

# **School of Creative Technologies Programmatic Review**



**Report of Programmatic Review Process**

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March and Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

**Including School response to panel findings  
and recommendations**

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## Programmatic Review: Introduction

Programmatic Review is a quality review and self study process whereby a provider conducts a critical evaluation of its programmes (or all programmes within a department/school, or all programmes within a field of learning), and produces a self evaluation report (SER). It comprises a critical evaluation of all aspects of each programme – its strategy, learning outcomes, modules, assessment, resources etc. Such a comprehensive review shall take place at least every five years, in keeping with current best practice.

Programmatic Review involves engagement in a process of self assessment, with inputs from experts and stakeholders, leading to an SER. Review of this report is by external peers, and results in a set of recommendations and clear actions based on interaction with the review group.

Programmatic Review is part of a continuous improvement which all providers of programmes should embrace and embed within their organisations. It is intended to be a positive, supportive and open process. It results in a five year plan for the provider in respect of the specific provision under review and which therefore will feed into the strategic plan.

## School of Creative Technologies: Summary

### Background

This Programmatic Review was the second for the School of Creative Technologies; the first Review took place in 2005.

### Suite of Undergraduate Programmes

<b>Department of Learning Sciences Head Dept: Dr. Marion Palmer</b>	<b>Department of Technology Head Dept: Dr. Mark Riordan</b>
DL141 Bachelor of Science Honours in Applied Psychology (Level 8)	DL133 Bachelor of Engineering in Audio Visual Media Technology (Level 7)
	DL131 Bachelor of Science in Computing in Multimedia Programming (Level 7)
	DL143 Bachelor of Science Honours in Computing in Multimedia Systems/Web Engineering (Level 8)
	DL142 Bachelor of Science Honours in Computing in Multimedia Systems/Web Engineering (1 Year Add-On Level 8)

For Level 9, HETAC accredited courses at the Institute, the School sought revalidation at Programmatic Review for the Masters of Science in Cyberpsychology.

The second Level 9 programme offered by the School is a Cross Institute programme (MA/MSc in Digital Media) which was validated in 2008; consequently the School is not seeking re-validation of this programme through its Programmatic Review process.

## Suite of Postgraduate Programmes

Department of Learning Sciences	Department of Technology
Masters of Science in Cyberpsychology	MA/MSc in Digital Media Cross Institute programme

Staff of the School produced a self-evaluation report prior to Programmatic Review. The Registrar then convened an external peer review panel, which met on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010. The following report identifies the findings of this panel.

## School of Creative Technologies Mission Statement

Against the backdrop of the Institute's strategic plan (*Creating Futures, IADT Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012*) the School of Creative Technologies has agreed a mission statement:

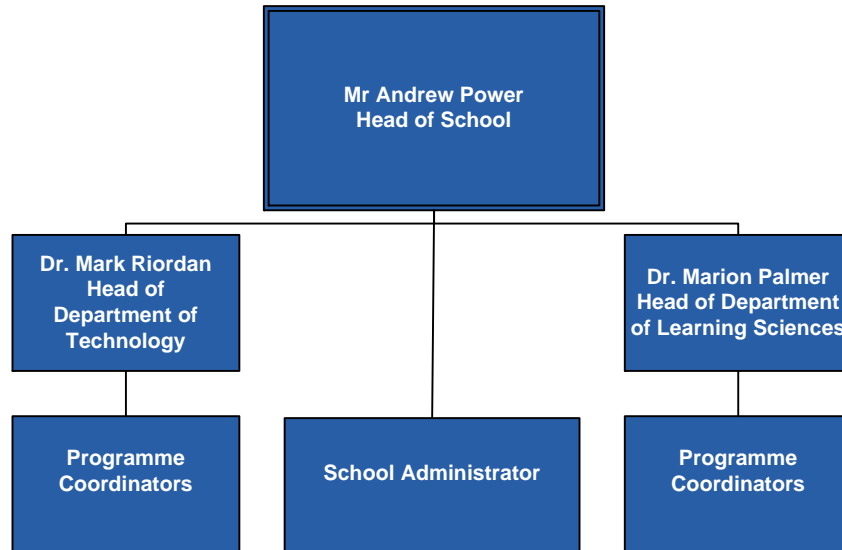
Creative Technologies at IADT is people-centred technology in a digital environment. The School offers dynamic programmes which combine technical skill and knowledge with an understanding of how technology operates in society.

