

**Report of the Review Panel Approved  
by the Teaching Council  
following the  
Review of the Higher Diploma in Art for  
Art and Design Teachers,  
Limerick Institute of Technology/  
Limerick School of Art and Design**

**19 September 2011**

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## 1. Background

The Teaching Council is the statutory body charged with setting the standards for entry to the teaching profession and ensuring that these standards are upheld.

In accordance with Section 38 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001, the Council shall:

- (a) review and accredit the programmes of teacher education and training provided by institutions of higher education and training in the State,
- (b) review the standards of education and training appropriate to a person entering a programme of teacher education and training, and
- (c) review the standards of knowledge, skill and competence required for the practice of teaching,

and shall advise the Minister and, as it considers appropriate, the institutions concerned.

The Teaching Council's role in relation to the review and accreditation of programmes of initial teacher education is distinct from the academic accreditation which programmes also undergo. Academic accreditation is based on the suitability of a programme for the award of a degree/diploma, whereas professional accreditation for any profession is a judgement as to whether a programme prepares one for entry into that profession.

The review and accreditation of programmes of initial teacher education by the Teaching Council provides an opportunity for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to demonstrate that they offer quality programmes of teacher education. It is expected that the graduates of such programmes achieve programme aims and learning outcomes which are aligned with the values and professional dispositions and the standards of teaching, knowledge, skill and competence which are central to the practice of teaching.

In order to guide its review of programmes, the Teaching Council has drafted its *Strategy for the Review and Accreditation of Programmes of Initial Teacher Education* (hereinafter referred to as "the Council's review strategy"). In 2010, the Council invited expressions of interest from HEIs wishing to put forward programmes for review in accordance with that draft strategy. A number of programmes was subsequently put forward and it was agreed that four of those would be reviewed in the 2010/2011 academic year. This report sets out the findings following one of those reviews, i.e., the review of the Higher Diploma in Art for Art and Design Teachers, (hereinafter referred to as "the programme") in Limerick Institute of Technology/Limerick School of Art and Design ("hereinafter referred to as "the Institute").

In parallel with the drafting of the Council's review strategy, the Council has also published its *Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education*, which sets out its vision for teacher education at all stages of the continuum – initial teacher education, induction and continuing professional development. That policy will influence the design and content of teacher education programmes and will feed into the final

review strategy. Also significant is the Council's publication of *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers*. That document sets out the criteria which must be observed by programme providers in developing reconceptualised and extended programmes of initial teacher education. Current accreditation of all programmes will be subject to the recommendations and requirements which are set out in the Council's *Policy on the Continuum* and its *Criteria and Guidelines*.

## **2. Publication of this Report**

The Teaching Council routinely makes information available to the public in relation to its functions and activities and, in line with that practice, this report is being made available on the Council's website, [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie)

## **3. Overview of the Review Process**

The review of the programme took place in the 2010/2011 academic year in accordance with the Council's review strategy. The process was formally initiated when the Review Panel was appointed by the Teaching Council's Director with Professor Sheelagh Drudy as Chairperson<sup>1</sup>. The Review Panel Chairperson wrote to the Institute on 20 September 2010 to arrange the preliminary meeting in accordance with Section 6.1 of the Council's review strategy.

From the outset, there was wholehearted engagement by staff of the Institute and a genuine openness to the review and accreditation process.

The preliminary meeting took place on 16 November 2010 and a list of attendees is included in Appendix 2. At that meeting, the date of the Review Panel visit was agreed, together with the deadline for the submission of documentation in line with Section 5 of the Council's review strategy.

Documentation was submitted by the Institute on 23 December 2010 and the first meeting of the Review Panel took place on 2 March 2011. At that meeting, the Panel reviewed the documentation and considered the first draft of the visit schedule.

