National College of Art and Design (NCAD)

Strategic Dialogue Cycle 3: reflections on performance

Overview

The National College of Art and Design (NCAD) has provided a clear self-evaluation report providing an update on all interim 2015 targets, as requested. The report is completed in full, colour-coded and the College reports on its objectives in a new compact format. The College is making progress and provides context on areas where it sees performance as behind trajectory. Three original objectives have been suspended to facilitate prioritisation of core activities in NCAD. While many sections are complete or on target, a number are not or have been revised, and these are noted below.

Some particular strengths of the current self-evaluation were:

- NCAD have made full or partial progress in all domains of the self-evaluation report. The College indicates that 17 of the 22 revised compact objectives are status green, 5 are reported to be amber or making adequate progress. NCAD are mindful of the aspects of their performance which were not meeting the objectives in the original compact.

- Concentration on a three-year primary degree (first graduates in June 2016) and focus on postgraduate MA and PhD offerings. This fulfils the 3+2+3 strategy adopted by the College in 2008.

- The engagement performance is very strong; NCAD has doubled its number of partners; it would be good to hear of how NCAD plans to further leverage this performance (T&L, Cluster, Research).

The self-evaluation does raise the following issues for further discussion:

- The future direction of the relationship between NCAD and UCD as restated in a report published in March 2016 (*NCAD + UCD Alliance*) – the report identifies potential areas for future cooperation and ten recommendations are made, six of which are being implemented in 2016 and four in 2017.

- Overall, the revised NCAD compact and progress report are more focused and strategic than in previous years. Each objective has a stated person who is accountable for delivery. While most targets and objectives are clear, focused and progressing well, others have been suspended or need further discussion. Some are noted in the sections below; some specific examples include:

  – The reorientation of engagement with UCD
  – The establishment of a joint PME in initial teacher education
  – Regional cluster progress remains lacklustre
  – The excellence in T&L award is not progressing; while it was agreed that this should be deferred, it would be of interest whether this is likely to be reactivated soon
  – NCAD access and lifelong learning intentions
  – Research objectives, appropriateness of strategy and recruitment
  – Internationalisation and achieving ambitions
  – The development of a long-term institutional vison.

Self-evaluation report

1. Regional clusters

Three objectives are identified in the compact and while progress was made, it is clear that the target for a full merger by NCAD with UCD is no longer an aim. Some progress has been made with TCD, UCD and MIE towards the establishment of the Institute of Education. There is a limited but important collaboration with IADT.

1. Closer relationship with UCD up to merger

Eight joint projects have been established under SIDF research programme.

The merger of NCAD and UCD is reported to be not feasible at this time, however a report published in March 2016 (*NCAD + UCD Alliance*) and submitted with the compact, demonstrates the potential areas for closer alliance/cooperation between the two institutions. This report has ten recommendations, six to be implemented in 2016 and four in 2017.

The MoU between NCAD and UCD has been extended for one year and is now scheduled for renewal in September 2017.

2. Constitute and establish merger with NCAD as a college of UCD

(a) Merger

A merger is not under consideration. However, further to the report mentioned above, two working groups are progressing actions on academic collaboration and accreditation.

(b) Joint Professional Master of Education (PME)

Plans for joint provision of the PME by the four HEIs participating in the ITE are on hold. The following statement would indicate that this action may also be suspended and the target for 2016 will not be achieved: 'the management committee has consulted with staff from the four institutions and has agreed that the benefits in a joint PME in apparent efficiencies would not improve in quality of individual programmes'.

3. Constitute and establish a new Institute of Teacher Education (ITE) with UCD, TCD and MIE

TCD and UCD published an MoU (March 2016) setting out the framework for advancement of the ITE.

The PME is collaborating on the alignment of research methods. NCAD subsequently clarified progress had been made in developing an online/blended learning research methods module for collaborative delivery. However, progress has stalled in this academic year. NCAD efforts to invite a meeting to progress things further have not been successful.

