

***Review of the Provision of Creative Arts Programmes in  
Dublin***

***6<sup>th</sup> February 2013***

## Executive Summary

In September 2012 the Higher Education Authority (HEA) appointed an international panel of four arts-education and culture experts to review the provision of creative arts and media programmes in the Dublin region. The review, to which all providers were invited to make a written submission, involved interviews with stakeholders (N=38); visits to universities, institutes of technology, arts colleges, and further education colleges (N=8), with whom meetings were held; and analysis of the 46 submissions received. The review was conducted within the context of a challenging economic climate in Ireland.

The overall goal of the review was to consider the potential for enhanced collaboration and synergies between further and higher education providers of creative arts and media education in the Dublin region, addressing questions of institutional autonomy, governance and validation. For the purposes of this review, 'creative arts and media' encompass the visual arts, graphic arts, film, drama, music and performing arts, in addition to which aspects of the work of museums and galleries—and, in a wider sense, architecture—have been included. The Terms of Reference for this review are provided in Appendix 1.

While employment in Ireland for highly talented media and creative arts professionals, and for technology/computing specialists to work within the creative industries, has arguably been negatively affected by the economic downturn, demand has nonetheless accelerated for training in the arts in the Dublin region. Currently more than 3,300 students participate annually in uniquely practice-based or performance-based creative arts courses. In the Dublin region, these are provided by four universities (TCD, UCD, DCU and NUIM), four institutes of technology (DIT, IADT, ITB and ITT Dublin), the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), and the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM), amongst whom the principal providers of creative arts courses are DIT, IADT and NCAD. In addition, creative arts courses are provided by several well-known and respected private-sector colleges, as well as by publicly funded further education colleges, in the Dublin region.

The creative arts higher education sector has been asked to form into regional and thematic clusters by the HEA. There is evidence that this policy directive has been well-received at institutional level with most institutions examined in this review striving to form partnerships. The types of partnerships that can be formed include:

- Vertical partnerships between educational providers at different levels—e.g. greater coordination between schools, further education colleges, institutes of technology, and universities;
- Horizontal partnerships between educational providers and other institutions and organisations—e.g. better connections between industry, cultural institutions and educational providers;
- Both vertical and horizontal partnerships between educational providers and cultural institutions, facilitating the consolidation of undergraduate and postgraduate programme provision, as well as the merging of providers;
- International partnerships, facilitating the consolidation of undergraduate and postgraduate programme provision, as well as the amalgamation of institutions across national borders.

In the opinion of the reviewers, the enhancement of progression pathways between different levels of educational provision is the most urgent issue facing the creative arts in the Dublin region. Due to a shortfall in NFQ level 8 places, bottlenecks are particularly prevalent in disciplines such as animation and film; and while formal progression routes through the levels of the National Framework of Qualifications exist, real and meaningful inter-level partnerships cannot occur without a general acceptance of equality between the various levels of education and respect for the learning outcomes at each level.<sup>1</sup>

While the value of cross-sectoral partnerships is acknowledged, there is nonetheless evidence of a tendency for institutions to choose partners of a similar type. Consideration therefore needs to be given to whether the current institutional strategies accommodate adventurous partnership-forming, that will be innovative and visionary, rather than merely facilitating the consolidation of programme provision. Heterogeneity is valuable: a heterogeneous system causes more dynamic friction. In the creative arts, often the most interesting practice occurs at the edges and so it is vital that implementation strategies, partnerships and mergers do not reduce the rich diversity of programme provision in the creative arts to bland uniformity. It may be more effective and strategic to look for partnerships with complementary organisations, and it may be better to look for partnerships **outside** the higher education sector, including in the further education sector, in industry and in cultural institutions. Currently, too many partnerships are driven by connections between individuals, they lack widespread influence, and they are not sustainable.

The Irish higher education system must continue to develop clear routes of progression and transfer, as well as non-traditional entry routes. The admissions system to higher education has to provide a greater variety of access routes for school-leavers and those completing further education and training. Much of the learning that is completed within further education is not readily accepted as currency for the purposes of direct access to Irish higher education. Further education students in the creative arts tend to go to British and other institutions for further study to honours degree level. Indeed a number of programmes in the Irish further education sector are accredited outside the state. There is also a lack of connection between the school sector and both higher education or further education. Schools pupils receive limited career guidance in terms of progression pathways into the creative arts. For example, there are currently no apprenticeships or similar work-based learning provisions in place for the creative industries.

Currently there are a number of blocks within the system especially in terms of pathways. The system could be strengthened by greater partnership-working across the various levels (i.e. from school to further education to the institutes of technology, universities and other providers). There is also a need for solid partnerships to be formed with the cultural and creative industries.

Moreover there is a need for significant consolidation of course provision at postgraduate level because at present the supply of postgraduate arts students exceeds demand for them in the labour-market.<sup>2</sup> In order to generate critical mass and to foster excellence in terms of the student experience and institutions' reputation, it is essential that, at the postgraduate level, there is consolidation not just in Dublin, but nationally and perhaps even internationally. It is possible for

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<sup>1</sup> On the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) see [www.nfq.ie](http://www.nfq.ie).

<sup>2</sup> Department of Education and Skills, *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (Dublin: DES, 2011), 41, 69.

very small ‘boutique’ postgraduate courses to gain international reputations, but to be successful as a small institution at postgraduate level, you need to be highly selective in terms of acceptance of students and recognised in a particular creative field as being of outstanding and notable quality. The danger though of a consolidated approach to postgraduate offerings in the arts is that this might remove active research and inquiry from the gaze of undergraduate-level students, thus reducing the opportunities for research to inform and invigorate undergraduate programmes. So while postgraduate programme provision should be consolidated, strong vertical links need to be maintained with undergraduate students to ensure vertical integration and knowledge-transfer—in other words, consolidated postgraduate programme provision should not be ‘hived off’ and isolated from influencing, and being influenced by, other levels.

National research priority-setting exercises have not favoured the arts. In all institutions included in the review, research incomes attracted by the creative disciplines and international research links are quite small, despite rhetoric to the contrary. It is challenging to show that research funding in the arts has resulted in economic and social return. As a result, very little research funding (from the national education or the arts budget) goes into creative arts activity or practice-based research in the arts, though arguably, there is good small-scale support for arts production for individual artists. The research potential apparent from collaborations between cultural and educational institutions appears to be largely untapped as a research resource. Partnerships between cultural institutions and educational partners provide opportunities to combine field-based research and development around the wealth of heritage resources available in Dublin. Closer working of education and culture could provide a chance for a ‘win-win’ situation.

Much of the current discussion about collaboration and consolidation, and the current stratified system, focuses on the courses and the institutions rather than on the learner. While it is a recommendation of this report that there should be clearer pathways in arts learning and greater consolidation of postgraduate arts courses, this is with a view to enhancing the student-learning experience, rather than to advancing the strategic prioritisation of institutions.

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## Chapter 1: Overview

### 1.1 Introduction

As part of the building of Ireland's reputation as a 'knowledge economy', the government is keen to put higher education at the centre of a more coherent and coordinated strategy. It hopes to achieve this aim by consensus and shared working, rather than direct intervention in the institutions. The drivers for higher education change at national level in Ireland are multi-faceted. This review is limited to examining a strategy for better processes of working for institutions in Dublin involved in higher education in the creative arts. It is acknowledged at the outset that an appropriate set of relationships in the Dublin region may not necessarily be able to be applied across the country. Despite this, there was openness to and welcoming of this review of creative arts and media provisions in the context of broader initiatives to effectively position higher education within Ireland. This overall positive response is effectively captured in this participant statement:

We really welcome this review. It is long overdue and we are pleased the creative arts can be heard in the broader debate.

This review of creative arts provision needs to be seen to exist as a subset of the overall review of higher education occurring concurrently with this review. As such, the results of this review will assist the HEA in advising the Minister for Education and Skills, in the context of the implementation of the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*, on an outline structure for the higher education system over the next 10–20 years.

### 1.2 Scope

In May 2012 the HEA announced the appointment of an international panel of four arts education and culture experts to review the provision of creative arts and media programmes in the Dublin region. This review presents a picture of what is happening in terms of educational programmes, research, innovation and collaborative activities in the field.

The review involved an analysis of written submissions, interviews with stakeholders (N=38) and visits to universities, institutes of technology, arts colleges and further education colleges (N=8); and it enabled all providers to contribute (46 contributions were received).

The review was undertaken in a context that acknowledges the centrality of the arts in creating national identities, building international relationships and creating cultural and economic capital. There was an understanding from the outset that to address current and future challenges, institutions offering creative arts and media programmes need to be flexible and ambitious in their approach to changing circumstances. Programmes and research in the domains of the creative arts, media and culture are key components of a thriving and innovative economy and society.

The role of higher education within the creative arts field includes the fostering and development of talent and originality, the encouragement of creativity and the generation of ideas, the development of skills, the encouragement of multi-disciplinary knowledge and the challenging of traditionally held boundaries. In order for this vision to be realised, there is the need for the leading institutions within

the world of the creative arts, media and culture to come together to create new and exciting partnerships inside and outside education.

Any meaningful study of either a region or an individual institution must be informed by effective national and international contextualisation. To proceed on the basis of a purely geographical framework necessarily obfuscates many of the attributes, activities and themes a review would seek to engage with. The findings and recommendations of a review founded on geography will inevitably be limited.

### 1.3 Aims

The overall goal of the review was to consider the scope for enhanced collaboration and synergies between providers of creative arts and media education in the Dublin region, including addressing questions of institutional autonomy, governance and validation. The review provides an overview of the position of creative arts and media education and research in the Dublin region so as to better understand and communicate what is being done in this area, and how and where is it being done, including the effectiveness and value for the public investment.

It is intended that the results of this review will further enhance Dublin's position as an international centre for education in the arts, and lead to the development of a higher education system for Ireland comprising a coherent system of diverse, but complementary, institutions. It is intended that this will ensure access and quality outcomes for students, create a world-class student experience, and optimise the outcomes for public investment and the future positioning of higher education in Ireland on the world stage.

From the outset it is acknowledged that Ireland and Irish higher education can benefit from the national and international reputation of the Irish writers, musicians, and artists. With a view to capitalising on this, the review examined if the current institutional arrangements and configurations meet Ireland's needs and provide opportunities, both nationally and internationally, for the future. The review addresses the coherence of provision and advises on the most appropriate configuration for the effective delivery of world-leading teaching, learning and research in Dublin.

Aligned to these major aims, there are a series of objectives including:

- Analysing the emergence of practice-based arts education and the scope for greater collaborations and partnerships;
- Developing an appropriate set of relationships in the Dublin region that are more coherent and coordinated;
- Enhancing the architecture and coherence of the system; and
- Highlighting the contributions made by the arts and creativity to building a sense of community, social cohesion and cultural understanding.

Embedded in these aims is the desire to maximise the potential of the current range of institutions and ensure that a reputation of excellence is maintained and enhanced.

## 1.4 Definitions

“Creative arts and media” is a wide ranging and all-encompassing phrase especially given the imperatives around trans-disciplinarity. In the ‘Terms of Reference’ that underpin this review “arts, creativity and cultural education” is recognised differently in all four Dublin universities, the four institutes of technology, and the National College of Art and Design. The review panel acknowledge broad definitions for the arts and heritage and recognise the sentiments expressed by one respondent:

We are a broad church and we want this reflected in policy. We begin with an inclusive rather than exclusive view of art and culture.

However, while recognising the limitations of the scope of this review and acknowledging the range of definitions of the arts, creativity and innovation and the allied disciplines, this review will for the most part be on the practice-based and performance-based disciplines and on the academic disciplines most immediately aligned to the creative arts. In this review, creative arts and media are generally taken to include visual arts, graphic arts, film, drama, music and performing arts. Aspects of the work of museums and galleries are often included, and architecture has also been examined. These are referred to in the review as ‘Circle 1’ from the ‘Circles’ model of the Cultural and Creative Sectors (KEA European Affairs) and include:<sup>3</sup>

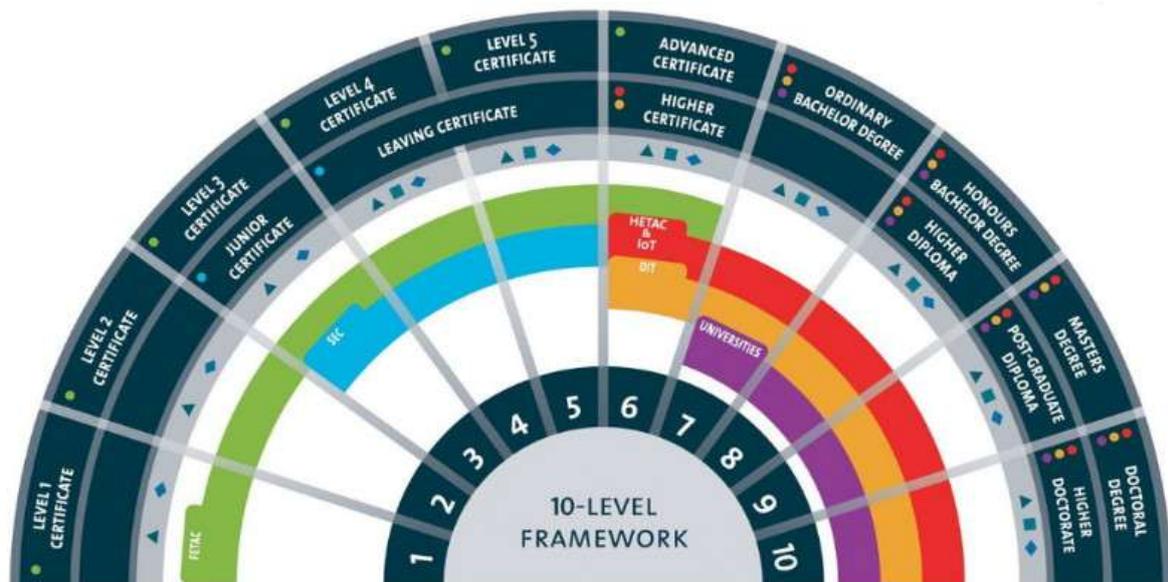
- Visual arts: including fine art, decorative arts;
- Film & media: including broadcasting and animation;
- Design: including fashion, craft, architecture, built environment, spatial, product, fashion and graphic design, design for stage and screen;
- Performing arts: including acting, dance, drama, music;
- Literature and languages; including creative writing, cultural criticism;
- Creative technologies: including communication technologies, gaming and applied technical arts;
- Cultural and heritage: including curatorial practice, tourism, arts management, culinary arts and enterprise.

