

University of Prishtina, Faculty of Fine Arts:
External Report: June 2016.

Expert Team:

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Thanks

We appreciate the time and effort made by the staff of the Faculty of Arts and the Department of Dramatic Art to prepare the documentation we scrutinized before the visit, for their participation in frank and courteous discussion during the validation event and for their production of some of the further documents we requested upon completion of the site visit and after having met with the course development, management and staff teaching teams. We would additionally like to extend our thanks to the staff and office of the KAA for appointing us as experts.

It should be noted that since writing the main body of this report we have received from staff members at the faculty of arts, a series of responses in the form of additional documentation, some clarification of nomenclature and an assurance from the senior management team that our recommendations and conditions have been welcomed and fully understood. Given the time frame for responding, it appears to be the intention of the new faculty management team to ensure that the conditions and recommendations we propose for all three departments, are implemented in full. Some planning work has already been reported to have been undertaken in preparation for meeting the conditions we propose at the end of the departmental reports.

The submission of more accurate additional documentation from the department of Dramatic Arts is welcome and we would advise that all course documentation is kept under regular review, standardised and simplified – and that the university employs translators who have a joint understanding of technical language skill and teaching, curricula and the production of documentation.

It is clear from our discussions with KAA that this report makes very clear recommendation and associated conditions for all programmes to enable the Accreditation Board to make an appropriate and informed decision.

Introductory Remarks

This report has a number of aims. Chief amongst them is an attempt to support the newly appointed senior leadership team of the Faculty of Arts and particularly the staff and students working within the Department of Fine Arts and Department of Applied Arts to establish a highly effective intellectual and creative environment. This

environment will support Faculty of Arts graduates to become well qualified and experienced national and international professional arts practitioners, cultural educators and entrepreneurs.

Additionally, the tone of the report seeks to be supportive and positive without shying away from the still significant number of issues which continue to raise serious concerns as expressed in previous reports over the past few years. The negative aspects of these reports continue to damage the reputation of the subjects themselves, the Faculty and the University. **It is clear that a different approach is required if the University is to maintain its credibility in light of a succession of less than positive reports about aspects of the Faculty of Arts provision.**

This report will therefore attempt to assess the current state of play and importantly suggest key ways forwards in order to resolve the issues which seem to repeat in previous expert reports. The report is focussed as far as is possible on evidence based decision making based on the following:

- The documentation supplied.
- The conversations with staff members.
- The conversations with students.
- The experience of the site visit in relation to resources.
- Previous expert reports

THE MAP IS NOT THE TERRITORY

It would be fair to say that a number of the issues and frustrations expressed by the authors of the 2015 Report into the Fine Arts provision, we have some sympathy with, having read the documentation and taken part in the site visit. We think many, if not all of the issues raised in the 2015 report, can easily be remedied and they are not all about additional financial resources, although this does remain a critical area for discussion in this report.

Documentation and Evidence

The experts have independently compiled their reports for the various departments and identified in them, areas of good practice and excellence. However, across the board there are a number of on going issues that need to be addressed by the various stakeholders responsible for the production of consistent and well presented documentation. In some areas, the documentation as presented has a number of very significant issues and confirms that whilst there are some very good modules in the extensive array of modules available to students, which are well articulated, together with staff who want to secure the best possible learning experiences for their students, there remains a substantive gap between what may be happening on the ground as the lived experience of quality interactions between staff and students and students and students (peer group learning), very little of which is captured in the existing documentation.

This is a serious issue in relation to demonstrating both within the institution and externally to other partners and stakeholders, that some staff have the skills and knowledge to compose formal documentation detailing the development of a student's learning across the designated programmes of study. There is a particular skill in constructing this documentation but from the evidence presented here it is either not currently present in the existing team or there is an attitude towards the

production of the documentation which is causing a barrier to its successful completion. **This is a situation that needs fixing.** The 2015 report suggested that this reason alone was sufficient to prevent the programmes from being validated.

The documentation should reflect as accurately as possible the pedagogical approach to the subject matter and map out clearly the learning progression for students from each year of the programme of study. One BA programme in the Dept. of Fine Arts has only 4 programme aims articulated in the documentation for the whole 4 years of study. Two separate undergraduate programmes in the Dept. of Dramatic Arts have identical programme learning outcomes.

There is no articulation relating to student progression in terms of learning and levels of learning and very little sense of what 'graduateness' is for students graduating from the faculty of Arts at Prishtina University in any of the current programme documentation at BA or MA levels. The submission of the document entitled, 'Catalog Addendum Academic Year 16/17' was an extremely useful document received after the site visit. This document, whilst containing the same information as parts of the SER, does have an additional level of clarity that is not currently present in many of the programme documents, especially those within the Dept. of Fine Arts. It would have been helpful to see these documents for the departments of Music and Dramatic Arts also.

It is disappointing that the information requested on progression rates within and across programmes did not provide the relevant detail in terms of yearly progression rates although it is clear that a large number of students enrolled on the programmes in year one entry level do not result in successful completion rates at graduation.

Previous expert reports and discussions with the staff teams in some areas suggested that incoming student numbers are dictated by the ministry and central university management and bear no relation to the capacity which faculty management teams feel they have capacity to control. Given the lack of clarity and accuracy in this data, we would recommend the senior management team track this information at departmental level in order to support an increase in the resource base for delivery and development.

Also, the lack of additional documentation requested by us in regards to internal faculty reporting structures means that our recommendations and requirements to fix the 'documentation/evidence base' and get the programmes back on track, is by necessity less detailed and directed than we would like. These requested line management and strategic leadership frameworks are key to providing accountability, and confidence to external experts when recommending final decisions and conditions.

Currently what the previous subject expert referred to as 'a cut and paste' approach, seems to predominate and this is not acceptable as a way forwards. The description of the programmes needs to be owned by the subject teams and a vocabulary needs to be acquired that reflects the concerns, aspirations and ambitions of the staff teaching team.

The production of suitable documentation is a skillset and a mindset and needs to be undertaken in as effective and streamlined manner as possible. The current volume of documentation has a lot of repetition. We'd advocate a 'less is more' approach, where less is accurate, analytical and user friendly to a wide range of readers/stakeholders – including most importantly of all the student body itself.

Students did say they had access to module and course handbooks at the start of their study – so there is also concern about why these have not been forthcoming

Clearly, there are skills and abilities at a high level in the Faculty in some areas and so the new management team would be well advised to develop a staff development strategy to support all staff who are responsible for the production of formal University documentation to enable them to up skill in this area.

In terms of documentation, one might have expected to see, presented in a detailed section of the Self Evaluation Report (SER) the following:

The following is generic for all programmes

Assessment matrix, collated for each year of a programme articulated at modular level detailing the assessment regimes deployed by each programme i.e. the balance between written academic assignments, documentation of artistic process, the production of artworks/artefacts, seminar presentations. These details ought to be mapped against the time allocation and ECTS weightings, so that different audiences for the documentation can easily see the relationship between module/programme delivery options (workshops/lectures/seminars/ self directed study), the time allocations for these activities and the assessment regimes that accompany them. All this information should be placed together to enable a quick and detailed overview of how learning is being structured and measured.