Our goal, through both our taught programmes and research, is to explore the interaction of people and technology. This goal finds expression in a range of existing disciplines such as Audiovisual Technologies, Gaming, Multimedia, Psychology, e-Learning, Assistive Technologies, Teaching and Learning, e-Business; and emerging disciplines such as Cyberpsychology. Students at the School will find a wide range of career possibilities both within and outside these disciplines.

Because technology is always evolving, research is key to the development of the School and our students. It underpins and informs our taught programmes, develops the skills and expertise of staff, generates funding for growth and development and adds to the pool of knowledge, and forms a measure of our contribution to academic development in the Institute of Technology sector. In short, it means our programmes are among the most dynamic in the country, and always remain at the cutting edge of this fast-growing industry.

The School hosts the Centre for Creative Technologies and Applications (CCTA), which is an umbrella for existing and future research publications. Recent successes of the CCTA include significant funded research into wireless, mobile and assistive technologies.

## School Structure

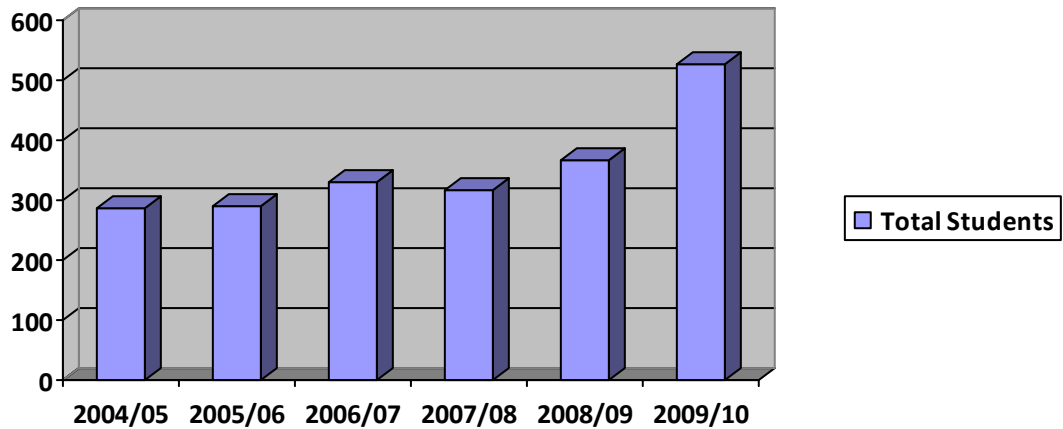


## Analysis of Learner Profile and Target Learner Groups

In the period since the School's last Programmatic Review the School has grown considerably from a total of 287 students in 2004/05 to a total student cohort of 526 in 2009/10 as shown in Figure 1.1. This growth has been achieved by the development of new programmes, and the constant development and expansion of existing programmes. There is a strong emphasis on the first year student experience and retention.

In addition, the number of students selecting Creative Technology programmes as their first preference has increased by 10%, to a total of 444, between 2008 and 2009. Further information on retention and completion statistics is available from the Registrar.