Under this definition, we are focusing on a range of areas of core activity within higher education including teaching and learning, research and development, engagement with wider society, and internationalisation.

The 10-level NQF promotes lifelong learning in which the learner is at the centre. The 10 levels can be understood in an international context as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> The Economy of Culture In Europe (2006); [www.keanet.eu/en/ecoculturepage.html](http://www.keanet.eu/en/ecoculturepage.html)



**AWARDING BODIES**

- FETAC - Further Education and Training Awards Council
- SEC - State Examinations Commission (Department of Education & Science)
- HETAC - Higher Education and Training Awards Council
- IOT - Institutes of Technology (make their own awards at specified levels under Delegated Authority from HETAC)
- DIT - Dublin Institute of Technology
- Universities

**AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK**

There are four types of award in the National Framework of Qualifications:

- ▲ Major Awards: are the principal class of awards made at a level
- ▲ Minor Awards: are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
- ▲ Supplemental Awards: are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
- ▲ Special Purpose Awards: are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement

The focus of this review will primarily rest on NFQ levels 7–10

The Irish language (and Ulster-Scots) is central to many aspects of Irish culture. Just over 72,000 people speak Irish on a daily basis outside of the education system. Language, culture and the creative arts are primary sources of national distinctiveness and we should deepen our understanding of these and capitalise on their inherent cultural value and on the cultural and literary qualities that make us distinctive and interesting internationally. Gaeltacht is the term used to describe the regions where the Irish language is spoken as the first language. A recent review of governmental structures saw the emergence of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, which brings together functions from the former Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport; the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government; and the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs. Despite the overall importance of language in the Irish context, this review is not examining this area.

“Audience development”, as referred to in this review, is understood to include both increasing the numbers of participants in the arts and widening the demographic profile of arts audiences.

**1.5 Institutions<sup>4</sup>**

Unlike a number of its European neighbours, Ireland has seen a sustained growth in birth-rates. There has been a 33.3% increase in the population since 1994. Today around 10% of the population was not born in Ireland, compared to less than 2% in 2001. There is a current and future need to accommodate higher numbers of students wishing to study in higher education. An HEA-

<sup>4</sup> This section aims to provide a very brief overview of institutional programme provision to guide readers of the review. It is not intended to give a detailed picture of all the offerings or to judge the quality of the offerings.

commissioned ESRI report, *A Study of Future Demand for Higher Education in Ireland*, suggests an increase in entrants from around 41,000 in 2010/11 to just over 51,000 in 2029/30.<sup>5</sup>

In any one year, more than 3,300 students participate in programmes that are uniquely practice or performance-based, creative arts courses that could be aggregated under ‘Circle 1’ (KEA European Affairs model). Taught postgraduate enrolments account for around 8% of total enrolments for ‘Circle 1’. In the same period of time, overall undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments within ‘humanities and arts’ for the Dublin region exceed 10,500 in the university sector and 2,100 in the institute of technology sector. A combined enrolment of 3,300 students in practice-based and performance-based disciplines is significant by international standards. However, in the case of Dublin, this student population is distributed across a number of higher education institutions (now including TCD, with the launch of The Lir: National Academy for Dramatic Arts)—a situation that has evolved under conditions of rapid expansion of higher education provision generally, combined with the significant autonomy enjoyed by institutions in strategic planning and goal-setting. The demand for creative arts courses has remained relatively consistent but there has been a slight increase in the number of courses from 40 in 2002 to 56 in 2012.

There are four universities (TCD, UCD, DCU and NUIM), four institutes of technology (DIT, IADT, ITB and ITT Dublin), a specialist art college (NCAD) and the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) in the Dublin area that teach creative arts courses. The principal providers of creative arts courses are DIT, IADT and NCAD. The DIT is the only provider covering all disciplines included in ‘Circle 1’. Architecture is provided only in DIT and UCD whereas music is provided in DIT, MIE, NUIM, RIAM, SPD, TCD and UCD. Creative writing programmes can be found in UCD and TCD; and art, design and media programmes can be found in DIT, IADT and NCAD. For the purposes of this review, the principal providers of ‘Circle 1’ creative arts education are considered to be DIT, IADT and NCAD.

### 1.5.1 Figure Abbreviations of institutions

AHC:	All Hallow’s College
AIT:	Athlone Institute of Technology
DCU:	Dublin City University
DIAS:	Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies
DkIT:	Dundalk Institute of Technology
DIT:	Dublin Institute of Technology
IADT:	Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dún Laoghaire
ITB:	Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown
ITT Dublin:	Institute of Technology, Tallaght
MIE:	Marino Institute of Education
MDI:	Mater Dei Institute of Education
NCAD:	National College of Art and Design
NCI:	National College of Ireland
NUIM:	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
RIAD:	Royal Irish Academy of Music
TCD:	Trinity College Dublin
UCD:	University College Dublin

<sup>5</sup> ESRI, *A Study of Future Demand for Higher Education in Ireland* (2012), 26.

TCD has a tradition of innovation in the arts and humanities over many centuries. In 1997 Trinity established the first creative writing Master's programme in Ireland, followed in 1998 by the establishment of the first dedicated practitioner centre, the Oscar Wilde Centre for Irish Writing. The first specialist undergraduate course leading to an honours degree in film studies was introduced in 2003 and the only literary translation Master's in 2004. Trinity College Dublin has strong connections with a number of cultural institutions. The Lir – National Academy of Dramatic Art is the only institution in Ireland to offer an honours degree in acting. It is the first to offer undergraduate education in stage management and technical theatre, and it initiated the first Master's in Fine Art degree in the disciplines of stage design, theatre directing and playwriting. Film Studies is a relatively new subject in Trinity College and though primarily scholarly in its first years it is now, through a philanthropic donation, seeking to realign the delivery of its education through film practice (in the areas of screenwriting and digital video production). Existing resources in Trinity, such as MoCap (motion capture) and Arts Technology Research Laboratory (ATRL), provide a context within which Film Studies as a practice can be nurtured. This is particularly relevant in the development of a new joint degree with Queen's University Belfast (MRes in Creative Arts) in which QUB can offer its expertise in sonic arts (at the Sonic Arts Research Centre), and in documentary cinema (in Film Studies). Trinity College will bring to this new degree its practical expertise in the dramatic arts and in music composition through the provision of this proposed joint degree with QUB, as well as the partnerships with the conservatoires, RIAM, and The Lir. The Douglas Hyde Gallery, supported by the Arts Council and Trinity College is a long established gallery exhibiting the cutting-edge of contemporary art. In summary, Trinity College aims to engage arts practitioners in the research and development, from NFQ level 9 and beyond, of new artistic forms with global impact.

In 2012, QUB joined UCD and TCD as partners to create the All-Island Innovation Academy to foster cross-border student mobility and inter-institutional sharing of modules in innovation and entrepreneurship. UCD has established strategic partnerships with the Institute of Bankers, National College of Art and Design, and the Institute of Public Administration and through formal recognition of these institutions as Recognised Colleges of UCD. In 2010, NCAD became a recognised College of UCD, driven by a desire to 'remove barriers and transcend boundaries' in expanding the intellectual community of each institution and to harness the complementarities and diversities which bring the visual arts and a wide range of academic disciplines into closer proximity.

Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT) is a vibrant institute of technology that thrives on new ideas and creativity. IADT is the only institute of technology in Ireland with a specific mission to drive and inform the creative, media technologies and cultural industries through teaching, learning, research and innovation. IADT creates an interdisciplinary environment combining visual arts, media arts, enterprise, technology and psychology and is closely linked to business. IADT incorporates the National Film School (NFS). IADT's Media Cube is an incubation centre with a specialist focus on the digital media industry in Ireland. There are currently 16 companies based in the Media Cube in the area of creative arts, culture and media working on content creation and distribution, video and music production, social media, campaign management and analysis, advertising, social media, and software development. In 2012 IADT was voted the "sexiest" university by students.

Dublin City University (DCU) is a young university situated three miles north of the Liffey. DCU has a formal regional partnership aimed at promoting higher education consolidations and collaborations

at both national and international level. This cluster incorporates DCU (and its linked colleges: SPD, MDI, AHC), NUIM, RCSI, CICE (via DCU), DkIT (via DCU), AIT (via NUIM), and NCI (via DCU or NUIM). By establishing a strategic framework for collaboration, the partnership hopes to leverage synergies and “complementarities” in research, education and engagement. It considers itself to be a research-intensive institution characterised by a focus on innovation and entrepreneurship with 92% of staff having Ph.D.s. St Patrick's College Drumcondra (SPD), a college of Dublin City University is a college of education with over 2,500 students taking courses in education and the humanities at undergraduate and postgraduate level. An annual average total of 130–140 students specialise in music for B.A. and B.Ed. degrees at SPD, each of which involve core modules in music performance and composition. SPD also provides courses in curriculum music for prospective primary teachers (B.Ed., Grad Dip. Ed., c. 950 students) as well as two taught Master's Degrees (M.A. in Music and M.Ed. in Music Education) and research degrees at Master's and doctoral level. SPD also houses 'Developing Diversity in Music Education in Ireland'—a new two-year partnership between SPD and Music Generation. Initiated by Music Network and funded by U2 and The Ireland Funds, Music Generation aims to help children and young people to access music education in their own locality.

Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) is one of the largest higher education providers in Ireland, with over 14,000 full-time students. DIT offers a full spectrum of disciplines with a range of apprenticeship, ordinary degree, honours degree, master's and doctoral programmes. The soon-to-be-developed Grange Gorman campus is intended to provide an interdisciplinary hub for the arts. The first 1,000 DIT students will arrive at Grange Gorman in September 2014 and by 2017 over 10,000 students will be located on the new campus. DIT provides creative arts qualifications across four colleges in areas from architecture, art design and printing, culinary arts and food technology, engineering (electronic and communications), ICT, to media, music and drama. There are ambitions to be the national centre for culture and creativity. It is viewed that the new campus is important as they will be located in the centre of the city.

The National College of Art and Design (NCAD) offer a broad range of visual arts and design disciplines within the State. As a specialist art and design college, NCAD offers a disciplinary mix of undergraduate, postgraduate, and continuing education programmes in fine art, design, craft, teacher education, and visual culture. A number of NCAD graduates have become nationally and internationally successful artists and designers occupying significant and influential positions in their discipline fields. NCAD has historically been the provider of art and design courses. It has a theoretical focus and a critical stance which aligns it most closely to the university sector. NCAD's research priorities include user-first design, contemporary practices in art and design, creative and critical pedagogies, Irish design history and material culture and design sustainability.

Founded in 1848, the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) is a national conservatoire with a wide educational reach. It receives 46% of its funding from the Department of Education and Skills and the other 54% is raised through examination fees from its national examination system, course-tuition fees, and publications. The RIAM's Local Centre Examination System (founded in 1894) sets the curriculum for, and examines, over 40,000 music students each year. In addition, the RIAM runs teacher-training programmes targeted at 7,000 private music teachers active in Ireland. On its Westland Row premises, RIAM staff teach approximately 1,000 pre-tertiary music students, acting as a learning laboratory for 'best practice' and also as a vital feeder programme for its degrees. At the

top level, the RIAM has approximately 100 highly gifted students at diploma, Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral level (one of very few such performance-based doctorates in Europe).

The National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM) claims major strengths in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, with 69.2% of students in the humanities, social sciences, business and law (against a sectorial average of 47%) and 21.3% of students in the natural sciences (against a sectorial average of 17%). With approximately 8,400 registered students, NUIM has 26 academic departments and offers creative arts-related programmes in areas ranging from education to musicology, performance, composition and music technology, as well as in media, design and design-inspired innovation

There are also a number of small educational institutions that include the arts in their programmes. For example, Marino Institute of Education (MIE) has a focus on teaching, learning and research and is committed to promoting inclusion and excellence in education, but includes arts provisions. Mater Dei Institute of Education is a college of education specialising in religious education and providing concurrent initial teacher education for post-primary teachers. In addition it offers a B.A. in Irish Culture, an M.A. in Poetry, and specialist music provisions.

### **1.5.2 Private sector colleges**

In addition to the publicly funded further and higher education sector, there are several well-known and respected private sector colleges that offer arts provision.

Griffith College Dublin (GCD) is one of the largest private higher education colleges in Ireland with more than 8,000 students. It offers arts courses at NFQ levels 6, 7 and 8 validated by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC). Programmes in photography are offered at NFQ levels 6 and 7 and in music production at levels 6 and 8.

The National College of Ireland (NCI), located in the Dublin Docklands (IFSC), has 3,500 full-time and part-time students, and over 130 full-time and 220 part-time staff and faculty. NCI is a higher education provider with a specialist interest in business and computing, including arts-related provision in ICT, web-design, and marketing.

Dublin Business School (DBS) is an independent higher education institute which offers over 100 accredited courses to more than 9,000 students including a number of programmes via its Department of Creative Arts including a B.A. (Hons) in Film, Media, Journalism, Communication and Cultural Studies.

The Portobello Institute, a private training college offers post-Leaving Certificate training through a number of full-time, part-time and distant-learning courses including creative studies programmes in fashion, interior design, editorial and fashion hair, fashion make-up, theatrical performance, performing arts and theatre production.

The Grafton Academy is a private fashion college with over 70 years of creativity in design, pattern drafting and garment assembly which offers a 3-year full-time Professional Fashion Design Diploma course.

The Newpark Music Centre has developed a niche specialism in jazz performance and offers a Bachelor of Arts in Jazz Performance (BAJP), a non-classical, undergraduate music-performance NFQ level 8 honours degree, validated by HETAC. Also offered by Newpark is the 'Berklee Track' programme, a two-year course which prepares students for entry into the Berklee College of Music in Boston, the result of an articulation agreement between Berklee and Newpark Music Centre. The programme also leads to the award of the ATCL Diploma (Associate of Trinity College London). This qualification is aligned at NFQ level 6 on the NFQ.