In relation to the above, one might usefully expect that there is a simple grid demonstrating progression routes for students on each programme by year. I know a version of this exists within the SER but with so little time to digest an enormous amount of information, the onus is on the institution to make this information as accessible as possible. In addition, this information should also be essential to inform staff and management teams at Departmental and Faculty level to better understand what is happening in relation to student progression and importantly, what actions need to be taken to improve student retention and progression rates through each year of the programme.

Currently it is very difficult to form a view on this matter other than to say the student attrition rates seems alarmingly poor i.e. the significant drop in student numbers from Year 1 to Year 4 of a standard BA programme. This is both loss of income to the University and also a worrying indicator that students are not having their expectations met within their programmes of study.

Given the increase of alternative Higher Education suppliers in Kosovo via the private sector there will be increasing competition to attract students, keep them and support them into meaningful employment at the end of the programme of study.

The compilation of accurate data sets relating to recruitment, progression, student exit velocity (how many student graduate), the degree classifications, end of year statistical analysis relating to grades per module are mainly administrative operations that could be undertaken centrally and provided to the Faculty and Departmental teams in order to facilitate healthy and robust subject team discussions relating to the quality of the student experience as indicated through these data sets – plus individual student feedback data.

These data sets are now standard practice across the UK Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and they enable subject teams and management teams to develop a meaningful response to senior management as well as back to the student body,

which demonstrates an understanding of subject/programme level issues and identifies strategies and actions to deal with them.

The Staff meetings

It was refreshing to meet with a newly elected senior management/leadership team for the faculty and understand the areas of responsibility held by this team including: a representative departmental vice dean, teaching and learning, academic development, finance, administration, student experience, and the vice rector for quality. This information should be presented as part of the documentation, and was requested subsequently, post the site visit, but was not provided. It is common and excellent practice to provide a diagram which presents the management structure of the faculty, detailing responsibilities for key post holders and helps external and internal stakeholders understand where accountability lies, clarifies the lines of communication and tracks the development of agreed actions. All of this is key to demonstrating the seriousness with which quality assurance processes are taken.

The dean in discussion clearly identified 4 key priority areas for his leadership team, which were stated as:

- 1) the engagement of all staff in his faculty
- 2) the importance of a developed and effective communication strategy
- 3) the development and improvement of the learning environment for staff and students
- 4) A development and increase of resources (building on the recent success of Music provision)

The dean's articulation of the huge pride and attention placed on the tradition of achievements from the faculty, by current staff, alumni and students underlined the ambition and aspiration for the Faculty of Arts to be recognised in a local, national and international context, as producers of world class artworks.

There was a clear articulation by key members of this team of a need to change based upon the previous experts reports and the sense in the room was that the new team were willing to work together to ensure that improved student experience was placed as the driver in achieving success in the 4 priority area mentioned above. This prioritising of the student experience, and excellence in research, are currently the two strongest drivers in all European Higher Education policy development, so it is an essential marker for meeting European standards.

It is clear having spoken with many of the specialist teaching staff in the separate meetings (detailed in the individual departmental reports), that the new leadership team have gained a mandate for ensuring they deliver the structures, strategy and development required to enable the aspirations of the faculty staff to be met. The leadership team have therefore to take primary responsibility and accountability in future review and evaluation processes, to ensure the recommendations and conditions are met. We feel this new team have the capacity and aspiration to deliver on the recommendations in this report but will need the central university to provide support in terms of staff development, bespoke training for quality assurance delivery in an Arts context and the confidence to embrace new approaches to evidencing excellence in teaching, learning, assessment, research and professional practice.

Research AND International Co- Operation

Research

We would welcome a clearer articulation in the documentation of how research in the faculty is understood, funded, supported and disseminated. The documentation of some of the programmes, even at MA level, often appears to equate the term 'research' with independent student learning.

It is clear that staff and students are engaged in a process of artistic research and that outputs are able to be evidenced in different ways and in different places. It would be useful for staff to understand the range of ways that research can be articulated in the documentation, in ways which provides appropriate differentiation between practice led research, research informed teaching, professional practice, academic research and scholarly activity. This process would strengthen the currency of the programmes in the contemporary context in Kosovo and position the Arts Faculty staff as significant players in the overall university research community, providing opportunities for cross disciplinary and collaborative research projects. (see individual departmental reports for details)

To this end, the Faculty of Arts leadership team should be able to develop a strategy for the development of individual staff research profiles, and encourage multi modal outputs which ultimately serve the profile of the whole department rather than just key individuals. Additionally, the explicit evidencing of collaborative student outcomes from final modules in third year and at MA level as research (where appropriate), would provide a clear framework for future extension into PhD provision, which is cited as an aspiration in the faculty vision statement.

International Co-Operation

Notwithstanding the clear challenges faced by the Kosovan socio-political context to access mobility and international exchange, it was clear from the meetings that all staff highly valued international opportunities above all else and were keen to find efficient ways to extend their networks and access new academic and artistic practices. Again we would recommend the faculty senior management team in partnership with central university and international organisations and funding streams to develop a strategic cross departmental framework which supports staff teams to realise and extend opportunities for continued international co-operation.

There was discussion with the senior management team that central budgets from the university had been ring-fenced to support four areas for development which the faculty could make application to, namely: research, distance learning, student professional practice and attendance at conferences.

Collaboration

There was a clear request from many staff teams for the facilitation of online platforms and meetings to enable regular, rigorous and collaborative consultative processes in order to more explicitly share good practice in teaching and learning and assessment, develop currency in curriculum development and provide consistency for quality assurance. This falls in line with the awareness of the need to improve communication and consultancy expressed in the senior management team meeting, and we would urge immediate planning and publishing of a schedule to facilitate this.

The student meetings

The student meeting was well attended and students were enthusiastic about their learning experiences. Music students particularly discussed the excellent relationship with their tutors who often went 'above and beyond' to ensure they had access to apply for all available external opportunities for developing their experience and skills. A key indicator of 'on the ground success' of a programme is the student voice, and there were clearly many students we met who felt their experience of study in the Faculty and their relationship with their tutors was improving.

The potential for more cross disciplinary learning and teaching opportunities within and across programmes in the faculty was acutely represented in the meeting with the students, through a clear articulation of their desire to work together in the production of artworks which speak to a 21st century audience. Student-led extra curricula learning environments have been set up, and provide an important space for the next generation of creative graduates to plan and aspire.

The importance of making available English and Albanian language modules to support the students in their development and aspirations to co-operate outside of their current context was strongly articulated.