The visit took place in a number of phases. On 3 March 2011, three panel members visited the Institute to observe lectures and workshops. The visits by two Panel members to schools hosting students in placement took place on 12 and 13 April 2011. The visit of the full panel to the Institute, in accordance with Section 6 of the Council's review strategy, took place on 16 and 17 May 2011. Further details in relation to that visit are available in Section 5 of this report.

At the conclusion of the visit, an oral presentation was made to staff of the Institute by the Chairperson of the Review Panel, in the presence of her fellow Panel members, outlining the Panel's preliminary findings. This report elaborates on the issues raised in that presentation.

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<sup>1</sup>Details of the Panel membership are included at Appendix 1.

## 4. Documentation

The documentation submitted by the Institute was substantial and adhered to the template provided by the Teaching Council in the *Pro Forma* which accompany its review strategy. Key areas of focus were:

- conceptual framework and programme aims
- student intake
- programme content
- structure and design of the programme
- the school placement
- assessment policies and procedures
- financial resources
- staffing
- institute facilities
- student support and guidance system
- processes
- learning outcomes.

The Panel considers that the documentation articulated fully the aspirations and aims of the programme, which are laudable, and provided valuable evidence of the inputs, processes and outcomes associated with the programme, as defined in the Teaching Council's review strategy. It commends the Institute's ready cooperation in supplementing that documentation when requested, and notes that it demonstrated the Institute's clear commitment to, and engagement with, the review process.

## 5. Review Visit

As set out in the *Overview* above, the visit of the full Review Panel to the Institute took place on 16 and 17 May 2011. To supplement the observations already made during visits in March and April, this visit consisted largely of reading, observation and dialogue, and provided the Panel with the opportunity to consider the programme in detail, and to explore further a number of issues which had emerged during the Panel's reading of the documentation.

In the course of the two days, the Review Panel engaged in:

- observation of studio work
- meetings with programme staff, including internal and external supervisors of the school placement component
- examination of course work, examination scripts, published research material, etc.
- meetings with Co-operating Teachers and recent graduates of the programme
- meetings with current students of the programme
- a meeting with principals of schools hosting students on placement and/or employing graduates of the programme
- a guided tour of the facilities.

The full schedule for the visits to the Institute is included in Appendix 3.

On 12 and 13 April, two Panel members visited eight schools hosting students on placement. These visits included observation of eight student teachers in their host classrooms and subsequent discussions with them, their supervisors, some of their Co-operating Teachers and some of their school Principals.

There was a very commendable level of engagement by the Institute throughout the process and the Panel experienced warm hospitality during the review visit and placement observations. The Panel appreciated that the President and members of the Institute's senior management team engaged fully with the review visit.

## **6. Overall Finding**

Having regard to the documentation which was submitted and considered in detail by the Review Panel, and the Panel's subsequent visits to the Institute and to schools, the Review Panel recommends to the Teaching Council that the programme be granted accreditation. Such accreditation would normally have a lifespan of five years but this may be adjusted in the context of proposed extensions to programmes of initial teacher education proposed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The commendations made in Section 7 relate to areas of particular strength which the Panel has identified.

The recommendations made in Section 8 relate to areas which the Panel believes to be of strategic importance to the programme. It therefore proposes that the Council should require the Institute to submit a time-bound action plan setting out its proposals for implementation of those recommendations. It further suggests that the Council should prioritise those areas for particular attention when the programme falls due for re-accreditation.

In the case of the national issue raised in Section 9, the Panel recommends that the Council engages in discussion with relevant parties at national level.

## **7. Commendations**

Arising from its review of the programme, the Review Panel has noted a number of particular strengths of the programme, as follows:

### **7.1 Overall quality of the programme**

The panel commends the aspirations and aims of the programme and notes that they are reflected, for example, in the emphasis on a constructivist approach and on active learning methodologies. In the context of the resources available, there was evidence that the programme is being reviewed and modified as appropriate. The programme is held in high esteem by students and graduates.