The Gaiety School of Acting was established in 1986 by the renowned theatre director Joe Dowling in response to the lack of full-time actor training programmes in Ireland at that time. The school is now widely regarded as a leading training facility for actors and is associated with the restoration project of the historic Smock Alley Theatre, dating from 1662. The School offers a two-year intensive acting programme and, in collaboration with NUIM, has recently introduced an M.A. programme in Theatre.

## 1.6 Context

This review is framed by a complex interaction between managing the impact of a challenging economic climate in Ireland and a drive to shape the future direction and profile of higher education. The aim of this is to position Ireland as a world-class higher education system serving current and future generations of students and developing the creative industries and the wider 'knowledge economy'. It is clear that Ireland needs a new economy. The new economy has to rely more on creativity and knowledge and on the industries that generate income from these sources. To achieve and sustain this will require new thinking, new understandings and new knowledge. As Ireland moves forward, new types of graduates with differing competencies will be required. Education in general has to provide these competencies and art and design/creative arts education, in particular, has a substantial contribution to make to this new economy.

There are a number of unknown elements which could impact on any forward strategies. For example, employment control ceilings, reductions in Government funding, institutional and delegated authority reviews are all likely to have a direct impact upon higher education. Yet, the focus must remain on realising the best interests of students within the creative arts, media technologies and cultural sector and economies and on determining how to best position higher education to positively respond to the emerging strategic questions being debated at national level. Institutions need to be encouraged to move towards a more student-centred provision, ensuring that the structures and frameworks that follow serve the students, rather than building the frameworks and structures and expecting the student to fit these. It also has to be recognised that higher education is expensive both in terms of the investment in facilities and personnel and in the investment of time and income forgone by students while studying. This calls for a balanced view of numbers of places and students who can be admitted. While higher education, and education more generally, contributes more to the individual and society than those things that can be measured financially, there has to be a responsible view of employment prospects for those receiving and completing education and training and student demand **alone** cannot be the only factor in determining intakes of students. The quality of students needs to be high and there should be a reasonable chance of employability at the end of the course. There is also reason to suppose that Ireland may earn revenues from its high standards of higher education from international students,

for whom Dublin is an attractive setting to study; this enhances the wider student experience. There should therefore be space for such a development in higher education provision.

According to the latest edition of Education at a Glance (EAG), published by the OECD on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012, Irish higher education is the 5<sup>th</sup> highest of all OECD countries in terms of educational attainment levels of young adults aged 25 to 34 in 2010.<sup>6</sup> The Irish higher education sector, in line with most situations internationally has an equal focus on teaching and learning, and research and development. Higher education needs to be international in its focus, while at the same time connecting at the local level and being a proactive part of engendering strength within the local and wider society. Despite the desire for more connections with industry and society, the enterprise sector is generally not involved in curriculum design in higher education. Similarly, while creativity and innovation are seen to be future directions for Ireland, there is a need to embed intellectual and artistic creativity more fully in public consciousness. Moreover State and semi-State agencies involved in cultural heritage and cultural tourism have shown little interest in engaging fully with higher education.

Irish higher education is experiencing increased demand for places from a predominantly younger demographic. It is the arts, humanities, and social sciences that have consistently attracted the largest numbers of students, and these are the domains in which Ireland has made a real global impact. This can be seen in the achievements of Irish writers, musicians, and artists, and in the extent to which Ireland benefits from its reputation in these areas. As an island of scholarship, scientific discovery, creative arts and innovation, Ireland attracts independent thinkers and entrepreneurs from around the globe.

## 1.7 Economic context of the arts, cultural and creative industries

Ireland has long encouraged the development of the arts and artists with educational and training provision, grants to artist and craftspeople and tax breaks; the wider cultural and creative industries now attract similar attention. These industries form part of the 'knowledge economy' that is essential to the new economy and specialised education and training for these industries (Circle 1 especially) is provided by the institutions that are the focus of this report. Most creative industries are located in the Dublin region,<sup>7</sup> with the exception of crafts, which are mainly located in rural areas outside the region. The Dublin region has a lively arts scene for the production and consumption of the arts and similar pursuits.

The cultural and creative industries are clearly an important source of employment for the graduates of the creative arts and media. In 2011, the "wider arts" sector (the arts plus film and video, publishing and libraries, museums and archives) were reported to employ 13,000 persons. A broader delineation of creative industries that includes advertising, radio and television and software in addition to the "wider arts" classification employed 48,000, representing around 7%<sup>8</sup> of total employment in Ireland. A further study reported that the creative industries (including the 'wider

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<sup>6</sup> Education at a Glance (EAG) 2012; [www.oecd-ilibrary.org](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org)

<sup>7</sup> According to D. Curran and C. van Egeraat, *Defining and Valuing Dublin's Creative Industries* (Dublin City Council Think Dublin Series, 2010), [www.dublincity.ie/Planning/EconomicDevelopment/Documents/Creative\\_Industries\\_Final\\_Report.\\_05.05.10.pdf](http://www.dublincity.ie/Planning/EconomicDevelopment/Documents/Creative_Industries_Final_Report._05.05.10.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 17.

arts’) contributed 2.8% to Irish Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2011.<sup>9</sup> Of this, software constitutes 62% of the Gross Value Added. Figures had been higher in earlier reports but the recession has had a negative impact on output and employment. Such figures bear careful analysis but that is beyond the scope of this report.<sup>10</sup>

The question to be addressed here is to what extent the expectations of graduates are met in the labour-market, whether they are receiving appropriate training, and what effect any reorganisation of training institutions would have on graduates and potential employers. In other words, more consideration in course design and delivery needs to be given to student outcomes. It is worth pointing out that many creative arts and media graduates will find employment outside the cultural and creative industries without any “earnings penalty”; indeed, they are likely to earn more than those who work within the arts sector. Conversely, graduates from non-arts disciplines find work in the cultural and creative industries, especially in software. The issue for the HEA is the relative cost of creative arts and media courses as compared to other higher education and training programmes, for example in the social sciences.

A study of 2010 by McAndrew and McKimm, entitled *The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland*, commissioned by the respective arts councils estimated that there were nearly 5,000 professional artists in the Republic of Ireland (ROI), 1,688 librarians, archivists and curators, and 11,180 software engineers.<sup>11</sup> The survey showed that half were female, over 40% worked in more than one art form, 30% were born outside ROI and half lived in Dublin. In terms of education and training, 70% were graduates, of whom 40% had a postgraduate or professional qualification (approximately three times more than in the ROI labour force); 70% had received specific education or training as an artist. In terms of earnings, average income from work as an artist was €20,501 for males and €9,789 for females.<sup>12</sup> Both earned a further average €10,000 from non-arts work, mostly teaching. These earnings (with notable exceptions in the ICT design and media sectors) are considerably lower than for other professional occupations for males and females, taking age and educational qualifications into account. These figures are in line with surveys and other sources of evidence from many other developed countries.

A report *Economic Significance and Potential of the Crafts Sector in Ireland* (Indecon, 2010) estimated that in 2009, there were over 10,000 craftspeople (makers) in ROI working in 1,700 craft enterprises, of which 20% were in Dublin. GVA from craft enterprises with more than 3 employees (the way the statistics are collected) was just under €179 million. The report showed that there had been a fall in craft employment over the previous few years. This evidence bears out the following comments made in interviews:

“Many artists aspire to make a living from the arts, though most cannot.”

“For the vast majority of artists their income is below the poverty line.”

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<sup>9</sup> Indecon (2012) Assessment of the Economic Impact of the Arts in Ireland.

<sup>10</sup> See Towse (2010) A Textbook of Cultural Economics (ch.13).

<sup>11</sup> The survey did not include craftspeople.

<sup>12</sup> The median is regarded as the better measure as it reflects ‘typical’ earnings: the average is raised by the very uneven distribution of the few high fliers. Median earnings for male artists was €11,148 and for females, €5,952.

Artists are also supported by grants, which form part of their income. The 2009 survey by McAndrew and McKimm found that respondents obtained one-eighth of their income from grants and awards. The Arts Council, in partnership with regions throughout Ireland makes a significant investment in small-scale grants to emerging artists. Another important source of support is by Aosdana, a system of both honouring and financially regarding outstanding Irish artists. It provides considerable prestige to a small number of artists and importantly makes them eligible for a stipend for life that enables their income to reach the basic salary level. When an artist's income falls below two-thirds of the basic income, they can receive the grant. The programme costs around a million euro per year and caters for around 250 artists. Members are eligible under certain conditions for an annuity (called a *Cnuas*), payable for five years and renewable thereafter.<sup>13</sup>

## 1.8 Creative arts training and the cultural and creative industries

The general view expressed was that while much attention had been given in recent years to higher education providers forming partnerships with each other, partnerships with industry have not been formed with the same level of vigour. In many creative arts and media courses, there is a lack of focus on entrepreneurial development. All universities and institutes of technology should provide development in marketing and business acumen, but the feedback is mixed—and at times contradictory—as to what occurs in creative arts courses. Industry partners may be invited into creative arts courses and greater pedagogical/industrial connections seem to be welcomed. But such connections are not systematic and too often depend on one-to-one relationships between particular staff.

It was argued that the contemporary artist's business is not understood by the academics.<sup>14</sup> Dublin has been particularly successful in attracting leading global digital companies, such as Google, Microsoft, and Facebook, who employ large numbers of graduates in European and international operations of significant scale. The 'Digital Hub', a cluster of digital content and technology enterprises established by Government in 2003, brings together more than 70 digital content and technology enterprises, and employs more than 800 highly skilled staff in fields including animation, design, learning, gaming and mobile technology. Both Irish and multinational company activity is growing in the games, animation and digital publishing/eLearning sectors. In this context, the 'Digital Hub' provides a location where relationships are fostered and encouraged between suppliers and vendors, creators and consumers, inventors, entrepreneurs and investors sharing a space with their industry peers and offers an environment ripe for greater exploration and exploitation by creative arts education providers.

Moreover digitisation itself provides new platforms for the arts. The higher education sector globally has not always kept pace with the latest development in the arts world. A media degree or a technology degree is now seen as the new "arts degree". As the following quote suggests, graduates from more industry-led courses tend to move straight into employment:

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<sup>13</sup> The value of this annuity in 2009 was €17,180.

<sup>14</sup> Further education tends to have stronger links with industry

Our good graduates are snapped up because we work so closely with industry. They see who the best people are and before they even graduate, they have been offered jobs.

Cultural tourism is an important element of Ireland's tourism product and thus stimulates job creation and economic regeneration. Ireland's World Heritage Sites have the potential to significantly enhance the tourism return from Ireland's heritage. Yet the cultural industries in Ireland are a self-limiting system. There is a moral argument that suggests that despite student-demand, there may only ever be a limited number of jobs within the creative and cultural industries and student places should be reduced to ensure there is a more equitable position between supply and demand, as the following comments to the Panel emphasises:

I would say in Ireland we have an oversupply of artists working in the 'circle one' but we have a undersupply in the other circles and as we move to the outer circles this is where there are the most employment opportunities but the least courses. There are simply too many people training to be 'circle one' artists. It is very rare, even for the top artists to be able to make a living from being an artist. At the human level we have a contract with students we put through HE level courses in the arts. We take their fees but we do not offer any chance of full-time employment. We need more offers for the outer circles and better career advice for the creative industries so talented and creative people can make the right choices.

While we don't have detailed data, anecdotally, except for in animation where almost all of our graduates go into employment in the field in which they trained, the rest could take more than five years to be in employment directly related to their training.

While, there is much potential in the arts and in the cultural, heritage and creative industries to create growth and jobs, there needs to be more robust labour-force surveys that truly reflect employment, unemployment and earnings of employed, self-employed artists and how they make a living. This is done by the Arts Council (referenced above) but it is unclear the extent to which higher education course decisions reflect the information gathered. There also needs to be more robust efforts on the part of arts colleges to track graduates over a number of years. A reasonable number of places should be provided in further and higher education to give those people who complete courses in the creative arts a reasonable chance of getting work. Courses in the arts are popular and easy to fill but this does not mean that there will be employment when the students finish. Analysis of graduates has not been taken seriously. While initial destination surveys are completed, this does little to map the complexities possible in the creative arts where there is predominance of "portfolio" types of careers. Graduate tracking information is difficult to obtain and, with the exception of one innovative example in which 'Linked In' was used to track graduates, little is known of how the higher education received may (or may not) have led to employment and career creation. This is a particularly important source of information for further and higher education institutions to plan the number of places they offer. These should not be driven by the demand for places alone.

In other instances, professional organisations have taken a more direct proactive role in building the size of their industries and using professional development programmes to ensure that workforce

skill development is matched by a growth in demand, as is shown in the following examples from the Crafts Council and the film industry.

The Crafts Council has more than 2,700 member and four education staff. It is currently working with the school sector to raise the profile of the crafts in education. Called "Crafted", this educational programme aims to develop partnerships between crafts people and schools with the goal of showing through practice the benefits of crafts to children's learning. The Crafts Council is also a provider of training offering 2 year programmes (44 weeks per year) with a focus on skills training for the craft area. Although this is apprenticeship style training, it is difficult to get funding and accreditation. For example they are trying to get jewellery and ceramics accredited.

The film industry is funded directly by the Department of Arts and Culture. It receives around 5 million euro per year. There are also healthy tax concessions<sup>15</sup> for the arts and artists especially for writers. Screen Training Ireland offers professional development for those people already actively working in the film industry.

Other respondents argued that the employability and life-outcomes are seen as a benefit of education, not a direct outcome and so the creative arts higher education should not be focused on industry needs and that it is not possible in the arts for a direct line to be drawn between academic and vocational learning: "Higher education should be about opening the mind not just fulfilling job vacancies." Proponents of this view receive support from some quarters of the creative industries who argue that an overly vocational focus can result in graduates that are less flexible, adaptable and "future proof", as is indicated in this response:

We want graduates with a whole set of skills of value. They need to be of excellent quality.