The Department of Dramatic Art

General Remarks

The department of Dramatic Arts provides the largest range of undergraduate named programmes at BA and MA level in the Faculty, and despite relatively small student cohorts this appears to be a workable structure which serves the needs of the students. However, having visited the institution, met the staff and students and read all the documentation, I think it would be beneficial to the staff and student teams to have the collaborative projects between directors, actors, dramaturges and scenographers, made more explicit in the documentation, and this might require a change in module titles across the programmes to facilitate this.

The changes made by the Departments of Music and Fine Arts to streamline their delivery and reduce the number of programmes may be worth considering for this department in due course. At the very least this might make the delivery of shared resources and curriculum planning more equitable. This would also give all the programmes in the faculty something of a consistency. I would recommend the team in Dramatic Arts meet the Music Department to discuss how they have achieved their aims and approached their documentation.

There is a marked differentiation between what I saw and heard on the site visit, and what the documentation of this department describes. I would urge the programme teams with the leadership of senior management to continue to re-visit the structure and delivery of their programmes in the light of student numbers and find ways to capitalise on the potential for sharing expertise and resources.

Some of the programmes articulate their purpose and identity much clearer than others, and this gives outside stakeholders including evaluators, much more confidence that what is being designed and delivered is of a high quality.

The SER document has made comparability of its BA Acting programme with Academies of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb, Skopje and RADA in London as well as the University in Vienna. Whilst it is always useful to be able to benchmark against comparable institutions, the actual detail of articulation of the programme aims and learning objectives and outcomes from RADA, which are clear, do not map against the BA Acting as currently presented in the documentation. As part of the general commentary, earlier in this report, we noted that there needs to be evidenced in programme aims, purpose and learning objectives a real sense of staff ownership of the specific character and intention of each individual programme so that all stakeholders can easily understand what is unique and particular about it – especially the students.

It would be most useful for all programme leaders to compare a range of EU programme descriptions of all similar Acting, Directing, Dramaturgy, Scenography and Film Production programmes alongside level descriptors and assessment criteria to ensure the rationale and delivery as well as the curriculum content is appropriate and reflective of the 'on the ground' delivery in the Department in Prishtina.

As stated in other part of this report I would advocate here that it would be very beneficial again to undertake a series of workshops and discussion with staff to support them to be able to articulate better how they wish their students to learn and how that learning can be significantly enhanced during each year of a programme of study. This would allow staff teams to develop a more specific focus to their programmes, whilst at the same time identifying common modules that could be undertaken by specialist students from different programmes of study. The development of a common suite of modules certainly in the first 2 years of study would support students from different programmes to come together each week in a shared lecture/seminar/workshop series and be a catalyst for peer group learning.

1. Academic Programmes and Student Management.

Curriculum Design.

The undergraduate programmes do have some sense of development for students across the levels/years of study but there are a number of areas that require immediate attention.

At BA level the 'purpose and study programme profiles' of 4 of the 5 programmes are identical. How can this be? BA Film and Television Directing is the only exception to this and BA Dramaturgy offers a short additional text. This is the place in the documentation to describe what makes each programme unique, to summarise the characteristics of the programme.

There are different numbers of programme learning outcomes, all expressed in different registers, leading to a sense that the department is operating under different directives. There is also a confusion about the constitution of skills and knowledge. One would expect a department of Dramatic Arts to have identified a range of key skills and knowledges that ALL student would be expected to achieve upon successful completion of the programmes, in addition to subject and discipline specific skills. Some programmes identify skills in communication and professional behaviour, some identify criticality as key, one mentions historical knowledge. Only one mentions research. Two programmes have identical learning outcomes, despite

different curricula! (BA Theatre Directing and BA Dramaturgy). This needs reviewing in a context of embracing the opportunity to profile the USP of each programme, in this specific cultural context, at this point in history.

Given the potential alignment of the programmes and the current student numbers it would make good sense to revisit the programme profiles and learning outcomes to identify a range of shared skill sets and knowledge areas that could be co-taught. This would lead to better peer to peer learning opportunities, more explicit focus upon interdisciplinarity, possibilities for team teaching, and a shared understanding of the differences between subject specific knowledge and general requirements for critically in theory and practice. More importantly this would provide consistency within the department which is crucial for quality processes.

More problematic is that in the submitted documentation at MA level the 'purpose and study programmes profiles' are often identical to the undergraduate programmes. There is some additional information provided in individual programmes which contradicts this, but the sense of cut and paste across documents, makes the ownership of the programmes appear confusing. I would urge a revisiting of the programme documentation and suggest that programme directors work together with the creator of the BA Film Directing documentation, whose programme is articulated the clearest and there is a sense of level advancement across years and a clearer sense of what the students are taught. The MA Film Directing programme specification is missing from the documentation.

The 'research plan' for all programmes in the documentation is identical at both BA and MA level. I would expect a clearer rationale for the place of research in this department. The allocation of university central budgets to support research, student professional practice and conference attendance, means that department staff can make applications and further strengthen their profile and planning.

It is frustrating and quite difficult to get a sense of what specifically the students are actually learning from many of the module specifications provided. There is a lot of repetition of material between and across levels. This again is an issue of knowing how to write clear specifications which are accessible to the stakeholders. Booklists are often incomplete, quite dated and lack in almost all cases the inclusion of ANY female authorship. This is untenable in a modern university and 21st century context.

Teaching, Learning + Assessment:

The SER cites the vision of the faculty to create a stimulating and innovative environment for student learning

Many of the students on this programme whom we met, certainly felt satisfied with the quality of their learning experience, and they articulated strong support for their tutors as well as an understanding of the conditions under which they are working. There was a huge appetite for undertaking more international collaborative work and an awareness of the possibilities and opportunities offered to arts students in the wider European context. The students we met are a credit to your faculty and institution and should be congratulated for their ability to speak intelligently and enthusiastically about their experience. Some of them did say that they had access to module and course handbooks, online, at the start of each year of study – but despite a request to see examples of these in additional documentation, I was not provided with examples from this department.

There is additional evidence of student feedback processes relating to their learning experiences are in place and the generic questionnaire included in the appendix is satisfactory.

That said, I would like to see some strategic positioning of 'critical and creative feedback' in the module descriptors, as this transferable skill set is crucially important for creative graduates who are entering a world where they are expected and required to demonstrate high level reflexive self and peer assessment as well as become expert in applications for funding and gaining employment opportunities. These transferable skills sets are now valued at least as highly as discipline specific skills and knowledges.

Examples of key master's graduate attributes in creative courses would include communication skills, emotional intelligence, risk taking, self reflection, digital literacy, global outlook etc. Additionally, international taxonomy of level 7 assessment domains would reasonably include: organisation and planning, theory, analysis, reflection, synthesis, evaluation and creativity.

There appears to be plenty of space within the curriculum for students to work independently, on their own projects, and a number of programmes are able to articulate the importance of their students developing their creative voices, which is a welcome addition to any conservatoire training environment and will serve to extend the forms and languages of artworks which in turn will impact upon audiences and their understanding of the world.