## **7.2 Calibre of students and graduates of the programme**

During its visit, the panel met with students of the programme and found them to be professional, articulate, loyal, mature, reflective and hard-working. The Panel saw evidence that the programme is producing professionally competent art teachers. The high calibre of students and graduates was attested to by Principals and Co-operating Teachers.

## **7.3 Highly motivated and committed staff**

Arising from its meetings with staff, graduates and students of the programme, the Panel considers that the staff of the programme, both full-time and occasional, are highly motivated and committed to the programme and form a cohesive unit. There is evidence of a supportive relationship between full-time staff and part-time school placement tutors and of careful induction of these tutors. There is also evidence of a positive, supportive relationship between staff and students.

## **7.4 Teaching, learning and assessment**

The Panel commends the effectiveness of the programme in developing students' professional skills. In particular, the skills workshops are highly valued by students. The use of peer teaching in those workshops is a particular strength of the programme.

There is a variety of assessment modes used in the programme and this is to be welcomed. It should be noted that, in order to attain an overall honour on the programme, an honour is required in respect of the school placement.

## **7.5 Effective support systems**

There is a culture which supports regular student access to staff and effective structures are in place to support students experiencing difficulty during the school placement.

## **7.6 Relationships with placement schools**

The Panel is aware that programme staff have nurtured and sustained excellent working relationships with placement schools.

## **7.7 Use of ICT**

The panel was impressed by the innovative use of ICT and digital media and their integration within the programme. The panel also commends the effective use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) across the programme.

## **7.8 The portfolio**

The electronic portfolio is an effective means of recording the student experience and summarising student learning during the course of the programme. It has significant potential as a platform for ongoing reflection and professional development.

## **7.9 Communities of practice**

There is an emphasis on the development of communities of professional practice which starts during the programme and which is enhanced by the annual art exhibition of student work. This emphasis on communities of practice continues into employment and is a particular strength of the

programme. The use of social media to sustain those communities of practice is a commendable feature of the programme.

#### **7.10 Special educational needs**

The Panel considered that the issue of special needs/universal access is handled very well on this programme.

### **8. Recommendations**

Arising from its review of the programme, the Panel has noted a number of areas of the programme which it recommends be further developed/improved.

The Panel's recommendations are as follows:

#### **8.1 Position of programme within the School of Art and Design**

The Panel notes the unique position of the programme within the School of Art and Design and recommends that opportunities for synergies therein be availed of, in the interest of enriching the learning environment for both staff and students.

#### **8.2 Staffing and resources**

While the Panel recognises the commitment and expertise of programme staff, it cautions that future teacher education requirements will necessitate additional full-time personnel and other resources, including research opportunities. The Panel further recommends to the Institute that there is an immediate need for additional administrative support and an increase in the number of school placement tutors. In addition, a wider range of appropriate online journals should be made available.

#### **8.3 Staff development**

Staff should avail of a dedicated budget for collaborative research which exists within the Institute. All staff, including occasional staff, should be encouraged to avail of opportunities for continuing professional development both within and outside of the Institute.

#### **8.4 School placement**

##### *8.4.1 Guidelines for placement schools*

The Panel recommends that the Institute should consolidate its partnership with placement schools and Cooperating Teachers, for example, by producing detailed written guidelines setting out, inter alia, the Institute's expectations for the placement, having regard to the Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations, 2009 and the important role of the Co-operating Teacher.

##### *8.4.2 Number of placement schools*

Insofar as possible, students should be placed in two schools, but not where they themselves were students.



#### 8.4.3 *Nature of the placement experience*

The Panel is of the view that the placement experience would be enriched if it were re-configured to allow for a greater degree of classroom observation and wider school experience. In particular, students on placement should be afforded opportunities to observe the teaching of Junior and Leaving Certificate examination classes. The Panel recommends that a handbook for schools should be prepared, outlining the Institute's expectations regarding the placement and the breadth of experience which it should entail.