NCAD and MIE have jointly delivered two CPD modules via the ITE.

Within the cluster, progress on collaboration between the four members (TCD, UCD, IADT, NCAD) appears to have slowed overall.

2. Participation, equal access and lifelong learning

In the updated compact, there are three objectives reported. All three are making good progress, although that part of one objective has been suspended.

1. Introduction of a part time degree programme

This action has been deprioritised in order to concentrate on the delivery of full time level 8 honours degrees, level 9 masters and PhDs

2. Collaborative programmes

Develop community-based learning model of teaching and learning for young adults. In 2014, the College had two partnerships and in 2015 there were 12 external community-based learning partnerships (further details should be provided).

3. *Increase in number of Access students*

The 2015 interim target for the number of access students 18 and this has been exceeded. It is reported that 27 first-year, undergraduate new entrants and three postgraduate students entered the College through the NCAD access programme. NCAD operates its own access programme outside of schemes such as HEAR and DARE. Offers are open to all applicants including further education graduates and mature learners.

4. Academic accreditation of CPD participants in Education

The objective was to design (by 2014) a one- year, credit-bearing course at Level 9 for 550 primary and secondary teachers undertaking in-service training**.** It is reported that this course has not started. NCAD indicates that the approach is to be developed and implemented by the ITE by 2016.

3. Excellent teaching and learning and quality of the student experience:

Three objectives were identified in compact, two achieved and one deferred.

Two new objectives have been added under this heading.

1. *Establish NCAD as a college of engaged learning*

Establish new degree course. The MA in Socially Engaged Art is in its second, two-year cycle. The current group of eight students will progress to year two in September 2016. The first cohort of eight students on the BA Visual Culture have completed their degree. There have been further additions to this objective as follows:

- Continued collaboration with Stockyard Institute in Chicago

- Establish NCAD as a college of engaged learning and a national leader in complementary fields of socially engaged art and of further education in the art and design sector. Further details should be provided on what actions/targets are intended here.

2. *Identify and reward excellence in teaching*

The original KPI was to implement/reward excellence in teaching through establishing an awards process and pathways to professional development. This measure has been deferred so that the College can concentrate on the core delivery of full-time Level 8 degree, Level 9 Master's and Level 10 PhDs. NCAD subsequently clarified the Guidelines and Procedures relating to the implementation of an excellence in teaching aware are being developed for implementation in 2017.

3. Centre of Excellence in Teaching Practice

The interim target is to increase the College's recognition and student numbers from the UK. International fee-paying non-EU students has increased from 8 in 2013/14 to 14 in 2015/16. NCAD is launching a BA (International). The programmes will allow for international study or work placements. The course was approved by UCD in April 2016 and students who commenced their undergraduate

studies in 2015/16 will be eligible to participate in 2017/18. NCAD increased its QS ranking for international Art and Design from 73 to 68 but should be cautious in using this ranking as a priority metric. NCAD hopes to increase recognition and students from EU and non-EU students. A formal arrangement with the International office in UCD is a recommendation in the Alliance report (implementation status to be clarified).

4. To take a lead role in responding to the Transitions Agenda within the Art and Design Sector

NCAD reports that it is not part of the DES Transitions review group and does not operate points-based entry, and that places are offered on a portfolio score. The action here is to complete an internal review of admission/recruitment practices by end-2016 and make recommendations, and also to map diagnostic mechanisms and support structures.

5. Retention rates

NCAD has historically had low non-progression rates (6% at Level 8) up to 2013–14. However, the College has noted a rise in non-progression in 2014–15 and 2015–16. A working group has been established to report on progression rates and to make recommendations to address areas of concern. A strategy is to be developed to address retention rates.

4. High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation

Six objectives were identified, four are reported to be fully achieved, two progressed but not to the extent projected.

1. *To grow the number of PhD students*

NCAD had a target of 35 PhD students by 2015 – the outcome was 28. The College indicates that it is committed to a research ethos and will seek to stabilise PhD numbers in the coming years through MA progression and international marketing.