2. Staff

It is clear from my meeting with the staff team that there is a will to build upon the best practice and achievements of the department and find new ways to collaborate and share best practice. My sense was that staff in this department are operating well within the confines of their context. There is clearly a lot of staff and student collaboration on practical projects which would be further strengthened by a more explicit collaboration in the documentation.

Staff in the field of Dramatic Arts and Film Production are required to engage in regular scholarly and professional activity which would develop their academic profile and raise their profile nationally and beyond Kosovo. It is imperative that staff are supported to attend conferences/symposia/workshops and continue to take their students to international festivals.

The department has an adequate number of permanent staff and during all the programmes the students have the opportunity to work with a range of staff with different expertise and research interests. Some staff commented on their positive experience of team teaching and developing spaces within the curriculum where students could legitimately take the lead in establishing new possibilities for peer to peer learning.

Many members of staff we spoke to are well connected professionally and are working towards more explicitly aligning the national Film and Performance festivals more closely into the curricula. This approach is to be applauded.

3. Resources.

During the site visit I was able to see some practical spaces used for rehearsal and performance and the theatre space has undergone significant improvement since my last visit in 2014. I was able to see a Master's Acting project in the theatre space which utilised a basic lighting rig and projections.

It is absolutely clear that the staff and students in this department are accustomed to working in the most basic of conditions for the realisation of their teaching and learning and this situation needs immediate attention and to be kept under review.

It is of paramount importance that students and staff have access to computers, cameras and editing equipment (hardware and software) to enable them to successfully realise their learning outcomes and create outcomes of a professional and graduate standard. This is especially true of the Film Directing programmes, where one full camera kit, provides the absolute minimum provision for a BA and MA programme. A reliable working internet line, within the university, is essential for 21st century teaching and learning.

The students are able and indeed required, in some cases, to work in spaces and with equipment located outside of the university but this should not be a replacement or substitute for the university providing adequate learning resources. In addition to improving the space and IT resources required to enable staff to operate successfully, there was a clear lack of investment in access to books, journals and scholarly material. Budget constraints have impacted significantly upon the staff's ability to realise the aspiration of creating the best learning environments for their students and this is evidenced in the outdated and incomplete indicative bibliographies attached to all modules across the programmes.

Staff identified the crucial and immediate need for more texts to be translated into Albanian, and I saw evidence of good and excellent practice by internal staff of finding strategies to fill the gap left by inadequate resourcing in the production of a well presented and current Journal series.

4. Recommendations:

It is recommended that the existing provision in the Dept. of Dramatic Arts be permitted to run for a period of 3 years on condition that the following items are fully dealt with within a 12-month period of receipt of this report and that failure to comply with the core conditions will mean the suspension of the provision until such a time it fully meets the requirements.

Core Conditions

- A programme of staff related activities be developed as part of a strategic Faculty and University plan to support current staff teams in Dramatic Arts related areas to enhance their skills and knowledge in articulating the pedagogical imperatives of their subject areas, both in terms of the production of formal quality assurance styled documentation for external audiences/agencies and stakeholders as well as translating these documents into user-friendly student programme and module handbooks. This would be a formal part of a positive staff development initiative.

- That the above initiative is mapped into the forthcoming Departmental and Faculty Action Plan Documents.
- That specific timelines are set for the production of enhanced documentation that jointly meets the formal quality assurance requirements of the University and of KAA and that the documentation is re-submitted for formal review by no later than April 2017 ensuring that the formal documentation can then be translated into student friendly documentation for all programmes by the start of the 2017 academic cycle.

Additional Recommendations

- That a series of regular minuted meetings are implemented for all staff in the Department of Dramatic Arts with an agenda which places collaborative planning, research sharing and enhancement of student experience high on the agenda.
- That IT resources for staff and students are prioritised in the strategic planning of the faculty management team
- That all booklists/materials are reviewed and updated to reflect relevant and current developments in critical and creative praxis.

Department of Fine Arts / Department of Applied Arts

General Remarks

The student meeting session was a real high light of the visit but it was telling that the Art+Design students present when asked what had been to date the most meaningful learning experience for them on their programme of study, that all the examples cited were activities they had organised themselves, for themselves off the University campus. This level of initiative is to be applauded but may also act as a key indicator that the students didn't cite experiences on campus from their classes. See 'Student Enhancement / Experience' below.

The current action planning document as part of the SER is welcome but I think the document would be further strengthened by having more details about what the action is, who will be lead officer to undertake the actions and when will it be done. Also it would be standard practice every 2-3 months within a programme team meeting to discuss progress against the actions – reporting both up to the faculty management team and across programmes.

The benefits here are that proposed actions and decisions are made based on evidence and facts. Again these integrated processes should involve a level of collaboration and cooperation between the various stakeholders in ensuring student quality of experience. A traffic light code system of red/amber/green is a highly simple and visible way to indicate progress/completion of actions by using this simple colour coding by way of an exemplar.

The above points also raise 2 important issues that were confirmed during the site visit. These are: communications and success metrics.

With a dynamic and enthusiastic new management team in place, it will be helpful to consider how communications can be further enhanced in and across the various subject teams in Fine Arts and Applied Arts as well as communications with key members of the management team who hold specific responsibilities e.g. teaching and learning, resources, etc. What was very striking in the subject team meeting was the fact that a relatively large group of staff – some listening in via internet – were for the most part silent during the 2 hr. meeting with only 2 people out of more than a dozen making most of the responses and providing commentary. The additional observations made by other staff were minimal but insightful and extremely valuable. I have never been in a subject team meeting even in my role as senior external examiner, where the staff haven't wanted to engage in a robust debate about their areas and what they need to make things better. It's hard to make a judgement call based on a single meeting but it did feel as if the staff had little sense of agency in terms of having more say and control about developments in the areas could be progressed.

Re- the above, whilst I think it is a good and pragmatic decision to create the two Departmental structure as per the SER, I would also add a word of caution here about the relationship between the two areas.

There is clearly a substantive resource issue in the Faculty and certainly within the Art+Design areas, although progress in some areas have been made. I think the decision to create the Dept. of Applied Arts is a solid one and there are clearly ambitions amongst some staff who see themselves as primarily located in this area as wanting to expand provision in this area. Clearly this is highly desirable and a Department isn't a Department with 1 BA and 1 MA programme in the portfolio. There are two main areas to reconcile here. 1. Resources – specific and shared,

and 2. Collaboration across the two Departments and then subsequently collaboration into the broader faculty (see Curriculum Design below).

Resources

From my perspective there is barely sufficient physical and technological resource to adequately run the existing portfolio of programmes, albeit given the small numbers of students in some areas. The Dept. of Applied Arts is probably best served in terms of its 'clean' resource base, The Dept. of Fine Arts requires more attention, especially when compared with the level of space and physical resource dedicated to Music for example.