This point was also raised as a criticism of an overly strong focus on art production rather than on creative or aesthetic processes. For example, it was pointed out that "the Arts Council has a strong emphasis on production but this has failed to fully realise the potential of a range of forms of research and artistic practice not linked explicitly to the production of art pieces."

In either scenario, a creative arts education serves to provide the recipient with a formalised education environment which allows the participant to develop and more rapidly hone their craft. The best formalised arts education should prepare the student, appropriately, for a career in the creative and/or entrepreneurial world.

## 1.9 Policy

The *National Strategy for Higher Education 2030* states that policy should support the structures, capacity and relationships that the higher education system will need to meet the expanding demand. While promoting a distinct sense of Irish place and identity, Irish higher education should equip students with the skills to play a strong part on the world stage. This is not just in terms of quality and reputation, but as a strategy for innovation that builds a robust future for the Irish

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.revenue.ie/en/tax/it/reliefs/artists-exemption.html>

society and economy by providing a workforce capable of dealing with the increasingly complex demands of the global economy, including the proliferation of technologies.

Importantly, this review of creative arts provisions is being conducted within the context of a number of other reviews redefining the relationship between the State and the higher education system, based on contracts for delivery (service-level agreements) negotiated between the institutions and the HEA as part of a wider strategic dialogue. While all the proposed changes retain a role for a reformed HEA as an intermediary between the Minister and the institutions, the reforms stress that the roles and responsibilities of the HEA will have to change to reflect societal needs and to respond to national priorities.

Within the cultural sector, the arts are being viewed as being capable of supporting Ireland's world-class artistic, heritage and cultural strengths, nationally and internationally and to contribute to job-creation and Ireland's economic recovery. Current and future growth in cultural tourism is deemed to be fuelled by the conservation, preservation, protection, development and presentation of the arts and culture through a more co-ordinated, strategic approach to culture and the creative arts.

Part of this strategic approach is to ensure the optimal use of the resources allocated for artistic and cultural endeavours and to support artists of all disciplines to produce high-quality work. In relation to the latter point, it is considered that securing meaningful levels of support to artists is of equal importance to securing arts infrastructure (buildings and organisations).

## 1.10 Finance

The combination of currently low levels of private investment, high levels of anticipated demand and constraints on the public finances require a new approach to higher education funding. Ireland must sustain an on-going expansion of opportunities for higher education and to create maximum learning opportunities from the available resources. Sourcing funding for this expansion will not be easy. The quantum of public funding that is available is unlikely to grow significantly and in the immediate years, the total public funding to higher education is likely to decrease, while the required contribution by students is set to increase. In 2013 the reduction in State contribution will be 2%; followed by a further 1% reduction in 2014 and 2015.<sup>16</sup>

The funding base for higher education is under discussion with suggestions including a reform of student financing, including a new form of direct student contribution based on an upfront fee with a deferred payment facility. Local and EU students currently pay around 2,250 euro per year in tuition fees, but this will rise to 3,000 by 2015. If this is compared to the very modest fees of 800 euro that existed in 2008–09 when many students had started their degrees, it represents a substantial increase, and while it is at the higher end of fees in European countries, it is significantly cheaper than fees in England (where students pay up to 9,000 GBP per year). For international students, the fees can be much higher with fees of €10,000 or more not being uncommon, though individual institutions can set (or discount) international fees based on demand. Arguably, the higher arts education scene of Dublin appears rather confusing for a student coming from abroad to try to find out who is doing what and under which circumstances. This kind of confusion could be a

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<sup>16</sup> Government of Ireland (2012), Expenditure Allocations, 2012-14, pg. 34.

barrier for students when they try to find their way into and through the sector. This is particularly true, if the learner is to be placed at the centre of the provision. Understanding the system would require a lot of "local knowledge". Therefore better transparency of the complete sector would be necessary to enable further education and other students to select what best suits. At the minimum, a common website combined with a better service where students can locate all the necessary information would greatly assist consolidation. Better information and communication is a prerequisite for realising more permeability of the progression pathways.

Higher education in Ireland is currently heavily reliant on Exchequer funding. The most recent OECD data shows that in Ireland 85.1 per cent of funding for higher education comes from public sources, compared with the EU-19 average of 81.1 per cent and the OECD average of 72.6 per cent.<sup>17</sup> In Ireland, household expenditure (by students and their parents) currently stands at 13.2 per cent, and expenditure by other private entities forms only 1.7 per cent.<sup>18</sup> It is likely that in the foreseeable future education and culture will face a reduced funding envelope. In the immediate future, it was suggested that 'the envelope' may have a 12% cumulative reduction. Despite this Ireland is facing a demographic growth in student numbers. This in turn will lead to a subsequent bulge in the need for employment. Yet a young and educated population with ambition to attend higher education should not be viewed as a challenge but rather as an opportunity. Philanthropic and/or industry funding of higher education remains in its infancy and while universities have been urged to seek a more diverse funding base, funding is still mainly obtained through the State and student contributions.

The growth of higher education must be sustainable and resourced with an appropriate funding base but it should not exceed what is viable in terms of potential job creation. Growth and quality improvement must be progressed together. While it is clear that any recommendations in this report needs to be framed by the financial constraints within Ireland, the HEA was keen to emphasise that the review should not be driven by financial imperatives, but rather must embed a strategy for sustainability.

Arts funding in Ireland comes from both the local and the national budget. Funding streams and financial support mechanisms include annual grant-aid, awards, projects, schemes, initiatives, promotions, and key research and development actions. The size and number of these awards vary and while there is a clear commitment to maintain public support for the arts, it is likely that this budget will also be reduced. At the same time, as funds have reduced the strategic focus of funding has been more to the established and prestigious cultural organisations and artists, rather than emerging or experimental artists.

## 1.11 The school sector

Higher education alone cannot be held accountable for all creative and cultural learning. There needs to be complementarity and consistency in the approach to curriculum design and delivery through primary and secondary education. On-going educational reform should therefore consider the balance between entry routes to arts higher education (e.g. the additional portfolio requirements) and the intensive nature of the senior school cycle which can require students to take

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<sup>17</sup> OECD, Education at a Glance (EAG) 2012; [www.oecd-ilibrary.org](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org)

<sup>18</sup> Department of Education and Skills, *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (Dublin: DES, 2011), 111.

seven subjects to Leaving Certificate level. Better arts education in schools would also free up more expensive resources at the third level - so there is significant value-added economic benefit for good early arts education.

The Department of Education and Skills has recently (October 2012) announced a radical reform of the Junior Certificate which will see students rather than examinations at the centre of the new approach to assessment. Proposals for a new junior cycle programme include options for curricular reform with subjects and short courses to include art, craft and design, artistic performance and digital media literacy. Learning outcomes are intended to encourage students to create and presents artistic works and appreciate the process and skills involved. Implementation of this junior cycle reform will play an important role in building a continuum in Irish arts education.

Ireland also needs to invest more in the continuous improvement of the quality of teaching, the role of research in teacher education, and international cooperation in all of its teacher education institutions. Currently, one-year postgraduate programmes for teachers of Art and Design are provided by the National College of Art and Design in Dublin, by Crawford College of Art and Design in Cork (CIT), and by the College of Art and Design in Limerick (LIT). A one-year programme for Wood Technology teachers is provided by Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT).

*A recent review of teacher education has suggested that 'with regard to Art, the Panel recognises the distinctive Art elements of teacher education programmes for Art. However, based on the principle that a common programme should be followed by all post-primary teacher education students in each consortium, the Panel recommends that ITE programmes for Art should be university-accredited and university-based. This means that teacher education courses in Art should be planned and delivered jointly by personnel from a university and the art institute. Staff should be integrated in terms of the planning and delivery of common parts of the programme and, likewise, students should be integrated for lectures and seminars.'*<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education Provision in Ireland: Review conducted on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills, July 2012. Pg. 26.

## Chapter 2: Responses to quality

### 2.1 Introduction

For the positive impacts of creative arts higher education to become apparent the organisation, processes and content of programmes must be of the highest quality. It is therefore imperative that any changes made must result in the creative arts education within Ireland reaching certain levels of quality and that current high-quality is not threatened by any of the structural proposals outlined.

This chapter outlines the basic components that together form high-quality arts education. Quality assurance in creative arts education is not a straight forward process as, unlike a number of other fields of social and economic activity, good-quality education in the creative arts is not a mono-causal phenomenon but rather is one which hinges on many variables pointing in the same direction. Statisticians have developed a measure of this: the so-called 'Cronbach's Alpha' measures the consistency between factors in a compound phenomenon.<sup>20</sup> The higher consistency there is between the qualities, the higher the 'Cronbach Score'. Statistically speaking, total consistency equals 1, whereas no consistency at all equals 0. Related to creative arts education, we know that quality programmes have a number of characteristics in common, such as inclusion of partnerships, performances and approaches to learning but equally they depend on attitudes of risk-taking, collaboration, sharing and other abstract constructs. These together form the baseline 'alpha' that needs to be considered in informing any proposed changes. So in this sense, 'quality' here is being defined as those arts education provisions that are of recognised high-value and worth in terms of the skills, attitudes and performativity engendered and is the result of interplay of structure and method. It should be noted, that 'alpha' specifies qualities or processes and not content. This is deliberate, as content should be derived in relation to local environments, culture and resources. In this way content and context can operate independently of the quality alpha while the indicators of quality remain quite stable and consistent.

Within this chapter, consistent aspects of quality are highlighted as the basis for the recommendations for structural changes that will follow. So, put simply, whatever structure is ultimately adopted these basic parameters of the quality alpha need to be contained within that structure.

### 2.2 Quality and impact

Funding and operational autonomy must be matched by corresponding levels of accountability for quality and impact against clearly articulated expectations. The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* acknowledges that the arts, humanities and social sciences have consistently attracted the largest numbers of students, and that Ireland has made a real global impact in these areas. Arguably the current system has produced world-class graduates with innovative dispositions in terms of knowledge and skills. However in the context of the advancement of national strategic priorities, higher education will need to continue to innovate and develop into the future.

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<sup>20</sup> Bogt, W.P., Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology (London: Sage Publications, 1993).

In view of the foregoing, performance and impact needs to be at the heart of education today. Students prefer high-reputation institutions and choose courses that offer depth plus breadth. While higher education institutions in Dublin tend to cater predominantly for local students, higher education is increasingly an international product with students choosing courses from all over the world. Dublin higher education in the creative arts needs to not only benchmark performance against other programmes provided in Ireland, but increasingly against international comparators in the United Kingdom, Nordic countries, and the USA amongst other places. Creative arts provisions, especially in Glasgow or Edinburgh provide meaningful comparisons and such environments and models would merit careful consideration as implementation of Ireland's *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* moves forward.

In light of the scale of transformation in teaching and learning that is under way in Irish higher education, the quality assurance framework must be reviewed and further developed. There is discussion of the adoption of dedicated performance funding, whereby financial levers will be used to promote institutional change to align performance of higher education institutions in terms of key national priorities. Even without such financial levers, it is likely that higher education seeks to have high impact and be of both intrinsic and extrinsic quality, but what measures of impact and quality may most usefully apply? What strategic values does any change bring?

The impact of creative arts education could include interplay of the following:<sup>21</sup>

*Figure 2.2.1 Impact measures*

- **personal/emotional impact** (such as students' confidence, ambition, aspirations)
- **social impact** (such as networks, collaborations, partnerships, contact webs);
- **cultural impact** (such as changes in merit and value measures, changes in perceptions and actual worth, accessibility);
- **educational impact** (such as new knowledge, formal and informal learning, industry based education; education of the broader field or community);
- **economic impact** (such as changes in income levels, effects on promotion, influences on market share, patents, knowledge-transfer, economic generation);
- **innovation impacts** (such as externally reviewed achievement, talent development, presentational opportunities, publicity, media attention, instigation of debates or discourse, entrepreneurial activity);
- **ethical impact** (such as changes in attitudes, sustainability, respect for culture);
- **catalytic impact** (such as flow-on effects, inventions, transformations, journeys, eventualities)

A great variety of methods and approaches have been used for impact evaluation. None are suitable for all situations and all have advantages and disadvantages. In measuring impact it is possible to take a forward-looking approach, focusing on changes that could be inferred into the future. It has to be remembered that the impact of any system changes constantly and so at best, impact evaluation can only be a snapshot in time. Impact measurement should be conducted over time

<sup>21</sup> A. Bamford, *An Introduction to Arts and Cultural Impact Evaluation* (NESTA, 2009).

(longitudinally) and its main purpose is to track the inevitable shifts in impact as they occur over time. Eleonora Belfiore (2008) argues the need for a toolkit approach to assessing the impact of the arts.<sup>22</sup> She suggests that what is needed is a “straight-forward method of impact evaluations which can be replicable in different contexts”. However she acknowledges that such a toolkit may lead to over-simplification and also provide a method for advocacy rather than a method of evaluation. Belfiore cautions, “advocacy considerations [...] have not only shaped the research approach and techniques adopted by cultural consultants, but also the type of work carried out by academia.”

Currently, it would appear that only minimal attention has been given to quality assurance and impact measurement as relates to final student destinations.<sup>23</sup> Inadequate attention is paid to the need for any changes to increase the positive impact of programmes on arts practice or employment outcomes. This includes impact in terms of productivity, economic, cultural social and persona. In relation to the latter, the views of students need to be particularly considered in the design, delivery and outcomes of programmes. Similarly, the cultural impact of the universities within Dublin has not been measured. While there has been a focus on broadening accessibility in terms of the social impact, very little data exists.

There is an urgent need to build a knowledge-base for the creative industries and industrial impact —preparing the types of graduates that are needed now and into the future. Yet graduate tracking has not been systemised by higher education and there is lack of connection with industry. Tracking creative arts students is very difficult as many go into self-employment, have multiple jobs, and have frequent bouts of unemployment.

Students want to be energised through their learning. Arts education should serve as a catalyst so that students are empowered to have a real ability and impact in the field. To this end all higher education institutions must ensure that teaching staff are both qualified and competent, in teaching and learning in the creative arts areas, and should support their on-going development and improvement. (See the later section on staff.)