**Figure 1.1 Growth in Total Student Numbers**

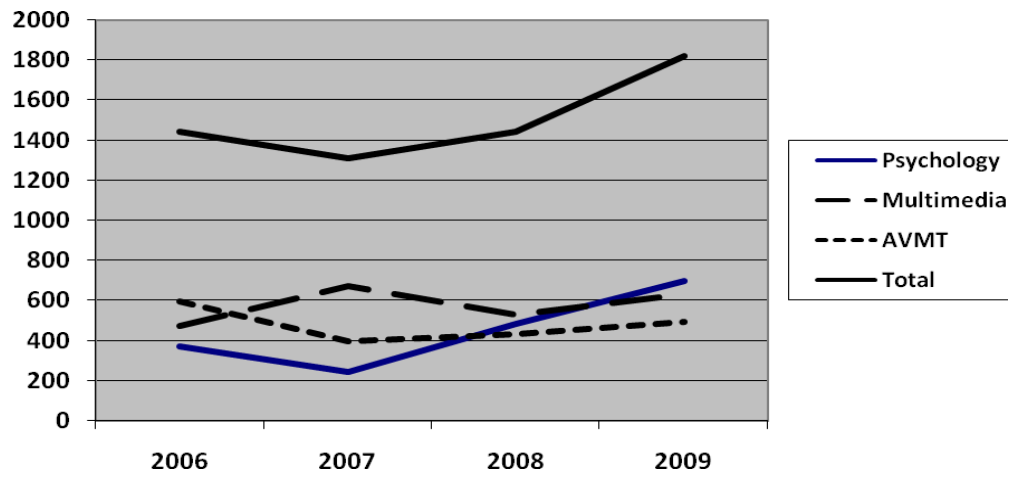


Parallel to this growth in student numbers the growth in overall CAO applications is dramatic as shown below in Table 1.1 and illustrated in Figure 1.2:

**Table 1.1 CAO numbers for the School of Creative Technologies 2005-2009**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	%increase first preferences	First preferences 08/09
Psychology	426	370	241	480	695	44.8	112
Multimedia	881	475	673	531	634	19.4	163
AVMT	628	594	394	432	491	13.6	169
Total	1935	1439	1308	1443	1820	26.2	

Figure 1.2 Growth in CAO Applications





## Membership of Programmatic Review Panel

Professor Alan Livingston (Chair)	Past Rector University College Falmouth, UK
Dr. Joseph Ryan	Registrar Athlone Institute of Technology Co. Westmeath
Professor Jan Noyes	Professor of Human Factors Psychology University of Bristol, UK
Mr. Simon Perkins	Multimedia Programme Leader Nottingham Trent University, UK
Dr. Michael O'Connell	Senior Lecturer School of Psychology, UCD
Dr. Kevin Jennings	Translational Research Leader National Digital Research Centre, Dublin
Mr. Peter Fox	Digicom, Dublin
Ms. Jessica Fuller	Managing Director/Producer Stillpoint Productions, Co. Roscommon
Dr. Deirdre MacIntyre	Director Institute of Child Education and Psychology Europe
Mr. Dermot Rogers	CEO Channel Content, Dublin
Mr. Hugh Sullivan	Education Officer Union of Students in Ireland

### For IADT

Mr. Jim Devine	President
Dr. Annie Doona	Registrar
Mr. Andrew Power	Head of School of Creative Technologies
Dr. Marion Palmer	Head of Department of Learning Sciences
Dr. Mark Riordan	Head of Department of Technology
Ms Laura Devlin	Cross Institute Administrator
Also present were Programme Coordinators and staff members, representing undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across the School of Creative Technologies.	

The Registrar of IADT attended the two day process in an observer/advisory capacity, and to provide guidance and information around IADT processes and procedures.

The IADT Cross Institute Administrator recorded the two day process, and subsequently drafted a report of the proceedings, in collaboration with the Panel Chair.

## Timetable for Programmatic Review

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2010:

9.00-10.00am	Initial meeting of Panel	Main issues and School Overview documentation
10.15-11.30am	Meeting with IADT Executive	Institutional context
11.30-12.30pm	Tour of Facilities	
13.30-15.00pm	Meeting with School Management, Programme Coordinators, Teams	Over view of programmes and School development
15.30-16.15pm	Meeting with Student reps	Student Feedback
16.15-17.00pm	Meeting with External Stakeholders	Industry/Stakeholder Feedback
17.15-18.00pm	Private Panel meeting	
18.00-18.30pm	Summary of Day 1	Feedback to School from Day 1

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010:

9.15-10.15am	Main Issues for Phase 2	Programme Documentation
10.30-13.00pm	Review of undergraduate programmes. Postgraduate SWOT analysis	Programme documents, including Level 9
14.00-15.00pm	Panel meeting	
15.00-15.30pm	Overall Summary	Feedback to Senior IADT Management

### Documentation provided for Panel

1. Volume 1: Institute Overview
2. Volume 2: School Overview
3. Programme Documents
4. Staff CVs

## **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

### **Private Panel Meeting to Identify Issues**

The Chair welcomed the Programmatic Review Panel

#### **Background information provided by Registrar, IADT**

- The Programmatic Review process was taking place in the context of an uncertain climate in the educational sector. Talks around a possible amalgamation between IADT and NCAD (as outlined in the McCarthy Report) have stalled due to NCAD commencing talks with another Institution in the university sector. The HEA strategy report is expected around June 2010, and curriculum and financial rationalisation is anticipated to figure prominently in this report. It is hoped the niche specialisations at IADT will ensure the Institute continues as an important contributor at national level, either independently or within a new Institutional structure.
- The Institute will undergo Institutional Review in January 2011
- All documents under consideration by the Panel have been subjected to rigorous internal procedures, having previously been submitted to IADT Programme Validation Committee and Academic Council