Previous Faculty initiatives have not been progressed because of financial issues as detailed by central University senior officers. Unless there is a review of the existing provision with a view to a resource re-distribution or additional resource, I cannot see how new provision can be developed. This is a very real issue for the Faculty (and University) if it cannot offer provision and progression routes into more commercially orientated areas of design building on the current strengths of the Graphics provision and with a variety of possibilities for expansion into product design, mass communications, digital media provision which are growth areas across a wide variety of international digital/design related providers. Normally expansion in student numbers in these areas help to cross subsidise lower student numbers in some of the more traditional areas of Fine Arts practice. This isn't always the case but it is happening more frequently especially outside the more conservatoire orientated art school sector.

The 2015 expert report suggested there might be more 'permeability' between areas with resource sharing being one way to ensure that all students gain access to what is a minimum resource base. (See Curriculum Design below). It wouldn't be very helpful if the growth of the Department of Applied Arts (although it would be strategically sensible) was undertaken at the expense of resources currently being used to deliver provision in Fine Arts but this is a decision for senior management to contemplate. (See Resources below).

I'd like to add a note here about what I will refer to as 'metrics of success'. In the opening session of the visit day, the Dean of Arts, talked about the significance of the faculty having produced outstanding artists who have graduated from the Faculty, additionally noting that the Faculty of Arts plays an important role in the evolving ecology of arts, culture and education within the country and beyond. I think these achievements are to be recognised and applauded in equal measure. I think the caveat here is that this is **one** important measure of success. There are others especially in the context of an Arts faculty within a University context. One might usefully expect to see a wider range of success metrics being articulated in the SER. Above I noted that good progression rates, student grades, collaborations, progression to Masters and further study, the setting up of a new business enterprise in country or beyond are all indicators of the many abilities and attributes your students graduate with and of which the University is a catalyst. The current SER mentions staff exhibitions and a graduate film being an Oscar nominated work. Both these things are extremely valuable – not least as marketing tools to attract more students – but they sit in a broader context of what constitutes success for current and future students and current and future staff.

None of the studio work I saw in the resources tour in Art+Design indicated the year level of the student. It is therefore impossible to contextualise the different works in order to judge progress from year to year. In this type of review situation one would expect to see examples of student work labelled with programme and year and for completed works accompanying mark and staff feedback on the work. The previous expert (2015) had the advantage of seeing an Art+Design showcase which would have provided this experience. On this occasion I only saw fragments of work in teaching studios. Likewise for clear reasons, I saw no written work.

On this visit I saw no library or text based provision nor on-line learning provision. On Saturday 21st May I did attempt to visit the Arts Library provision in the main library building but again I was not permitted access to this provision. See 'Resources' below.

1. Academic Programmes and Student Management.

Curriculum Design.

Curriculum design is the most critical aspect which ensures that student learning over a period of study is carefully scaffolded to ensure that skills, knowledge and experience are incrementally built upon and tested over a specific period of time.

The current portfolio of programmes in Fine Arts and Applied Arts appear to be bounded by a very formulaic approach to curriculum design which may not serve the best needs of individual subject areas nor meet the needs of existing and future student cohorts. Previously, commentary in other expert reports have repeatedly commented on the need for much more subject specificity to be a key part of a

programme outline and this would not be out of line with most specialist art and design programmes within the European context. One can't help thinking that the need to conform to the Bologna framework has been interpreted as a straight jacket rather than as a framework in which diversity at different levels can and should exist that is contextualised.

I would advocate here that it would be very beneficial again to undertake a series of workshops and discussion with staff to support them to be able to articulate better how they wish their students to learn and how that learning can be significantly enhanced during each year of a programme of study. This would allow staff teams to develop a more specific focus to their programmes, whilst at the same time identifying common modules that could be undertaken by specialist students from different programmes of study. The development of a common suite of modules certainly in the first 2 years of study would support students from different programmes to come together each week in a shared lecture/seminar/workshop series and be a catalyst for peer group learning.

A rigorous discussion about the relationships between notions of the 'traditional', the 'modern' and the 'contemporary' I think could be one of the key thematics of all the programmes at BA level and be part of a common cultural spine of theory/practice that acts as a catalyst for debate amongst students and staff from different art disciplines.

The introduction of programmes specifically orientated towards a more contemporary view of the expanded field of visual arts practice, in theoretical and practical terms, is welcome but these programmes in and of themselves sit within a tradition of inter- and trans-disciplinary art practice which has traditions (plural) and overlapping and inter-twining histories.

A very key point of concern about the current documentation is that many of the programmes do not have detailed and subject specific programme aims and objectives but that there is no articulation of aims and objectives being detailed at each level of the programme of study. This makes it very difficult for the student to see how their learning is being added to, tested, stretched, reflected upon, re-visited at each level of study. Again in programme structure terms one would expect that the first 2 years of study are strongly supported by higher contact time with teaching staff but that in Year 3 and certainly by Year 4, the students are working much more independently as they create a body of work for exhibition and/or focus more on analytical study/theoretical works as cultural critics.

In terms adhering to the broad University aims there is insufficient focus on pedagogical practice (see Teaching, Learning and Assessment below) in relation to:

1. Preparing students who wish to pursue a career in teaching at school level.
2. Preparing students for an academically focussed research programme at Masters level.

In relation to the 2 points above I would strongly recommend that in Years 3 and 4 of the programmes there are developed a suite of modules that balance subject study with pedagogical study options to enable students to develop their skills and knowledge in these areas alongside subject focussed curricula. Perhaps there is an opportunity here to collaborate with the teacher education area?

In terms of the second point above, and unlike comments from previous expert reports, I think that there needs to be available at Levels 3 and 4 of all the validated

BA programmes, the option to undertake an extended research focussed assessment. I stress that this could be presented as an option to those students who wish to engage with a more theoretical take on their subject specialism. At Level 3 this could take the form of an extended research project (5,000 words) and enable students to gain core research methodological skills that they would need to complete a more ambitious piece of research work at Level 4. I think creating a limited number of specialist pathways at Levels 3 and 4 from common core curricula at Levels 1 and 2 would create a strong sense amongst staff and students that there is a shared 'community of practice' albeit one with specialist skills and knowledge.

Electives: I want to comment briefly on current structures at Levels 2,3,4 of BA study in relation to the relationship between 7 Core programmes modules + 6 Electives (3 Theory/ 3 Practice). Given the commentary above relating to programme architecture and the conscious building of a diverse student body with shared knowledge and specific knowledge sets, I think it would be helpful to:

- State as part of the programme rationale why certain elective modules are pertinent to the specific programme of study.
- Reduce the number of options in light of the above so that elective choices relate in meaningful ways, explicitly, to specialist pathway provision.
- I also think that at Levels 3 and 4 of the BA programmes that there could be a prescribed set of elective modules that specifically add value to already established thematics elsewhere in the programme OR that are relevant to a wide range of students regardless of their subject specific programme. These might range from stranded electives in Year 3 and 4 which cover:
 - Marketing, Branding and Communications.
 - Creative Industries Start UP.
 - Events and Events Management.
 - Curatorial Practice.