## 2.3 Coherence and consolidation

A number of words have been used to describe various possible partnership arrangements. These tend to be used as being synonymous, though in reality they imply quite differing levels of commitment. For example, a 'cluster' might tend to imply a loose grouping of independent organisations sharing some common characteristics but largely being autonomous. On the other hand, 'collaboration' implies close working between complementary or perhaps symbiotic organisations. Collaboration may be project-based and relatively short-term, whereas a 'partnership' implies joint working on a longer-term and more structural basis. Similarly 'consolidation' implies a bringing together of institutions to create a new bigger organisations, whereas 'rationalisation' might imply reducing overlaps or surplus provision into a smaller more focused model.

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<sup>22</sup> E. Belfiore and O. Bennett, *The Social Impact of the Arts: A Social Impact Arts Intellectual History* (2008).

<sup>23</sup> Quality regimes under HETAC and IUQB have been developed and are quite robust by international standards; and at the time of writing this review, new QQI structures are being constructed and a new quality agency developed. In the light of this, it is timely for Institutions to reflect on quality and be proactive in addressing assurance and monitoring.

According to the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*, it is essential that “a critical mass” is reached through institutional cooperation and collaboration. The use of the expression “critical mass” could be read to imply that it is perhaps less about cooperation and more about consolidation or even rationalisation. In particular the *National Strategy* suggests that smaller institutions should be consolidated to promote coherence and critical mass, enabling them to work more closely together and to thus ensure the complementarity of their programme provision. It is felt that greater coherence will lead to an enhanced reputation through bringing together the best elements of a number of offers and consolidating key personnel. While the focus of this review is on ways to achieve greater coherence in terms of programme provision within Dublin, there is a need to look beyond Dublin and to engage with key stakeholders on both the EU and international stage. To some extent, the need to consolidate offers has been accepted within the creative arts sector as the following comment suggests:

You need a critical mass to obtain excellence. In the arts there is a pyramid—a lot of people need to be working from the bottom to get the stars emerging at the top.

In short, there has been a general message - get out and partner! The sector has been asked to form into regional and thematic clusters. This policy-directive appears to have been well-received at the institutional level with most institutions which participated in this review striving to make partnerships of one type or another. The type of partnerships that might be formed include:

- Vertical partnerships between educational providers at different levels—e.g. greater coordination between schools, further education colleges, institutes of technology, and universities;
- Horizontal partnerships between educational providers and other institutions and organisations—e.g. better connections between industry, cultural institutions and educational providers;
- Both vertical and horizontal partnerships between educational providers and cultural institutions, facilitating the consolidation of undergraduate and postgraduate programme provision, as well as the merging of providers;
- International partnerships, facilitating the consolidation of undergraduate and postgraduate programme provision, as well as the amalgamation of institutions across national borders.

### **2.3.1 Partnerships between differing levels of educational provision**

Pathways for students undertaking further education courses and seeking progression to higher education are in many cases over formalised, where they exist; and, in particular, they restrict a free-flow in disciplines such as film and animation. There is an urgent need to examine these articulation pathways to ensure that many creative individuals are not lost to the Irish system at an early stage in their careers. Equally there is a lack of connection between the school sector and further and higher education. Arguably there is also a shortage of progression routes into employment as industry-level skills audits have only been undertaken in a few rare examples, and there is a general lack of entrepreneurship education. As one of the respondents succinctly remarked:

There are no formal arrangements. Every year I have to do a series of cold-calling meetings to try to get places for my very best students. It is like biting an elephant piece by piece and every year it is the same.

In the opinion of the reviewers, the enhancement of progression pathways between different levels of educational provisions is the most urgent issue facing the creative arts sector and needs to be addressed through both partnerships and more substantial and accountable quality assurance frameworks. (See section 2.4 on progression pathways.) Inter-level partnerships cannot occur until there is a general acceptance of equality between the various levels of education and respect for what is achieved at each level. As one respondent remarked:

There is a cultural tradition of elitism in the university sector. Historically there is a binary system without permeable boundaries between the various institutions. These rigid walls mean that different traditions of learning have developed and so real partnerships are difficult. There are issues around genuine partnership and mutual recognition. Before we could begin to talk of working more closely together, we would need a framework of recognition. We need a system that promotes equality of status.

While much rhetoric surrounds the importance of practice-based research, early-stage, practice-orientated education or crafts-based work occurring in the further education, private and workplace sectors and to some extent in the institutes of technology is largely not accredited, nor does it facilitate entrance into higher education. Rather than acknowledge the unique contribution made by each sector, the perception seems to be that the further education sector has overstretched itself, and that there has been 'mission drift' in higher education, creating overlap between the two. There also appears to be the desire to 'morph' institutes of technology and further education providers into universities, or for them at least to become part of university consortia. This implies a hierarchy in which universities are located at the top and other providers further down. This view cannot be sustained within the creative arts in which individuals that undertake technical and practical training, and even those who are self-taught, can often gain greater professional status and more income than those with higher degrees. This is not to imply that some provision should not be made available to students wishing to pursue research in the arts, but this has to be seen as one of many pathways, not as a privileged pathway. There has been some pressure for universities and institutes of technology sectors to commence a process of evolution and consolidation. The aim of amalgamating these institutions seems to be less about capturing the unique contribution made by the various sectors in creative arts education and more about reaching the appropriate scale and capacity to potentially be re-designated as universities. Such a homogenous system is unlikely to serve Ireland well.

Moreover highly successful and reputable private arts colleges in Ireland have only limited connection to other or public-sector providers. The current system is one of stratification (levels of provision) rather than diversification and niche provisions lack the integration with other parts of the system. It is important that there is differentiation, rather than repetition of provision and that within this heterogeneous mix there are coherent, articulated and clearly communicated, student-driven and student-centred pathways. Arguably, more fluid progression pathways between differing levels of creative arts education provision could provide a cost-effective and 'fleet of foot' system

able to cater for the rapidly changing sector especially in terms of cultural aesthetics and the interface between technology, the arts and the sciences.

### 2.3.2 Partnerships between differing sectors

To some extent the rationalisation in the higher education sector is matched by a similar level of rationalisation within the cultural and commercial sectors, yet these fields have tended to remain quite isolated. Cultural institutions and the creative industries need to work more closely with education. For example, research could be conducted using museum collections. Cultural tourism could be combined with educational tourism. It is argued that cultural institutions are largely missing their potential educational value. There are possible creative synergies that can be achieved from greater levels of collaboration and consolidation but the impact of these collaborations would need to be researched further by existing institutions. There is a particular need to build a critical mass in certain areas, especially around new art forms emerging on the edges of the arts, sciences and technology fields.

Many institutions wrote of 'engagement' in their written submission to this report. With a few notable exceptions, this engagement tended to not be 'core' within the planning, delivery and review of offerings. 'Engagement' by higher education with wider society takes many forms. At its deepest level it includes long-term, 'deep' engagement with business and industry, with the civic life of the community, with public-policy practice, with artistic, cultural and sporting life, and with other educational providers in the community and region, and it includes an increasing emphasis on international engagement.

While there is acknowledged value in partnership there has been a tendency to choose partners of a similar type. In other words, in looking for a partner, the tendency has been to align with an organisation that is deemed to be the most similar to, and the best fit with, an existing organisation. Consideration needs to be given to whether the current strategy leaves room for quite adventurous partnership-forming that does not simply consolidate the existing offers, but rather create whole new patterns of connections and future visions. Institutions must adopt more interesting combinations of pathways, allowing students to undertake more bespoke programmes of study. In particular, greater alignment to more standardised quality-recognition schemes should make it possible for students to choose from a wider range of possible pathways, while still maintaining the quality of attainment and outcomes required for accreditation.

Heterogeneity is valuable. As one respondent remarked, "we need diverse not homogeneous provisions. We provide a niche offer. We have the tradition of being a specialist institution!". The best creative practice can occur when different forces bounce off each other or where there may be some friction at the edges. Some of the smaller institutions were concerned that they would be "swallowed up" by larger institutions "with Imperialist ambitions." In an era of rationalisation, recommended amalgamations aimed at generating perceived "critical mass", could adversely impact on quality and uniqueness of some organisations leading to unintended negative consequences.

A heterogeneous system causes more dynamic friction. In the creative arts, often the most interesting practice occurs at the edges and so it is vital that any implementation strategy, partnerships or mergers, do not result in a bland offer lacking the sort of diversity that is vital to creative arts disciplines. The greatest impact is likely to be achieved through forms of diverse rather

than conglomerate provision, but also that there is considerable potential to enhance this provision further through strategic partnerships and clustering—through collaborative diversity. As one respondent remarked, "we need diverse not homogeneous provisions". In a system the size of Dublin, the overall collaboration may result in only a few higher education institutions, but these institutions within a cohesive system should link with cultural institutions (the so-called cultural industry) and enterprise and forge far better pathways for students by accrediting high-quality further education programmes and practice-based learning. In pursuing research agendas they should do so with the cultural institutions and with industry. If funding and governance is more aligned to the pathways for students (i.e. follows the student rather than the institution) then learning can occur in a number of sites but with a more consolidated administration structure. For example, learning could occur concurrently in the National Youth Orchestra, in a school of music, and/or in a university with a single administrative structure funding and recognising the value of the various complementary types of learning.

It is likely that future art forms may rely on a student having a whole range of knowledge, skills and ways of working. Success in the arts is rarely mono-causal, but rather relies on the artist exhibiting a range of talents and behaviours. Professional connections and diverse sets of skills may be more conducive to success than a course directly related to the arts. For example, the reason the animation industry is going so well in Ireland is less to do with the arts and more to do with the technological environment and a society of good story tellers! Being able to present a visual narrative may be the most important aspect. Whatever the art form, it is undoubtedly the case, that in order for one to succeed, it is likely he or she will require continuous and determined lifelong learning, strong industry links (including with the cultural industries), a broad outlook and a focused mind. It is perhaps less important that institutions act in partnership with stakeholders in the field of arts and culture, and more important that they look for partnerships across areas of Irish society, so as to broaden the reach and deepen the impact of the arts. Given the forward-looking potential of the *National Strategy for Higher Education*, partnerships could be more strategic and complementary and thereby generate new relationships the outcome of which would be greater than the sum of its parts.

### 2.3.3 Partnerships between institutions in the same sector and at the same level

Higher education institutions have acknowledged the need to collaborate and to date, most of the 'partnership forming' has been between quite similar institutions at the same level. There are a number of inherent challenges that are making these connections harder to achieve. As outlined in sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2, it will more effective and more strategic to look to for partnerships with complementary, rather than similar organisations and to look for partnerships **outside** the higher education sector. For example, there was discussion about a "University of the Arts" scenario in which all arts courses would be brought under one umbrella organisation. While this would certainly result in critical mass and undoubtedly promote certain inter-arts working, it may not deliver the type of inter-disciplinary working characteristic of contemporary arts practice. Given those overall caveats, there are also a number of specific aspects that need to be considered.

First of all, the creative arts globally do not have a strong history of collaboration. Even within any given art form, there is likely to be little collaboration. For example, two different types of musicians

may not often, if ever, naturally work together. As the following quote highlights, connection in the arts is not a natural mode for the sector:

I think connections and partnerships are often the worst in the arts. There is no connection within institutions, from one department to the next let alone between different institutions and we certainly are not having any formal conversations across the sectors.

Secondly, the arts institutions within Dublin have emerged from very differing traditions and have a diversity of missions. For example, some argue their mission is technical, others vocational, others regional (or local), and others take an international perspective. The different providers in Dublin tend to have quite different underlying cultures and produce quite distinct types of graduates. Nationally there is a lot of disparity from one course to the next. While on paper there appear to be a number of courses in common, in practice the focus and intent of these courses tends to be quite different. If they are to form meaningful partnerships, higher education will need to accommodate a diversity of institutional missions and these missions will need to be clearly articulated and defined. As an immediate imperative, an internal review of specific academic offers within the institutions is needed in order to inform a coherent and inter-related system that is conducive to optimal quality, efficiency and a type of critical mass better suited to a connected and creative milieu. Currently, a number of institutions claim uniqueness whereas in reality many offer similar programmes. There has been a proliferation of similar courses being offered by different institutions. Arguably, this proliferation has reduced the focus on excellence. There is a lack of clearly defined criteria for certain courses and this limits the possibility for different institutions to work together. As one respondent noted:

We do not have a common language of experience nor do we share a common understanding of learning in the arts. We desperately need clearer levels of articulation and alliance.

Thirdly, too many partnerships are driven by individual connections (such as a direct personal connection between two people), they lack widespread influence, and they are not sustainable. There is a sense of neediness as smaller players are aligning to universities as they feel this is the only way to survive. This 'survival instinct' seems to have led to institutions 'rushing' into partnerships or aligning with multiple partners. It appears that the current perceived 'carrots and sticks' are driving the desire to collaborate more than educational possibilities. As one respondent remarked:

We need more cohesion and collaboration. There is a need for greater cohesiveness and rationalisation. Institutions will collaborate where there is a carrot. Smaller institutions will have to consolidate to promote coherence and critical mass.

There is currently a problem of scale. One way to overcome this could be to maintain the individual differences and histories of the various arts institutions but for them to become constituent colleges of a larger university organisational structure. In a constituent college model, the division of powers is balanced between the central governance structure of the university and its constituent colleges. A collegiate model gives the constituent colleges a substantial amount of responsibility and autonomy while still being structurally embedded in a larger and more cohesive overall university

structure. A 'constituent college' model enables the richness and diversity of the offers to be maintained while having a more coherent structure in which to collaborate. A 'college' model also is less likely to lead to a homogenisation of offers where the 'strongest' may dominate but rather makes synergies more meaningful. A collegiate model also lends itself to effectively maintaining and marketing particular identities while avoiding undue overlap and internal competition. Concurrently, the development of the new Grange Gorman campus would also allow DIT to consolidate its unique offer in arts and design, especially in the areas of architecture and industrial design.