#### **Issues for consideration:**

Following discussion, the Panel identified some issues and queries they wished to pursue with the School teams. These included:

- a) The Panel noted the comprehensive, forward thinking quality of the documents, and remarked on the positive student atmosphere on campus
- b) A more rigorous Institute Marketing strategy is desirable, particularly in such competitive times
- c) Modularisation and Semesterisation
- d) Institute Research strategy
- e) Economic situation/current economy
- f) Connections to Industry
- g) Future developments
- h) Staffing – in relation to the current moratorium on recruitment in the public sector
- i) Feedback from Stakeholders
- j) Current technology
- k) School going forward – is the strategy consolidation versus development and expansion?

### **Self Evaluation Document (School Overview)**

The Chair outlined sections of the SER document which were in his view potential areas for reflection by the Panel over the two day process:

- Page 14, review of the School
- Page 16, changes since last Programmatic Review process (Panel Recommendations made in 2005)
- Page 28 – 32, facilities
- Page 32, future plans
- Page 52, Research challenges
- Page 61 – 69, external input
- Page 89, challenges for next five years
- Page 91, conclusion

### **Observations of Panel members:**

- Digital media area provides huge potential in the market place
- While the balance between technology and psychology was noted by some Panel members, this was not apparent to all on reading the documents – clarify strategy behind this
- In relation to the Institute strategy, to what extent does this happen at School level?
- Chapter 7 of SER document; Panel would like to see more details of student feedback from schools
- Tension between balancing the delivery of quality ideas and the needs of the market/employment
- The need to teach fundamentals of Audio Visual Media Technology, and how this relates to innovative use in business
- Pressure on third level to increase student numbers – risk to quality?

## **Institutional Context**

The President of IADT gave a presentation, outlining IADT Strategy, against a background of continuing changes in the Higher Education sector, with cuts in funding now running at 6% to date. However, the Capital development programme at the Institute is going ahead, with the construction of the National Film School building due to start at the end of 2010. This building will provide important and much needed space for Film and Media activities at IADT. The President outlined the Institute's vision, mission statement, structures, strategic imperatives and risk assessment factors (funding, quality, research and imminent HEA strategy) and informed the Panel that the School of Creative Technologies was at the fore in the areas of web engineering, psychology applied to IT and computing; all important skills for contributing to a creative economy

## **School Context**

The Head of the School of Creative Technologies gave a presentation, summarizing the School's perspective, citing;

- The School mission statement (page 5 of this report)
- The focus on the convergence of people centred technology with human psychological interaction
- The multi disciplinary environment which students experienced
- The School plays a role in up-skilling teachers at primary and secondary level
- The engagement with, and the development of, the creative industries through a strong and sustainable relationship with Creative Ireland
- Cross institute collaboration – Film and Radio staff teach on the AVMT programme, and there is a visual communications project across schools
- Projects include; exhibition website, development of a Masters in Teaching and Learning, IDEA, Enterprise week, Imagine Cup etc.

Since the last Programmatic Review in 2005, the Head of School informed the Panel that considerable developments had taken place within the School, including;

- All programmes had been updated
- Introduction of electives
- Taught Masters now available
- Student numbers have doubled
- Improved retention rates
- Evening programmes on offer
- Introduction of pathways on Psychology Applied to IT programme
- Academic publications by School staff
- Increasing number of staff had attained PhD level
- A new Head of School and a new Head of Department

- Introduction to Music Technologies
- Fully modularised for the past five years
- Head of Department of Learning Sciences has specific cross institute duties, including a role in funded research
- Deepening experience of Cyberpsychology – quite unique in Ireland
- Staff links abroad via conferences and presenting papers
- Networks with social partners
- Students have practical experience of convergence, submitting assignments in digital form, using music and electronics technology. Students use a 'Business Breakfast' to present their work, and manage to obtain employment in industry each year. The School 'Youtube' is getting a lot of hits.