I note some of these options exist in a large array of options. I believe that a more thematic and prescriptive approach would be much more beneficial at this stage in the programmes history and would serve the students needs better than the current position. I note that for BA Conceptual /New Media programme there are 13 Theory Electives and 44 Practical electives. It appears that the enormous portfolio of electives could be more pedagogically focussed and be more prescriptive than currently seems to be the case. I have looked at the elective choices and many of them are very good in terms of content but I think need to be stitched in pedagogically to key areas of a student's specialist study programme.

The repetition of materials and the lack of subject specific details across a 4-year BA programme and the 1-year MA is also a point of concern and I am aware this has been articulated in previous reports. See 'Curriculum Design' below.

Teaching, Learning + Assessment:

It is clear that all of the programmes in the current portfolio are very studio/workshop based. It is therefore surprising to see that, I think without exception, that all programmes have selected to adhere a study ratio of 60% Theory and 40% Practice. I can find no explanation in the SER why this should be the case. At worst I would expect to see this ratio reversed or at least to have variations across the 4 years of a BA Hons programme. The division of time allocated to the various learning activities as detailed in the documentation is somewhat confusing in parts and again adheres to a rigid formulaic approach which doesn't allow for a subject to design a curriculum which is both broad and specific, which articulates what theory means to them and why it is embedded in the programmes and at which levels of study i.e. Year 1, 2, 3

and 4. I would strongly advocate a review of the current situation by means of positive, open discursive discussions amongst staff as part of an informed /informal set of staff development discussions where alternative models and structures could be considered by the collective teaching teams to determine the optimal structures and specific and shared modular content at each year of a programme of study. I would not be surprised if the lived experience of staff and student interactions were not substantively different to what is captured in the documentation.

There appears to be a lack of expertise in the current delivery teams in relation to understanding and articulating subject pedagogy as evidenced through the current documentation (and previous iterations). As previously stated, there is a specific skillset required to translate the expert subject knowledge of the teaching staff into the formal contexts of such document writing and also in relation to curriculum design and the specifics of a subject pedagogy. I know 'pedagogy' means different things to different people. What I am referring to here is the inter-relationship between WHAT you teach (programme content core/electives) and HOW you teach (workshops/lectures/seminars/Supported Open Learning (SOL) or Independent Learning / Peer Group Learning and importantly what assessment regimes can be creatively put in place to measure student progress and learning attainment levels.

Currently, a very formulaic approach has been adopted I suspect to try and provide a unified approach driven by the Bologna requirements but my view is that simply isn't functioning in the interests of the students and their interactions with staff.

Too many modules have adopted as an assessment pattern: 50% Practical / 50% Theory. There are too few exceptions given the breadth of subject matter and the large array of modules on offer. One would expect a much more varied and creative approach to assessment practices. Perhaps again the issue is one of articulation.

In more studio based modules (the majority) I would expect to see assessments at 100% Practical or 70% Practical relating to the production of an artefact and perhaps 30% relating to documentation of the working process and decision making process of the student. Theory focussed modules might have 2 assessment points – 3,000-word assignment (60%) – Group Seminar Presentation (40%). This is an example but assessment should not drive student learning. It should test and evaluate it and be able to offer feedback in such a way that the student can understand better what they have achieved and why in order to move forwards. One key aspect of 'graduateness' is how to become a self-reflexive art practitioner'. The question is how do you get the students to this point?

There is rare mention in the SER of student self directed study (1 programme thankfully mentions it) and a mention of on-line learning materials but this was not evidenced during the site visit.

There is little evidence in the SER that the partnership and dialogue opportunities between staff and students could be a highly creative and active learning experience for all participants. The current sense (and I acknowledge that I didn't witness any teaching happening) is that the staff/student interface doesn't suggest that this partnership is one where they are both 'co-producers' of knowledge. There appears to be an approach to pedagogy which aligns itself with the historic transmission models of learning so inherent in the conservatoire model of arts training. Again, this is part supposition because the programme documentation doesn't elaborate on how learning is instigated other than signalling that all students do lectures/seminars/workshops/ quizzes/homework. It is worth noting here that the BA

Printmaking and Graphics documentation came across with much more clarity than other subject documentation submitted.

It would be helpful for further expert visits to have access to the marks profiles for different programme cohorts that would sit alongside other data sets relating to progression and exit velocity i.e. how many students graduate and what are their final marks profiles. This would be an integral part of an annual metrics of success profile.

There is some serious and exciting development work to be undertaken in this area in order to ensure the future stability and growth of the Art+Design area with the Faculty of Arts. Without a strategic development plan being identified and resourced, then it is highly likely that the institution will continue to receive external reports that are less than favourable to the institution. This is an opportune moment to do things differently so that all the stakeholders, current, and future for these subjects, can benefit from the changes required to provide a significantly enhanced learning environment for students.

The observations here relate in general to all the portfolio of programmes. Some are better articulated and focussed than others as stated above, but all have a number of issues that need to be addressed.

Student enhancement / experience.

It was a pleasure to meet the large student group that attended the afternoon session on 19th May.

Many of the students present confirmed that there were feedback processes in place.

There appeared to be a big variation in the student's experience in relation to accessing programme and module handbooks which set out in detail and in a student user-friendly way what the programmes of study aims to achieve and how they will be achieved. Given the on-going difficulties with the production of the formal documentation, it is perhaps not surprising that programme level documentation for students appeared to vary. This is something that the programme leader for each programme should remedy so that at the start of each academic cycle a fully articulated student handbook for each programme should be readily available on line and/or in print. This in some respects becomes a contractual document with the students because it can make explicit what is expected of them in relation to their studies.

I think the student experience could be significantly enhanced by creating a better IT infrastructure in which Supported Open Learning (SOL) might be developed. This electronic space would allow students and staff to upload work in progress, assignment briefs, video links and support an enhanced space for dialogue and debate relating to each programme. Developing SOL materials for modules could be rolled out over a 3-year period and be focussed on accessing freely available content that is increasingly available via the internet.

As detailed above, I think that Years 3 and 4 of the BA programmes should be offering thematic strands of activity relevant to the professional career aspirations of the student body – teacher training, independent creative practitioner, advanced research study.

In relation to all the programme areas I think it would be beneficial to scope out the opportunities that might exist to develop a graduate business incubator project that could be a public/private partnership initiative that would support graduating students through the transition period from end of studies into the workplace especially those graduates who want to set up their own creative industries focussed business. These initiatives

have been very successful in the UK Higher Education sector which were originally pump primed via Government funding through the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) and through supporting academic/research staff to work with private and public sector businesses to help them sustain, innovate, develop their business models and grow their client base in order to grow the workforce and provide internship experiences for graduating students. This would be opening up a new dimension a round knowledge transfer between the University and regional and national businesses.