More transparency is needed in terms of market-development, with institutions being required to provide more evidence of which institutions teach what before they can develop or expand existing offers. At the moment the individual strategies of the institutions are mainly based on rather vague assumptions (or even more tangential, on traditions). This kind of evidence seems to be the more relevant when it comes to closer cooperation between the institutions and the industry sector. To persuade institutions to see the vital importance of market analysis, future funding could be tied to more cross-sectorial and multi-level scrutiny.

At postgraduate level, there should be clear pathways and opportunities for students graduating from any of the proposed constituent colleges of any new colligate structure and the courses within the proposed technological university consortium to undertake bespoke and articulated programmes maximising the supervision expertise, studio and technical spaces available and cross-disciplinary connections that could exist across the entire higher education landscape in Dublin and beyond.

### **2.3.4 Partnerships internationally**

There should be a renewed national effort to enhance internationalisation of higher education, to enable outgoing student and staff mobility to better match good European and international practice and to foreground creative arts education within that national effort. All education providers and creative industries need to form external partnerships in order to ensure their sustainability. Successful partnerships are about people going out and other people coming in. As one respondent noted:

We are after all an Island and this means we know the importance of trading and new blood coming in. We have to get off the island. Export what we do and import new ideas. In the education sector internationalisation has been too much about the money and not enough about education and broadening our wings.

Higher education institutions should set out their international vision in an institutional strategy that is related to their institutional mission and to wider national policy goals. Internationalisation and global engagement needs to be considered in the widest perspective if the creative arts courses are to attract and respond to a wide range of potential students from Ireland and abroad. While the institutions responding to this review seem aware of the financial value of working with students from abroad and the journeys of alumni to take up positions abroad, there was less awareness of the importance of higher education staff-exchanges and engagement in research projects with

international partners. Any recommendation of this review must stimulate an increase in the capacity of the institutions to engage internationally.

Despite this the general view is that currently many of the international partnerships are formed on an *ad hoc* basis rather than by strategic alignment. There was also a noted tendency in the written submission to contain lists of many “partnerships”. It is doubtful with so many partnerships listed that these can be more than very superficial connections. As one institution acknowledged:

I have a drawer of MoUs. Partnerships only work where they are feasible and add value in terms of finance and learning.

## 2.4 Progression and professional development

The Irish higher education system must continue to develop clear routes of progression and transfer, as well as non-traditional entry routes. The most important recommendation regarding partnership is to improve cross-level and cross-sectorial collaboration, in particular access transfer and progression agreements. The admissions system to higher education has to provide a greater variety of flexible access routes for school leavers and those completing further education and training.

Around 10–12% of all creative arts students access higher education from further education. Excess demand for places to study over supply favours the students with leaving certificates rather than further education pathways, meaning that large numbers of further education students who would like to progress into higher education are not given that opportunity. There are few Irish formal pathways for students undertaking further education courses to progress into higher education. Many further education students need to go abroad to access higher education.

It all depends on how convincing I can be and also my personal connections I have. The response I get is usually, "There MAY be a space" but this is not a proper progression arrangement. We need a situation where the very best FE students who get the distinctions know there WILL be a place."

Our students (FE) get very upset when they go to the HE interviews. They don't even get asked what they have done in their FE courses. There is a lack of acknowledgement of learning at the FE level. Their learning is simply not being acknowledged.

The old hierarchy of levels should be dissolved. Universities cannot promote practice-based research while ignoring the contribution of practice-based learning at prior levels.

We cannot rank and distinguish between differing levels of learning and say one is better than another. We need a balance of approaches and artist should be able to move freely between levels to access the skills and knowledge they need.

There needs to be far more coherence. But to be honest, these conversations are not happening. Even the way funding and bursaries are organised stops this possibility for cross disciplinary, cross level and cross mode working. There are so many barriers. No conversations like this are happening.

We urgently need a continuum approach. This will require a whole new policy framework. This applies particularly in the arts, but perhaps if this study had been done about the STE subjects it may have found a similar finding.

The lack of progression routes is an organisational failure.

More management needs to occur to effectively provide a learning continuum. There currently is no overarching legal framework to enable formalised progression of students outside traditional, rigid frameworks. In particular there is the need for a structural approach to improving the interface between higher education and further education. One notable development is the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELs) which incorporates FETAC Common Awards System (CAS) awards with other FETAC (NCVA) awards.<sup>24</sup> The scheme provides systematic progression opportunities through the CAO for FETAC award holders at NFQ levels 5 and 6 to first year of higher education programmes. On-going and flexible development of the HELs will be necessary to ensure greater numbers of students who would like to progress into higher education make that transition.

Equally, there is a lack of connection between the school sector and either HE or FE. Schools pupils receive limited career guidance in terms of progression pathways into the creative arts. Where guidance is available, it is often disconnected from industry or outmoded. As one respondent noted:

Who is the best person to ignite a future passion in a young person? Probably someone who is already madly passionate about a particular art form. Need multiple pathways for students with recognition of a range of learning. The problem with this to date is that progression pathways have not been articulated and so now there has to be attempts to 'retro fit' courses to possible pathways.

Arguably, there are also too few progression routes into employment or job-creation as industry-level skills audits have only been undertaken in a few rare examples; and there is a general lack of entrepreneurship education. Irish higher education institutions should review and reform their first-year curricula. While the first-year curriculum should continue to provide foundational subject material to be built on in later years, it must do more than that. It should serve as "a foundation of learning activities entailing more inquiry-based formats and engendering employability and lifelong learning outcomes".

Higher education institutions need to more effectively respond to the continuing professional development needs of the wider creative arts community to develop and deliver appropriate modules and programmes in a flexible and responsive way.

#### **2.4.1 Apprenticeships**

There are currently no apprenticeships or similar work-based learning provisions in place for the creative industries. As summarised by one respondent:

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<sup>24</sup> Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), Higher Education Links Scheme (HELs), [www.fetac.ie/fetac/learners/hels/hels.htm](http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/learners/hels/hels.htm)

The system is effectively broken. There are no opportunities for apprenticeships in the arts and cultural areas. We are missing a huge opportunity here to harness the potential of practice based learning. We need to look at apprenticeships in a whole new light - from an entirely different perspective.

It would be highly desirable for there to be better access routes into the creative industries. This could be achieved through apprenticeship type models but the current model of apprenticeships in Ireland would need to be totally redesigned.

In the immediate future, as the *National Strategy for Higher Education* recommends, undergraduate students should be encouraged to spend some time in a work or service situation, and such work should be formally acknowledged through accreditation.

#### 2.4.2 Further Education

As outlined in the introduction to section 2.4, there is an urgent need to remove the separation (some would say barriers) between levels of learning. Currently there is only limited connection between the further education sector and the higher education sectors. Much of the learning that is completed within further education is not accredited within the Irish system nor is immediately recognised for the purpose of direct articulated access to Irish HE. As a result many FE students receive their award accreditation from British and other institutions. Participants in this review have noted, “We need all Irish qualifications. Currently a number of FE students have to have their qualifications recognised by British or other universities.” There is considerable scope for more collaboration between higher and further education. A tiered relationship and multiple entry points promotes lifelong learning and builds the kind of strategic relationships that support both further and higher education provisions (including the institutes of technology)

Discussions with review participants also suggested that industry links tend to be stronger in the further education sector. For example, further education is more solidly represented than higher education on industry-level boards. Around half of the graduates from further education programmes go directly into employment. Demand is extremely high within further education. As one respondent remarked:

Student numbers are capped in FE but we regularly take over the cap because of very strong student demand and because we provide something for students who would otherwise miss out.

Two further education colleges in the Dublin region have developed substantial media-oriented, creative arts offerings with alternative progression routes to degree level. They are Ballyfermot College of Further Education (BCFE) and Coláiste Dhulaigh (CDCFE).

BCFE pioneered animation education and training in the mid-1980s in response to a demand for animators created by the location in Dublin at the time of Don Bluth Studios. The ultimate demise of the Don Bluth enterprise opened the way for the growth of an Irish animation sector and the emergence of many successful companies, some of significant scale. BCFE offers a range of programmes, predominantly at NFQ levels 5 and 6. The Diploma programmes offered have to be

accredited under the BTEC UK system. BCFE has managed to negotiate an arrangement with the University of Dundee, under which students can advance to a BA (Hons) in Animation.

Coláiste Dhulaigh (CDCFE) offers programmes leading to a mix of Irish and UK qualifications. A three-year programme in Communication and Media Production leads to a HND award with the option of progression to the final year of the BA (Hons) Media, at the University of Wolverhampton or to the University of Central Lancashire.

In summary, the further education sector, and BCFE and CDCFE in particular, are significant players in creative arts and media education, but the implementation of articulation arrangements with Irish higher education institutions remains an obstacle, resulting in the development by the further education colleges of links outside of Ireland in order to meet the expectations of their students and of industry.

### 2.4.3 Graduates

The drive for university status seems to be strong. As one respondent remarked, "everyone wants to be a university" and:

The term university brings with it status. Just the word university makes a difference.

There was a general view expressed—though not substantiated by data—that being a university increases institutional status and promotes student-demand. Some respondents argued that this drive for university status may be even stronger within the creative arts sector as they strive to be recognised. As one respondent remarked, "art and design has always been vocational."

The demand for postgraduate arts students is insufficient to support a proliferation of courses at this level. Based on seed-funding received, there has been a move to a more coherent and consolidated graduate programme provision through the initiative known as GradCAM. GradCAM is a national (all-island) collaborative initiative made up of DIT, NCAD, the University of Ulster (UU), and IADT. Its aim is to provide a shared postgraduate space, but to date the results of this initiative have been limited. While designed to primarily serve the needs of postgraduate arts provisions, it was argued by respondents in the review that there is an absence of artists in its structure. As one respondent noted of the postgraduate provisions in the creative arts, "there is a glaring lack of professional development opportunities". Despite the perceived need for the on-going professional development of graduate creative artists, consolidated provisions appear to be still under development.

The Cultural Odyssey Project (with a working title of U-Versity) has its origin in a proposal made to Government in the context of the Global Irish Economic Forum in 2009. The U-Versity provides one model of university collaboration. Rather than establishing a new educational institution, the concept for U-Versity is to bring together existing educational, cultural and performance based institutions and organisations. U-Versity seeks to be a new cross-institutional instrument to harness the strengths and offerings provided by a number of HE partners. Progress to date has been quite slow. It has taken more than three years to get institutions to sign up. The view was also expressed that some of the HE partners have been reluctant to join. Other institutions that have joined up may have done so for financial rather than educational reasons. "Many sign up because they feel there will be money in it!"

Although U-Versity was intended to be cutting-edge, a number of questions remain about accreditation and student support. It is argued that U-Versity will focus on "subjects where we feel Ireland can legitimately claim expertise" though this has not been clearly defined. U-Versity claims that it is a model that can potentially be inclusive of access to all institutions including smaller private providers. The management structure will be a Board comprising representatives from the member organisations. Currently it is proposed to have around 20 Board members.

The U-Versity claims that 'you' the individual student will be put at the centre and able to develop a bespoke programme. Modelled to some extent on MBA style offers, the Masters in Creative Process will be a one year Master programme enabling students to choose subjects and courses of study from a range of institutions and then combine these via a major project of thesis into a coherent degree. Such a programme will be quite costly with fees around €15,000 per student. Based on the concept of learner navigation, each student will have a mentor who will work alongside the student to create a bespoke programme from an open curriculum range. The programme only has to be coherent to the individual. Bi-lateral service level agreements bind the various providers to the scheme. Courses will be selected from NFQ level 9 programmes in the member institutions. It is likely that it could be global with courses being able to be selected from a range of international providers. The promoters behind this new initiative feel there is likely to be strong international demand, especially from the USA.

Whether U-Versity or GradCAM are ultimately successful initiatives, the basic premise on their formation remains the same. Ireland is a very small postgraduate creative arts market. To ensure a critical mass and excellence in terms of student experience and reputation, it is essential that at the postgraduate level there is consolidation not just in Dublin, but nationally and perhaps even internationally. It is possible for very small "boutique" postgraduate courses to gain international reputations, but to be successful as a small institution at the postgraduate level, you need to be highly selective in terms of acceptance of students and recognised in a particular creative field as being of outstanding and notable quality. The danger though of a consolidated approach to postgraduate offerings in the arts is that this might remove active research and inquiry from the gaze of undergraduate students, thus reducing the opportunities for research to inform and invigorate undergraduate programmes.

#### 2.4.4 Research

Generally, research activity in Irish higher education is likely to increase.<sup>25</sup> Irish government policy remains committed to research and development, with the ultimate goal of growing a "smart economy" to provide employment and careers in a country with the youngest demographic in Europe. According to the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*, the roles of teaching and research should be afforded parity of esteem. This should be reflected in resource allocation, in promotion criteria, and in the metrics used to assess performance at the individual, institution and system-level. Concurrent with an overall reduction in expenditure on higher education, investment in research and development is likely to be increasingly focused on areas that are considered to link directly to current and likely future economic and societal needs. The National Research Prioritisation Exercise has suggested a need to leverage what has been built to date by targeting

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<sup>25</sup> In line with the recommendations of the Innovation Taskforce report, for the 2014-2020 period

future public investment towards research based on potential for economic return, particularly in the form of jobs.<sup>26</sup>

Public research funding for research in, or involving, the creative arts should also be prioritised and better coordinated and underpinned by effective foresight, review and performance measurement systems. According to the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*:

The objective is to make Ireland an innovation and commercialisation hub in Europe—a country that combines the features of an attractive home for innovative R&D-intensive multinationals while also being a highly-attractive incubation environment for the best entrepreneurs in Europe and beyond.<sup>27</sup>

While there appears to be a general focus on positive development in relation to research, it is less clear how this will accommodate the needs of research in the creative arts. National priority-setting exercises have not favoured the arts. In all institutions included in the review, research incomes attracted to the creative areas and international research links are quite small, despite rhetoric to the contrary. It is challenging to show that research funding in the arts has resulted in economic and social return. As a result, very little research funding goes into 'circle one' creative arts activity or practice-based research in the arts. The Arts Council does not allocate funds to research.