#### **8.5 Skills workshops**

The Panel recommends that the programme of skills workshops should be planned at the beginning of each year based on an assessment of need.

#### **8.6 Student intake**

The Institute should document a robust admissions process to ensure that all entrants to the programme wishing to be registered as teachers meet the requirements set out in the Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations, 2009 and in the *List of Degree/Teacher Education Programmes Recognised for Post-Primary Registration Purposes*.

#### **8.7 Integration of theory and practice**

The integration of theory and practice presents a major challenge for all teacher education programmes. The Panel noted that the number of contact hours for the Foundation Studies of Education is low. In the absence of an opportunity to meet with the occasional staff who facilitate these areas of study, it is not possible for the Panel to make further comment.

#### **8.8 Cross-curricular linkages**

The Panel recommends that an awareness of cross-curricular opportunities be introduced into the criteria for assessment of school-based projects.

#### **8.9 Literacy and numeracy**

The programme should aim to develop students' awareness of the *Better Literacy and Numeracy* policy recently published by the Minister for Education and Skills, and its relevance to their role as teachers.

#### **8.10 Distribution of credits**

The panel recommends that the Institute should set out the distribution of credits within the programme, with reference to the Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations, 2009.

## **9. National Issues**

As well as the recommendations above, the Panel considers that there is an issue arising from its review of the programme which has national implications and which should, more appropriately, be considered at policy level by the Council. This is as follows:

### **9.1 HEI/School Partnerships**

There is a need to design and implement a new model of partnership between teacher education institutions and schools which will improve the quality of the student teachers' experience in schools, including a more formal involvement of Co-operating Teachers.

## Appendix 1 – Review Panel Membership

<p><b>An independent Review Panel Chairperson with expertise in teacher education</b></p>	<p><b>Professor Sheelagh Drudy</b>, Emeritus Professor of Education at the School of Education, University College Dublin and former Head of School and Director of the Postgraduate Diploma in Education. Professor Drudy is a former teacher, educational researcher and teacher educator. She was a member of the first Teaching Council appointed by the Minister in 2005.</p>
<p><b>One external expert from equivalent teacher education programmes, where possible in another jurisdiction.</b></p>	<p><b>Dr Jackie Lambe</b>, Course Co-ordinator, Postgraduate Certificate in Education, University of Ulster. Dr Lambe was formerly a post-primary teacher of Art and Design for more than 20 years.</p>
<p><b>A member of the Teaching Council</b></p>	<p><b>Dr Jim Gleeson</b>, Senior Lecturer in Education, University of Limerick. Dr Gleeson has been working in initial and continuing teacher education for more than 25 years. He has considerable experience of the Council’s review and accreditation process having already been a member of a Review Panel in the 2009/2010 academic year.</p>
<p><b>A registered teacher</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Lily Cronin</b>, Science and Biology Teacher, Mercy Mount Hawk in Tralee and Teaching Council Chairperson. Lily has 35 years’ experience of classroom methodology and management. She has considerable experience of the Council’s review and accreditation process, having participated in another review panel in the current year and in a review in the 2009/2010 academic year.</p>
<p><b>A representative of a professional body, with experience of accreditation processes in another system</b></p>	<p><b>Mr Jim Murphy</b>, retired Dean of Architecture, University College Dublin. Jim was the UCD Co-ordinator of a new School of Architecture at CESUGA La Coruna, Galicia, Spain from its inception in 2003 to June 2010. He is currently a Director of the Architect Register Admission Examination (ARAE) and a member of the RIAI Visiting Accreditation Board to the School of Architecture at the University of Limerick.</p>
<p><b>A person with expertise in the support and/or evaluation of teaching and learning at post-primary level in the sector/subject in question.</b></p>	<p><b>Dr Hazel Stapleton</b>, Examinations and Assessment Manager at the State Examinations Commission. Dr Stapleton was formerly an Art Inspector at the Department of Education and Skills, and prior to that, a teacher of art at post-primary level and in the areas of special education and further education.</p>
<p><b>The Director of the Teaching Council or his/her nominee</b></p>	<p><b>Ms Áine Lawlor</b>, CEO/Director. Áine was a school principal before transferring to work as National Co-ordinator for the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP), the in-service programme undertaken by the Department of Education and Skills. She was appointed first Director of the Teaching Council in 2004.</p>