There is clearly expertise and enthusiasm for this in parts of the faculty and I think this could be a really critical development to support Prishtina University students to effective transit into the professional world. These success stories can then be utilised as marketing to attract new students into the University.

2. Staff

The 2015 report suggested that a number of the issues identified may be down to the current profile of the teaching staff which as evidenced through the CVs, are predominantly subject based arts practitioners. This being the case it might be suggested that whilst the staff have extensive subject knowledge, they are less experienced in articulating their craft and expertise in a modern University context. This is in no way to discredit individuals nor to undervalue the skills and knowledge that they bring to their encounters to students, but in order to create a successful portfolio of programmes at under and postgraduate level there clearly needs to be developed over a period of time quite a different teaching and learning ecology. This would also include the development of teaching technicians who support students outside of the face to face class time as well as support staff to prepare workshops for the students.

It appears that the balance between teaching, technical and administrative support isn't yet in place to support the ambitions of the Art+Design area.

In relation to many of the above comments I would like to add that whilst there would be specific value in having departmental staff qualified to PhD. Level and to be engaged in research work, that this is an issue about current priorities. My experience of 30 years in the HEI sector tells me that having a PhD doesn't necessarily mean you have expertise as a teacher or as a catalyst for learning. The issue here is what is the best ecology needed to move the current programme team and their students forwards now.

3. Resources.

The current resource base – and I'm referring here principally to space, technology, materials for making, technical support staff. Library and SOL provision are not comparable to a similar sized operation in a mainstream European context. I understand there has been some developments but they do seem to operating on a borderline threshold of what is acceptable for students engaged in a 4-year programme of study.

As an example Print Making students at BA and MA level number 13. They have one specialist room with limited equipment for the whole 4 years of study plus MA study. Painting and Sculpture likewise, with 35 BA/MA students using 2 studio based spaces in which to work and Sculpture 10 students. These subject areas are space hungry and would benefit from additional shared and specific space. During the site

visit there was little sense of understanding how different year groups of students effectively moved through these spaces on a weekly basis.

I saw no adequate storage facilities for work-in-progress or a managed stores room where base line materials are kept and distributed at modular /programme level. These would all be seen as standard provision in other main European contexts. I am acutely aware that making these comparisons is not useful and that other benchmarking criteria may be more suitable but one of the aims of this process is to confirm, or otherwise, a level of comparability with a peer group European context. This does not mean that highly efficient learning cannot happen within the current provision. Studio based practices like painting, sculpture, printmaking, installation work have particular space requirements and these are certainly currently borderline acceptable.

The 'clean tech' spaces required perhaps for Graphics is often an easier to fix and often the setting up of a suite of PCs/Macs loaded with specific software can open up a large amount of learning opportunities and can benefit from recruiting larger student numbers so the University sees a better return on its investments.

This will be a crucial strategic set of decisions for the new faculty management team in terms of the volume of portfolio activity it can adequately support. This next phase of development is crucial. I would also advocate here, as far as is possible, that IT investments are not exclusively ring-fenced to certain programme groups but that the resources that are invested in can be fully utilised by all students. This needs careful management but it can be done. Often demonstrating to senior managers the impact of the investment in terms of outcomes can provide leverage for new investments in an area.

It would be helpful for staff to have a better and more transparent understanding of how resources are allocated. Most University institutions would have a Resource Allocation Model (RAM) which relates student numbers, income, staffing, materials, IT as a way of demonstrating what can be invested in and why. Again with the increasing development of private sector providers, it will be important that Prishtina University makes every effort to ensure a viable infrastructure for its Arts related portfolio.

4. Recommendations:

It is recommended that the existing provision in the Dept. of Fine Arts and Applied Arts be permitted to run for a period of 3 years on condition that the following items are fully dealt with within a 12-month period of receipt of this report and that failure to comply with the core conditions will mean the suspension of the provision until such a time it fully meets the requirements.

Core Conditions:

- A programme of staff related activities be developed as part of a strategic Faculty and University plan to support current staff teams in the Art and Design related areas to enhance their skills and knowledge in articulating the pedagogical imperatives of their subject areas, both in terms of the production of formal quality assurance styled documentation for external audiences/agencies and stakeholders as well as translating these documents

into user-friendly student programme and module handbooks. This would be a formal part of a positive staff development initiative.

- That in relation to the above that a parallel strategy be developed, resourced and implemented focussing on 'Best Practice Initiatives in Art+Design Teaching Pedagogy' which will enable the existing teams to review the current programme offerings to ensure that the best teaching, learning and assessment strategies are in place serving the needs of the student body. This would be a formal part of a positive staff development initiative.
- That the above two initiatives are mapped into the forthcoming Departmental and Faculty Action Plan Documents.
- That specific timelines are set for the production of enhanced documentation that jointly meets the formal quality assurance requirements of the University and of KAA and that the documentation is re-submitted for formal review by no later than April 2017 ensuring that the formal documentation can then be translated into student friendly documentation for all programmes by the start of the 2017 academic cycle. Failure to meet the agreed a deadline would result in suspension of further recruitment activities.
- That a strategy be developed and submitted to the University authorities detailing what forms of investment the Art+Design areas require in order to:
 - enhance student recruitment,
 - aid student retention so they complete their programmes of study,
 - enhance the student learning experience,
 - support the students to transition into further study and/or into employment.
- Given the current resource base as defined above for the Art + Design provision but especially for the Dept. of Fine Arts, that no new provision is brought on stream until such a time that the resources are improved for the current portfolio offering **OR** that the current portfolio is reviewed and subsequently reduced in scope creating some capacity for investment in other existing or new initiatives. This observation is based on the strong view that the current resource envelope is already over stretched in key areas.

Additional Recommendations – Enhancement:

- To scope the possibility of developing a trans and inter-disciplinary graduate incubator project enabling graduating Year 4 students to gain access to an infrastructure (space, staff, technology, specialist advice and guidance) enabling them to capitalise on their skills and knowledge via commercially orientated partnerships with the public and private sector **OR** to incorporate and embed such a strategy as a core part of a stranded part of a Year 4 BA programme.

Steve Purcell

Emeritus Professor – International Cultural Development.

Department of Music Arts

General Remarks

The changes put in place by the Department of Music Arts in response to the findings of the previous Accreditation Team are to be commended. It is clear that the leadership and the level of expertise in current quality enhancement practice in European Higher Education shown by the Curriculum Co-ordinator has been effective in benefitting the development of the Department. We would recommend that this approach is highlighted as good practice within the Faculty and used to inform the quality enhancement and development of other Departments.

The consolidation of the curriculum groups from 7 to 2 (Performance; Composition and Pedagogy) and the merging of the master's programmes has enabled previously isolated staff, with only one Full Time member for each programme, to come together and work collaboratively on a more consistent approach to teaching, learning and assessment. The Module Template is a good example of such an output. The evaluation of external programmes by the team is another. This programme re-structuring also provides a much clearer study route for the students.