Postgraduate research in the arts is falling into a hole as there is no one on the humanities research council with a focus on the arts and the organisations funding the arts such as the Arts Council do not fund research.

It is understood that the recently formed Irish Research Council will address the question of funding for the creative arts. The report *Playing to Our Strengths: The Role of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Implications For Public Policy* recommends that "[t]he Arts Council and the IRCHSS should meet under the aegis of the HEA with a view to identifying a menu of initiatives to fund research in the creative arts and whether by joint-funding or concentration on a single agency, publish conclusions for take-up in the academic year 2011-12" (p 63).<sup>28</sup>

The success of research funding in the creative arts is largely judged on the quality of the outcomes and impact of that research. Outputs in creative arts research must be of international standard. Consequently, creative arts researchers in Ireland should be connected with leading researchers internationally. To achieve quality and recognition, researchers in the creative arts may need a wider focus and support to encourage mobility. Irish creative arts research needs a broad base of scholarship across a wide range of arts disciplines.

It was stated during the course of the review that, "the first practice-based Ph.D. to be awarded in London was to an Irish man". Despite this claim, practice-based research remains under-represented and under-developed. While practice-based research was often referred to in written and oral submissions, there was not a shared view of what this meant. The providers of art courses which are

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<sup>26</sup> Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (2012), Report of the Research Prioritisation Steering Group.

<sup>27</sup> Department of Education and Skills, *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (Dublin: DES, 2011), pg. 32.

<sup>28</sup> The newly formed (reconstituted) research council ([www.research.ie](http://www.research.ie)) has been given the Arts mandate too (much like the AHRC in England).

perceived as being “part of a university” claim they have practice-based research and yet they have only limited industry-engagement. On the other hand, the institutes of technology and the further education colleges, have closer links doing “real”, practice-based research with industry. These graduates go straight into jobs as already they are practice-based inquirers. As one review respondent cautioned:

Some of the institutes and FE providers fear that they will actually lose practice-based research and partnerships if they join a university. Industry engagement needs to be preserved.

Where the industry links are strong, funding has been able to be obtained from third-sector sources to develop applied research solutions for local businesses and SMEs. Knowledge-transfer activities appear to be more effectively embedded and rewarded accordingly where there are regular and strong links with industry partners.

Conversely, some university aligned creative arts education provisions felt that arts research needs to be undertaken for its own sake, and should not have to rely on industry links or economic impact to be supported and funded. In some instances, a gulf was seen to exist between applied and “pure” research in the creative arts, as the following quote from higher education suggests:

Arts education is as much about developing the intellectual side as the practical side. Arts education should not be vocational education.

One of the professional associations felt that “applied” and “fine arts” did not even belong together, remarking:

Decorative and fine arts do not belong together. You cannot study fine arts without studying politics.

The research potential apparent from collaborations between cultural and educational institutions appears to be largely untapped as a research resource. Partnerships between cultural institutions and educational partners provide opportunities to combine field-based research and development around the wealth of heritage resources available in Dublin. Closer working of education and culture could provide a chance for a ‘win-win’ situation.

## **2.5 Flexibility, diversity and innovation**

Delivery of higher education in Ireland must be characterised by flexibility. Higher education itself will need to innovate and develop if it is to provide flexible opportunities for larger and more diverse student cohorts. The nature of the learning community and the modes of teaching and learning are likely to change significantly over the coming years. These changes will be supported through innovative approaches to research-led learning, programme design, student assessment and a quality assurance system—all of which will emphasise nurturing creative and innovative minds.

The general view of the respondents interviewed was that they were going to need to be able to “do more with less”. As one respondent remarked:

We will need to be flexible and innovative if we are to continue to deliver the services and supports that are expected by our customers. We need to develop, to adapt and to be dynamic.

This is likely to lead to a growing emphasis on flexible learning. In the creative arts, this implies more than just 'online' modules!

Arts education is at the heart of innovation. Innovation is like an onion. As you peel through all the layers eventually you find at the centre arts education. It is not possible to have the outer layers without the centre.

It is likely that more open-ended "teaching-term" and "teaching-day" arrangements could be enacted. Flexibility of timetables, course offerings and progression routes are likely to proliferate as student numbers grow, funding is reduced and students' needs change. Working with industry and creative outreach activities provide the context for undergraduate and postgraduate students to gain the generic skills required for effective engagement in society and in the workplace. Engagement is a valuable end in itself, but it also provides students real life experiences and the opportunity to develop their professional practice. There is also an issue in respect of whether three-year courses are preferable to four-year courses. The four-year-course model is very expensive in terms of the direct-costs of educational provision, and in terms of the income forgone by students. Consideration should therefore be given to whether current courses can be consolidated into a three-year model.

## 2.6 Accessibility

Generally within higher education in the Dublin region, there is an increasing focus on local-level communication and engagement. Higher education institutions should have open engagement with their community and wider society and this should infuse every aspect of their mission. The various educational institutions participating in this review are to differing degrees immersed in the vibrant arts *milieu* of the Dublin region and are engaged with the cultural life of the city and with its cultural institutions (museums, galleries and contemporary art spaces), theatres, the arts offices of the City Council and county councils, festivals and community arts groups. They are also engaged with State agencies including the Arts Council, Culture Ireland, the Irish Film Board, Music Network and Enterprise Ireland. The dialogue with the arts sector and to the wider public appears to be firmly established and offer mutual benefit.

The creative arts have a special capacity to "reach out" to the community. If actively extending activity beyond the confines of the education system, students studying in the creative arts can provide a lively resource for building the cultural tapestry of a local area. This is already evident to some extent in the Dublin area where 'creative precincts' are developing around cultural infrastructure and creative arts education facilities. Arts markets, street performers, retail opportunities and the entertainment industries amongst others are clustering and interacting. This organic development of creative spaces is adding to the richness and appeal of Dublin as a hub for creative industries.

The further education colleges, institutes of technology and the universities offering creative arts courses are adding positively to this “creative spreading”. There is an open and enthusiastic attitude towards community outreach: as one respondent remarked, “we try to have very permeable boundaries between the institution and the local community”. Many of the creative arts education providers have put in place structures and procedures that welcome and encourage the involvement of the wider community in a range of activities. While this outreach is a Government target, the enthusiasm for promoting public access, participation, and engagement in the arts seems to be extensive and driven by a deep desire for local connections rather than financial or other gain. Engagement with the wider community appears to be firmly embedded in the mission of higher education institutions with a focus on the creative arts. Engagement with local authorities in relation to arts provision within their areas seems to be well-developed. In part, this is due to cultural rather than educational policies. The Arts Council has effectively nurtured a dialogue that respects the local context and distinctive concerns of local authorities while maintaining an overview of national arts development.

## 2.7 Staff

In the context of progressively reducing the reliance of higher education on Exchequer support, individual institutions might be expected to progressively take on greater responsibility for key human resource functions. This could include a greater flexibility for institutions to establish their own remuneration terms, providing appropriate safeguards are in place in relation to the overall use of public funds. This will mean that current employment contracts for academic staff are likely to be reviewed and as part of such a national review, a particular contract suitable to sessional staff from industry or practice could also be considered. Despite the perception that further education or technology institute teachers are less qualified or educated than their university colleagues, in terms of the creative arts subjects this does not appear to be the reality. In fact many of the teachers in further education have higher qualifications than those working in the university-sector. For example 70–80% of teachers in further education in the arts areas have a Master’s or higher degree, with 6% holding Ph.D.s. Moreover all teachers in further education have a teaching qualification. Many teachers in the further education and technology sectors work in a job share arrangement — balancing high-level industry experience with their teaching.

Yet arguably, there is a lack of recognition of these qualifications or experiences. For example, the pay scales are not calibrated to recognise higher qualifications and there is a lack of a possibility for mobility of staff between sectors. There is no encouragement in the form of grants or professional development programmes to encourage staff to gain higher qualifications. Research is not funded at the FE level and accounts for only a small per cent of funding at the technology institute level. Greater mobility of staff should be facilitated between higher education on the one hand and enterprise and the public service on the other. This flexibility of staff terms and conditions could act as a lever to promote knowledge transfer between various sectors for the benefit of society and the economy.

The current employment contracts for higher education teaching staff should be reviewed with a view to recognising artistic production and practice-based inquiry; community engagement; professional partnerships; reputation and standing; impact and teaching expertise. It is not sufficient for academics to be experts in their disciplinary area. They also need to exemplify

innovative, and research-led approaches to learning and the capacity engage with students and the wider society.

## 2.8 Student voice

There seemed to be a lack of structures for involving the student's voice in decision-making in relation to creative arts courses. According to the *National Strategy for Higher Education*, every higher education institution should put in place a comprehensive anonymous student-feedback system. In both written and oral submissions for this review of creative arts provisions, scant mention was made of the perspective of the students in terms of the forward plans being outlined. Currently 45% of all students are in universities, 31% are in the institutes of technology, 4% in the education/other colleges and 19% in the FE sector.<sup>29</sup> There has been an increased demand for students undertaking studies at NFQ levels 8 and 9 and a slight decline in study at NFQ levels 6 and 7. There is a lack of research as to why students might choose a further education college or an institute over a university or *vice versa*. Anecdotally, much appears to depend on "local knowledge" of a particular course or lecturer. The view was expressed that further education colleges tend to "put students at the core" while demand is high to get a place in university and students are generally excited about attending university.

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<sup>29</sup> Department of Education and Skills, Key Statistics on the Department's Customers 2010/11, <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Key-Statistics-2010-2011-Pamphlet.pdf>

## Chapter 3: Looking to the future

### 3.1 Introduction

The invitation to conduct this review is reflective of the decision of the HEA and the higher education institutions to give priority to effective future directions for creative arts education. Throughout the review, the respondents at all levels have been welcoming and honest. It is hoped that this review presents an authentic picture of these voices and that as it is read, creative arts education colleagues can feel a strong affinity with the strengths, challenges and recommendations being highlighted.

Implementation is the process of turning policy into practice. However, it is common to observe a gap between what was planned and what actually occurred as a result of a policy. The following chapter both states the recommendations and examines some of the blockages that could potentially prevent the recommendations being implemented

### 3.2 Impediments and blockages

Currently there are a number of blockages in the system especially in terms of pathways. The system could be strengthened by more partnership working across various levels (i.e. school to further education to institutes of technology, to universities and other providers). There is a need for solid partnerships to be formed with the cultural and creative industries. Moreover there is a need for course significant consolidation at the postgraduate level. There are a number of systemic blockages that prevent this happening and would need to be addressed if the recommendations from this review are to be successfully implemented.

Much of the current discussion of collaboration and consolidation remains just that, discussion. The current stratified system focuses on the courses and the institutions rather than on the learner. While it is a recommendation of this report that there are clearer pathways in arts learning and greater consolidation of postgraduate arts courses, these should not be viewed as recommendations that suit the institutions, but rather as sensible approaches for increasing the chance of high quality learning for students. A far stronger framework is needed to support institution(s) in developing a student focused, engaged strategy. It is imperative that the institutions share more information with each other, and in so doing develop a clearer sense of where there are duplications and also where there are synergies. Although the documentation that committee members received indicates a strong desire to work with the creative industries, there was little in the way of hard-evidence in the teaching or in the courses to suggest that entrepreneurial training, for example, is taking place. Institutions that teach in the creative arts need to develop clear pathways from their subject-matter to identifiable outcomes, while also maintaining the core of a strong education in the humanities. Industry needs to have a voice at the table, while also respecting academic freedom.

#### 3.2.1 Creative arts learning is a continuum but...

It is important that all levels of higher education do not educate for now. Education has to be about educating for the future. Education systems have to educate for future jobs that do not currently exist. Very few of the institutions appear to have grappled with that question. Similarly, there is a need to put the learner first and while there are some institutions that reference learner-centric

approaches, many of the courses do not suggest either in organisation or goals that there is an in depth understanding of the challenges of pushing towards learners as the priority.

There has been inadequate acknowledgement of the needs for arts learning to build upon the learning that has occurred before it. Excellence in the creative arts is only achieved through a continued process of consolidation of concepts and skills and by revisiting past learning with greater levels of analysis and reflection. With a focus on the learner, it is difficult to see how even the most ambitious higher education programme can compensate for the gaps in arts education in school for children. This, coupled with inadequate inclusion of out-of-school arts provisions for children and young people mean that the learner's journey on the continuum is already behind that of their counterparts in the U.K., Europe and internationally. As a result, considerable "back-filling" is needed at each level of courses to make up for key learning not included in the preceding level. Much of the documentation that was received as part of this review did not acknowledge this challenge. The recommendations of the teacher education review and the proposed changes to the junior cycle will need to be fully accepted and implemented by both the State and higher education institutions if this challenge is to be properly addressed.

Once leaving school, there is a lack of articulation of progression pathways combined with an overall shortage of places at higher levels combined with a heightened demand for places. It is highly likely that even if students want to move onto further study there will be no places available. This lack of progression routes is exacerbated by a pronounced hiatus in provision between NFQ levels 5 and 6 meaning that many 18–23 year old students fall into a funding and provision "gap". There is inadequate focus on qualifications with clear learning outcomes.

Instead, there has been a historical focus on courses and institutions rather than the learner. This has led to a lack of clear connection between qualifications. Students and institutions often have to go abroad to receive validation of Irish further and practice-based qualifications. The outcomes of further education are not fully understood and there is an institutional bias towards higher education. This is particularly problematic in the creative arts in Dublin where there is a level of innate prioritisation and separation in the system between the perceived "fine arts" and applied arts and crafts. Under contemporary and inclusive definitions of the arts, the high and low arts should not be viewed as opposites or even as a continuum, but rather as a transformation of contemporary practice. Despite the realities of contemporary arts practice, and the popularity and employment success of practice-based and industry-linked courses, there is a striving amongst the practice-based institutions and courses, to become more theoretical with "research-orientated" university-level courses, rather than maintaining and expanding differentiated pathways and a unified administrative structure.

The current incentives to consolidate, have led to a scramble of institutions trying to align to university partners, regardless of the impact on students and there is a sense of those who join universities wanting to "pull up the ladder" and disconnect further from the institutions or practices that seem to align them with the lower level they have just 'fled' from. This has supported and reinforced a hierarchical approach, which neither serves the learner nor the system as a whole.