## **Appendix 2 – Attendees at the Preliminary Meeting, 16 November 2010**

### *Limerick Institute of Technology*

- Mr Terry Twomey, Registrar,
- Ms Tracy Fahey, Head of Department, Art and Design
- Mike Fitzpatrick, Head of School, Art and Design
- Dr Kieran Meagher – Course Leader, Art and Design Education
- Ms Maria Finucane – Lecturer

### *The Teaching Council/Review Panel*

- Professor Sheelagh Drudy – Review Panel Chairperson
- Ms Áine Lawlor, CEO/Director, the Teaching Council
- Ms Carmel Kearns, Communications and Education Officer, the Teaching Council

### Appendix 3 –Schedule of Visits

Advance visit by some panel members to observe lectures, workshops and studio work

Date	Time	Lecture	Tutor(s)
3 March 2011	09.30 – 10.45	Art and Design Curriculum and Research	Dr Kieran Meagher
	11.30 – 12.45	Review of Digital Media Work	Michael Fortune, Maria Finucane & Dr Kieran Meagher
	13.45 – 15.00	Art and Design Teaching Methodology	Maria Finucane

#### Visits to Placement Schools

Date	School	Panel Member
12 April 2011	2 x Voluntary Secondary Schools, Co. Clare	Dr Hazel Stapleton
12 April 2011	2 x Voluntary Secondary Schools, Limerick	Dr Jackie Lambe
13 April 2011	Community School, Co. Galway	Dr Hazel Stapleton
13 April 2011	Voluntary Secondary School, Co. Clare	Dr Hazel Stapleton
13 April 2011	2 x Voluntary Secondary Schools, Limerick	Dr Jackie Lambe

## Panel Visit to Limerick School of Art and Design

### Day 1: Monday, 16 May 2011

Time	Session	
9.00a.m.	Meeting with Dr Maria G. Hinfelaar, President LIT, Terry Twomey, Registrar, LIT, and Mike Fitzpatrick, Head of School, LSAD	
9.15a.m.	Meeting with programme staff	
10.30a.m.	Coffee Break (allowing an opportunity to meet programme staff)	
11.00a.m.	Guided tour of facilities, including a short meeting with the librarian	Some Panel members observe digital presentations
12.00p.m.	Meeting of Review Panel	
12.45p.m.	Lunch	
1.30p.m.	Panel members observe digital presentations	Some Panel members observe students at work in studio
2.30p.m.	Meeting with current students	
3.30p.m.	Meeting of Review Panel	
4.30p.m.	Meeting with graduates	
5.30p.m.	Meeting with Principals	Meeting with Co-operating Teachers
6.30p.m.	Meeting of Review Panel	

### Day 2: Tuesday, 17 May 2011

Time	Session	
9.00a.m.	Meeting of Review Panel	
9.30a.m.	Meeting with Jimmy Browne, Financial Controller and Registrar, Terry Twomey	Some Panel members to observe studio work
10.00a.m.	Meeting of Review Panel	
10.30a.m.	Videoconference with External Examiners	Some Panel members to observe studio work
11.00a.m.	Meeting of Review Panel/Coffee Break	
11.30a.m.	Some Panel members to observe workshop on curriculum and electronic portfolios	Meeting with part-time staff
12.45p.m.	Lunch	
1.30p.m.	Meeting of Review Panel	
5.00p.m.	Verbal presentation of preliminary findings by Professor Sheelagh Drudy, Review Panel Chairperson	