2. To scope and develop a structured doctorate route

NCAD has launched a structured PhD programme on which there are seven students.

3. To establish the Research Institute in Art and Design at NCAD as an international centre of research through a visiting fellow programme and other measures to enhance the international profile of the Institute and research productivity for NCAD staff.

The target for 2015 was for 34 Fellows – the outcome was 30 and 10 visiting fellows over a two-year period. The target has been achieved; however, the dedicated space has not yet been allocated.

4. Researcher Support via Research Institute

A €25k seed fund has been established to implement a small grant and research leave scheme to be introduced on a phased basis. Allocations of grants have been made: €1k for staff and €400 for PhD students.

5. Income from Research Development

This objective is to quantify growth in research income. An income of €311,330 was generated in 2015. This fell short of the €400k target.

NCAD reports that there was a decline in income from academic research but an increase in engaged research income. Following discussion with the HEA, NCAD has revised this objective, and now wishes to "*create impact through real world T&L, generate innovation and engagement research,*

commercialise NCAD design research and to create design license opportunities". Further detail should be provided on how, practically, this high-level objective will be delivered.

6. Establish international design research project

While progress has been made on this objective, there is further work to be done to introduce this project. Based on a recommendation of the SIDF report (NCAD and UCD) the area of design research and innovation was put forward. The objective is subject to funding becoming available, which needs further discussion. The appointment of a Director of Design Research is still pending.

5. Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange

There are two objectives under this domain, both have progressed well. A third, new community engagement objective has been added and very positive outcomes are reported for this.

1. To be actively engaged in knowledge exchange partnerships with a wide range of organisations to share NCAD's knowledge and expertise to benefit the culture, society and the economy.

Good progress is reported to have been made on this objective. The number of live projects with external partners has almost doubled to 44 (target was 25), the percentage of students engaged in real-world learning projects was 75% and a number of formal and informal events have been held in partnership with other organisations.

2. Commercialisation with NovaUCD and Enterprise Ireland

There are three strands to this objective and all are reported to have progressed very well over the year. NCAD continues to develop its commercialisation pipeline and has exceeded targets. The NCAD-Nova-UCD consortium maintained high standards with Knowledge Transfer Ireland. Capacity issues are reported to be impeding further growth and should be discussed further with NCAD.

6. Enhanced internationalisation

There is one objective in this domain. The College reports that the target for 2015 – to develop an internationalisation strategy – has progressed. This is to be delivered with support from UCD's International Office.

NCAD aims to have a world presence in art and design education through a diversification of student recruitment, internationally recognised research and knowledge exchange partnerships.

7. Institutional consolidation

There are three objectives under this domain.

1. Deepen relationship with UCD up to a merger.

This objective has already been discussed in relation to regional clusters, objective 1.

2. Trilateral cluster NCAD/UCD/IADT for provision of art, design and creative media education in the Dublin region.

NCAD, UCD, TCD

Collaborative modules are a key part of four Masters level programmes, with collaborators including UCD, TCD, MU, RCSI, Ulster University and Glasgow School of Art. A further MA programme involves significant industry collaborations as well as collaboration with UCD. A Joint Masters Programme is

being developed between NCAD, UCD and IADT for a September 2017 intake. An industry project with Intel and EPA is also reported to be progressing well, but it is not clear from the report which other HEIs are collaborating on this.

NCAD & IADT

- Enterprise linkage collaboration with IADT is reported to be not feasible as IADT is involved in a separate TTSI2 partnership/collaboration.

- Joint final exhibition did not take place in 2015 but a joint summer school did and another is planned for 2017.

- A joint MA programme between NCAD and IADT in Spatial Art and Visualisation is due to launch in 2017-18.

- A joint IADT-UCD exhibition on access initiatives took place in May 2016 as part of the UCD hosted EAN conference.

Additional notes

NCAD reported an accumulated deficit position of €1,000,000 for 2014/15 and is projecting a break-even budget for 2016.