Progressing into in the creative arts is not always easy. As institutions become more aligned to academia, their connections with industry are becoming more tenuous. Within institutes and

universities, the part-time “teaching” hours have been reduced and consolidated into a shrinking number of full-time positions. One of the results of this pattern has been that practicing artists are no longer coming in and teaching students. In further education there is still a stronger presence of part-time staff who are artists and practitioners teaching students.

Economic circumstance have seen a reduction in teacher numbers at second level which has required that career guidance provision be managed by schools from within their standard staffing allocation. Increasingly schools have to balance guidance needs with the pressures to provide subject choice. In the past career guidance services tended to not have extensive experience of advising students seeking creative or cultural careers. There are limited possibilities for those young people wanting to move into the profession in other ways. For example, the out-dated Irish apprenticeship model fails to recognise the value of practice-based and studio-based learning in the creative industries. To develop industry links, institutions in both educational and culture need to be more outward-looking. This includes aiming at a greater breadth of potential connections. Cutting-edge practice in the creative arts and many other fields is about bringing together projects that forge unusual connections. The creative arts can make a considerable contribution to areas such as mathematics and science, but these areas have also much to give to innovative arts practice. Internships and co-op arrangements are among the most effective ways in which to give learners the opportunity to experience not only the work world, but also potentially the professions that may enter.

Currently, too many of the existing partnerships or proposed collaborations are idiosyncratic and are not systematic. The quality and success of partnerships is reliant on the approach, expertise and reputation of individual academics. Similarly, much of the image and success of particular arts providers is due to key personnel. Individuals tend to dictate the way a particular institution or course will go. Such a ‘personality driven’ model is less sustainable and tends to be time and place limited.

### **3.2.3 Small is not always beautiful ...**

Scale is currently a limiting factor for many institutions. While ‘boutique’ arts colleges, especially in the private sector, may fill the need for niche provisions, the overall demand for creative arts courses significantly outstrips the supply of places. There is a scarcity of places and very few courses have the capacity to take more students. This is problematic if the size of the local creative industries sector grows or if the international reputation for arts training in Dublin were to grow. In either scenario, it seems it would be almost impossible to be able to quickly scale course offerings to meet levels of demand.

Currently, there is insufficient consideration of future demand in the creative area. Demand has been driven by pupil preferences not by a needs analysis or future knowledge development in the sector. Given the high level of demand, the other response could be to open the doors to “all comers” and this could impact negatively on the quality of a programme or international respect for the sector in Ireland. Irish creative arts have a well-earned reputation and cultural tourism is a distinct part of the Irish offer. Lack of robust quality assurance could result in an adverse impact on the “Irish” brand. It is important that individual and systemic excellence is recognised and promoted. This means more recognition of the uniqueness of programme offerings, a more visible way in which

these could be connected, and a deeper commitment from the higher education institutions to openly collaborate with each other. Staff to staff communication could be part of this, but leadership from the institutions needs to come from the top as well as from the community of teachers in each institution. The culture of the individual institutions needs to change, to more properly reflect a clear prioritisation of collaborative models both within and outside of individual schools.

### **3.2.3 But we don't have the people and the money...**

Higher education funding practices have been a barrier to more collaboration. Change and innovation will need to occur in a time when resources for risk-taking will be scarce. Even during the "times of plenty" it appears that education has not been particularly responsive to innovations. Rigid structures surrounding staffing formulas, contact-hours for teaching staff, salary scales and timetables and pay and conditions for staff significantly hamper the possibilities for fostering a continuum between further education providers, institutes of technology and universities, and significantly reduce the likelihood of collaborations.

Much more creative thinking and modelling needs to be applied to the synergies among institutions and this would require more knowledge exchange, and willingness to give and take. Most of the institutions are too protective of their particular orientation and place. For example, there is no clearly articulated relationship among the institutions offering the creative arts. There is even less evidence of sharing in research, both applied and pure. Money could be saved by joint development of online subjects, which would leverage aging facilities and expand institutional reach. The creative arts are engines of innovation, but there is little evidence that the intellectual property being produced both by students and staff is being properly evaluated or used to seek funding opportunities. In those cases where joint programs are being developed, there has been a tendency to preserve enough autonomy so as not to really attack the challenges of collaboration. A small institution becoming a school of a larger one is only a solution if both substantively change to accommodate new models of learning and education. The creation of larger and larger institutions is consolidation in name only. Consolidation can only be achieved through the setting of goals that drive towards integration otherwise economies of scale will not encourage real change.

## **3.3 Recommendations**

### **1) Greater focus of learning rather than on courses**

- Identify learner interests and needs with a view to improving the quality and relevance of courses.

### **2) Robust quality assurance and accountability**

- Funding and operational autonomy must be matched by corresponding levels of accountability for quality;
- More attention has to be given to quality assurance and impact measurement;
- The quality of teaching, scholarship and external engagement of academic staff must be continuously reviewed in all institutions as part of a robust performance management framework that supports partnership-working.

### **3) Remove the separation between the various tiers (levels) of the system**

- Immediately Improve cross-level and cross-sectorial collaboration, in particular formalise access transfer and progression agreements;
- It should be considered whether current courses could be consolidated into a three-year model;
- Better information and communication is a prerequisite for realising more permeability of the progression pathways;
- More transparency is needed in terms of market-development, with institutions being required to provide more evidence of which institutions teach what before they can develop or expand existing offers;
- Need for greater coherence of offers if Irish education is going to market internationally and successfully.

### **4) Greater coherence and consolidation in creative arts offers**

- Investigate enhanced scale of creative arts provision through the development of a collegiate university model where high-quality, smaller institutions could become constituent colleges of a university.
- Eliminate the duplication and fill in the gaps in postgraduate provision to ensure a continuum of learning—within one university, or at least within one strategic and shared framework.
- There are a large number of institutions in the Dublin area offering creative arts. If that is to continue, institutions must carefully examine their programme offerings, avoid duplication and develop synergies among staff.
- Consolidate postgraduate provision so that it retains diversity and develops a lively intellectual milieu both within the arts and across disciplines.
- Research both as an enterprise and activity needs to be visible and available for sharing and integration.

### **5) Removing the barriers that prevent flexibility**

- Greater mobility of staff should be facilitated between the various levels of education on the one hand and enterprise and the public service on the other, to promote knowledge-transfer and to capitalise on the expertise within higher education for the benefit of society and the economy;
- Tailored incentives should be provided within HEA to stimulate the production of a more concrete "we" (not just partnerships with two or three partners but among the majority of the institutions).

### **6) Better partnerships with industry**

- Conduct more robust workforce and employability analyses to determine the extent and nature of jobs that are available both in the present and with an eye to the future;

- Collaborations with industry should be required and institutions should be asked to set up offices and assign staff to the task of building integrated approaches to learning within the creative industries;
- Identify skills shortages that need to be addressed;
- More strategic partnerships need to be developed with business and the cultural industries including pedagogical/industrial connections;
- Develop apprenticeships or similar work-based learning provisions in place for the creative industries;
- Universities and institutes of technology should provide development in marketing and business acumen;
- More higher education funding for arts research should come from industry.

### 3.4 Implementation and limitations

Governance structures will need to be reformed at both institutional and system levels to enable the implementation of the recommendations of this review. Establishment of implementation structures and delineation of delivery mechanisms is beyond the scope of this review. The creative arts can be a particularly challenging area for policy implementation as the remit can fall under (and arguably between) a number of ministerial portfolios. While the focus of this report has been on higher education provision, the recommendations of this report need to be shared with schools, business and industry, tourism and leisure, culture, communication, technology and language departments. Successful implementation is likely to depend on cohesive and focused “whole-of-government approach” to enable “opportunities for the added value, educational and financial, and the creative synergies that can be achieved from greater levels of collaboration and consolidation in the creative arts”. Similarly, agencies and the private-sector need to interact with the recommendation in this review. It is suggested by the review committee that the HEA convene such meetings to action the recommendations.

Higher education institutions will need to develop monitoring and review mechanisms to ensure the quality and refinement of implementation. For future research, trend data is needed in the creative arts and in patterns of student choices and employment need over a number of years. More robust data collection should enable a deepening understanding of the economic, social and cultural impact of any changes in creative arts provisions within higher education.

### 3.5 Conclusions

Ireland has been very innovative and there is need to build on this success. It is about refining and consolidating existing provision in Irish higher education within the creative arts to maximum strategic advantage. While this study has focused on issues in Dublin, it must be remembered that Dublin sits within a national and increasingly global context. It is not possible to consider higher education reform without thinking of this wider arena in which it will operate.

State investment in higher education must be allocated in a way that promotes sustainable growth. Sustainability will result a greater concentration of resources and targeted investment in areas of strength and excellence. This does not mean a reduction in the flexibility and diversity of provision.

On the contrary, the creative arts thrives where there is a dynamic interchange and accessible pathways.

While partnerships have been formed and do exist, these need to be more focused on the learner rather than being provider-driven. Partnerships have largely been formed on the basis of personal connection, but for these to be sustainable structural solutions need to be developed. This should not imply rigid and impermeable boundaries, rather it is likely that responsive, dynamic and flexible arrangements will ultimately provide the most sustainable model. The arts do not thrive where there is over regulation and homogeneity of provision. Diversity and milieu are the fuel for creativity. This means that institutions need to be more outward facing and responsive. A range of providers can provide multiple pathways and routes of progression for students but unnecessary overlaps and obvious gaps in provision need to be addressed if Dublin is to achieve the highest quality.

Ireland will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2013. This may provide the impetus to developing local, regional and international collaborations as the key to an innovative higher education system that promotes creative and cultural development.

## Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference

### Higher Education Provision in the Creative Arts and Media in the Dublin Region

#### A review by the Higher Education Authority at the request of the Minister for Education and Skills

##### Context

There are four universities (TCD, UCD, DCU and NUIM), four institutes of technology (DIT, IADT, ITB and ITT Dublin), a specialist art college (NCAD) and the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) in the Dublin area. This number does not include the private providers, the teacher education colleges or the post-leaving certificate sector, and the proposed new U-iversity initiative. Many of these providers have long established and internationally renowned reputations for excellence in teaching and research and most, to a greater or lesser extent, offer programmes in or related to the creative arts and media disciplines. Over the past ten years, the Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PRTL), the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) and national policy more generally has encouraged greater coordination of education and research provision locally and nationally and enhanced inter-institutional collaboration. More recently, the publication of a *National Strategy for Higher Education in Ireland* has identified the need for globally-oriented and internationally competitive higher education institutions with better coherence, greater complementarity and stronger operational efficiency during a time of increased demand and contracting resources. The *Strategy* acknowledges that the arts, humanities and social sciences have consistently attracted the largest numbers of students, and that Ireland has made a real global impact in these areas. It is therefore timely to look at higher education provision in the creative arts domain, to consider if Ireland's needs and the realisation of opportunities, both nationally and internationally, are being best served by current institutional arrangements and configurations. In particular the extent and range of provision in the Dublin region raise issues of effectiveness and value for the public investment made, as well as issues relating to the scope for greater impact from the combined provision regionally, nationally and internationally. Institutions and providers to be included in the review are those in the Dublin region currently engaged in undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral and postdoctoral study in the multiple fields of the creative arts and applied cultural practices. These fields include, but may not be limited to:

- Visual arts: including fine art, decorative arts;
- Film & media: including broadcasting and animation;
- Design: including fashion, craft, architecture, built environment, spatial, product, fashion and graphic design, design for stage and screen;
- Performing arts: including acting, dance, drama, music;
- Literature and languages; including creative writing, cultural criticism;
- Creative technologies: including communication technologies, gaming and applied technical arts;
- Cultural and heritage: including curation, tourism, arts management, culinary arts and enterprise.

##### Terms of reference

Having regard to national needs and international 'best practice' models, conduct a study of creative arts and media education and research in the Dublin region to identify opportunities for the added value, educational

and financial, and the creative synergies that can be achieved from greater levels of collaboration and consolidation.

In particular the review will:

- Provide an overview of the position of creative arts and media education and research in the region so as to better understand and communicate what is being done in creative arts education and research and how and where it is being done.
- Having regard to the over-riding requirement of ensuring the quality of creative arts and media education and research in the higher education sector, to review the coherence of provision and advise on the most appropriate configuration for the effective delivery of world-leading teaching, learning and research in Dublin, including the structures necessary to take advantage of potentialities, address challenges and enhance Ireland's position globally.

In carrying out the review the group should also consider –

1. the emergence of practice-based arts education and its contribution to the development of expertise within education and more broadly in the creative/cultural industry sector;
2. the scope for greater collaboration between further and higher education providers of creative arts education, including the development of strategic partnerships for joint delivery of programmes and the creation of specialised hubs of excellence;
3. the contribution by the arts and creativity to communities, social cohesion and cultural understanding, and
4. how Ireland and Irish higher education can benefit from the reputation of the achievements of Irish people in literature, music, and the arts.

It is intended that this review will be carried out over a four-month period by an expert group of no more than three members supported by the executive of the HEA. In carrying out its work, the group will be informed by a background report on current provision as well as earlier publications and studies including the *National Strategy for Higher Education in Ireland* and *Playing to Our Strengths: The Role of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Implications for Public Policy*, and *Assessment of the Economic Impact of the Arts in Ireland*.

## **Appendix 2 – Review Panel Members**

### **Higher Education Provision in the Creative Arts and Media in the Dublin Region - Review Panel**

Professor Anne Bamford, Chair, Emeritus Director of the Engine Room at Wimbledon College of Art

Dr. Ron Burnett, President of Emily Carr University, Vancouver

Professor Ruth Towse, Emeritus Professor of Economics of Creative Industries, Bournemouth University Business School

Dr. Michael Wimmer, EDUCULT, Institute for Cultural Policy and Cultural Management, Austria

### **Secretariat**

Tim Conlon, HEA Executive

### **Additional support and input**

Dr. Jim Devine, Former President, Institute of Art & Design, Dún Laoghaire

Ms. Jennifer Maguire, Statistics Section, Higher Education Authority

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