New committees have been formed in Strategic Development, Facilities, and Teaching and Learning and this allows the staff voice to be heard at Faculty level as well as enabling a more collegiate decision making process and providing clearer communication from the Faculty to the staff team. It is important that the University recognises and draws on the expertise of its staff.

The Department should be commended on the quality of its academic staff, the enthusiasm shown by staff for their professional practice and willingness to improve the student experience through the adoption of new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment and for their international professional success.

1. Academic Programmes and Student Management

The quality, range and academic aims of the programmes are appropriate. The University is well represented in National and International Festivals and concerts, which reflects well on the standard of student achievement. Local staff-led festivals encourage international performers to the city and this gives students the opportunity to experience masterclasses by international experts. It would be useful to consider extending the range and frequency of external professional visiting lecturers to ensure an international and current perspective is offered to the students throughout the year.

Ongoing curriculum and student experience enhancement has included the addition of student choice in the study of composition styles, allowing students to compose in their own style and choose their own supervisor.

Employability: It is clear that there has been an increased focus on the development of student employability with the establishment of the Careers Office at the University. It is good to see that work placement in local schools and orchestras is available and it would be useful to consider how to explicitly embed these placements within the curriculum and further develop employability skills within courses. Whilst currently there is high demand for Music graduates locally within the music schools, orchestras and bands, it would be useful to consider how to expose students to alternative forms of employment within the programmes. The Faculty-wide electives offered, such as Art Management and Sound Design (UG) and Music Technology and Art/Culture Management (PG) are helpful in this regard. There may be relevant courses delivered by other Faculties in the University that could be contextualised for delivery to Music students or used as a guide to broaden the range of employability skills developed within current courses.

Research: The dissemination of the department's music practice is clearly seen through the impressive engagement with national and international festivals and concerts. Engagement with academic conferences is less well represented and it would be useful to consider how staff could be encouraged to contextualise and write about their professional practice and how Practice as Research could be developed within the department. This would enable staff research to be embedded within teaching and for staff to develop frameworks for studying at higher degree level.

Currently, only 1 member of Full Time staff holds a higher degree qualification and only 2 Part Time staff hold Doctorates. This is an area that should be addressed.

Theoretical courses tend to concentrate on the study of technique, which, though appropriate within the remit of the programmes, would benefit from the introduction of contextual studies that considers current research into appropriate areas.

Assessment: The Module Template clearly indicates to the student the modes of assessment used in the course and the weighting of assessment components. It would be useful to map these to the Learning Outcomes of the course to ensure that all Learning Outcomes are met. It would also be useful to provide students with the marking criteria for each assessment component so that students can be assured that marking is consistent and transparent. This would also aid the clarity of feedback given to students on their work. The development of a marking grid for performance (to include criteria such as interpretation of style and technical ability) is currently in progress through the Teaching and Learning Committee and on approval this document should be published to the students.

Feedback to students on their work and progress with their studies tends to be aural and informal. The use of 1-to-1 consultations with students is good practice but it would be useful to consider how written feedback, clearly linked to marking criteria, might be employed throughout the student's programme, not just within the transcript letter at graduation.

Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes are clearly written and provide a clear indication for student achievement. It would be useful to review how these align with the taxonomy of assessment domains at each level in accordance with the FQ-EHEA. In particular, analysis and evaluation at level 6 (final UG year) should be 'critical' and Masters level should include 'originality', 'critical awareness' and evidence that students are at the 'forefront of the discipline'.

2. Staff

It would be useful to review staffing levels to ensure that there is a consistency of support for all instrumental areas, according to need, to ensure a consistent student experience.

The demands on academic staff time within the Department are high, due to the nature of the field of study. It would be useful to work towards a staffing hours allocation model that is fair, consistent and transparent and one that takes into account the individual student tuition hours required of the music programmes.

There is only one member of administrative staff for the Department at UG level and only one for all Masters programmes in the Faculty. This places an undue burden on academic staff. The level and location of administrative staff support for both students and lecturing staff should be reviewed to ensure that staff are able to work effectively and that students are well supported.

The student and staff experience would be enhanced by the introduction of a Personal Tutor/Academic Advisor system that ensures students are clearly assigned a member of teaching staff as their Personal Tutor/Academic Advisor and are given the opportunity to meet regularly with their assigned Tutor to review their progress. This should be allocated within the staff deployment model.

Staff Development: The 1-year sabbatical offered to staff to undertake research is a useful opportunity in regards to staff development. However, within the Department there are only 3 staff that meet the criteria for this programme. Developing staff to enable them to apply should be considered. This would involve offering support for staff to undertake higher degree and PhD programmes.

3. Resources

Facilities: The development of the on-site concert hall is a positive step in improving teaching and the student experience. There appears to be limited on-site facilities dedicated for instrumental practice and it would be useful to know the Faculty's plans in this regard. Classrooms would benefit from acoustic isolation, particularly if the more widespread use of Audio Visual equipment is planned. Consideration should be given to the standard of loudspeakers used in AV set-ups in order to ensure that audio quality is suitable for the development of critical listening skills.

Learning resources: Indicative literature for each course is clearly indicated in the Module Templates and it would be useful to confirm that these texts and music

scores are available within the Department library or Central City library. Provision of learning resources online, particularly access to current research through e-journals, should be considered.

IT resources: Student access to general and specialist IT is limited and currently tends to rely on students using their own devices and software. With the increasing convergence of music practice and technology the need for students and staff to access current software programs is essential for future skills development and employability. Appropriate software for composition, such as Sibelius, and for Sound Design, such as Avid, should be made available as part of the study programmes.

4. Recommendations:

It is recommended that the existing provision in the Department of Music Arts be permitted to run for a further period of 3 years and that the following recommendations be considered;

To extend the range and frequency of external professional visiting lecturers to ensure an international and current perspective is offered to the students.

To continue to build research into the curriculum and to embed this within teaching delivery.

To review staffing levels to ensure that there is a consistency of support for all instrumental areas, according to need, to ensure a consistent student experience.

To work towards a staffing hours allocation model that is fair, consistent and transparent and one that takes into account the individual student tuition hours required of the music programmes.

To review the level and location of administrative staff support for both students and lecturing staff to ensure that staff are able to work effectively and that students are well supported.

To introduce a Personal Tutor/Academic Advisor system that ensures students are clearly assigned a member of teaching staff as their Personal Tutor/Academic Advisor and are given the opportunity to meet regularly with their assigned Tutor to review their progress. This should be allocated within the staff deployment model.

To publish clear information to students regarding the marking criteria used for assessment of their work.

To consider offering elective courses to students sourced from across the University, in order to enhance the range of employability skills taught.

To continue to review course Learning Outcomes to ensure that descriptors are appropriate to level, in line with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA).

To review student access to IT and specialist software and to provide software where it is essential to the course.

To put in place a staff development programme to support staff in obtaining higher degree qualifications.

To consider offering support for staff to enable them to gain teaching qualifications.

Andrew Fryer
June, 2016