In response to the Head of School's presentation, the Chair commended the Head of School on the School Overview document, and noted the positive student feedback contained in the document. The Chair felt the School enjoyed a distinctive niche in the educational sector, and suggested the School build on this.

A question and answer session ensued with members of School management and staff, and Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee. Issues discussed included:

#### Growth

The School has 520 students this year, expected to grow to about 600 next year. The School has had to be creative in dealing with issues of staff and space; while space can be negotiated to a certain extent, staff restraints are a national issue.

#### Specialised Equipment

While the School has a small equipment budget, most equipment is centrally funded. To date the School has managed to maintain full working classes, but with CAO numbers rising, there will be strategic facilities issues to consider in the future.

The President informed the Panel that the Institute grant was increased from half a million to one million in 2009, and IADT had permission to use some of it on equipment. The recruitment of staff remains a problem, with a benchmark of 6% reduction in staff being the current Government directive.

#### Student Destination Survey

The Head of School informed the Panel the School had considerable success in placing students in employment relevant to their disciplines. The economic downturn had not hit Technology as hard as other industries. Audio Visual Computing businesses were often focused on the smaller business model, especially in the current fiscal climate.

The School carry out an annual destination survey of its graduates; the profile usually includes students starting their own companies, set up ventures in the Media Cube, and external work with Eurotech, Microsoft etc.

A lot of Psychology graduates continue to Masters Level in Business, Clinical Psychology etc.; this focus on research equips students with a good range of skills. Final year projects on programmes are often suggested by 'real world' Industry.

### Creative Dimension

The Head of School informed the Panel the School strives to employ a creative approach to being different, citing three separate disciplines within the School (multimedia, psychology, AVMT), all with the common thread of being people centred. The School aim is to pursue the logic of their name, and think creatively about how people use Technology. The aim of converging creativity and technology in the School was to produce students who were technologists by profession, who applied their practical skills via a creative disposition. An example of this fusion in practice is on the BA in Visual Communications programme, where students are taught to apply graphic design principles in a Web environment.

### Research Ambitions

The Head of School emphasised the importance placed on promoting research in the School and the increase in peer reviewed papers, continuous learning and dissemination of research achieved in recent years.

The Head of School noted while funding research degrees through fees allowed for flexibility, it was quite difficult to do in practice due in part to the economic downturn and budget constraints.

Focusing on postgraduate programmes involves a certain risk element, running a programme is dependent on having enough student numbers to make the programme viable

### Erasmus

The Panel were informed by the Head of School that the Erasmus exchange programme was only recently underway, as other priorities such as launching new programmes had to date taken precedence. However, relationships are now formalised; one School staff member is in Turkey, and the School is in discussion with an Institute in Spain.

### Marketing

In response to a query by the Chair as to whether the School's Marketing Strategy was aggressive enough, the Head of School replied that while external marketing is necessary there must be a specific aim in doing this. More students may be desirable, but where to accommodate increased numbers was an issue. The Head of the Department of Technology added that on the ground marketing kept programmes full, with a steady demand over the last two years. The Head of the Department of Learning Sciences informed the Panel that since the BSc in Applied Psychology had changed its name (previously Psychology Applied to IT) the demand for places on the programme had increased.

The Head of School noted the Institute's growing reputation over the past 20 years is of benefit it terms of highlighting Creative Technologies niche programmes, and informed the Panel that first students' first preference option for the Psychology Level 8 programme is high. School staff visit regional educational fairs, and there is a School 'Youtube'. There is a good balance of Dublin/regional students, and the School enjoys good relationships with Career Guidance counsellors in feeder schools.

In response to the above information, the Chair remarked on the impressive achievements of the School to date, and suggested staff reflect on how these successes could be built on to further promote the School.

The Panel were informed that student expectations are clear when they arrive in the School; the Prospectus is online, and priorities are indicated. There are formal and informal lines of communication, and staff are on a first name basis with students.

### **Tour of School Resources and Facilities**

Accompanied by Mr. John Montayne of the Department of Technology, the Panel were guided around the School of Creative Technologies, to view resources and facilities available to students.



## **School Programmes & School Development**

The Panel met with the School Management Team, Programme Coordinators, and Working Group Chairs. The following topics were discussed;

1. Mission and vision of School
2. Consolidation and growth
3. Student Experience
4. Research – achievement and vision
5. Proposed amalgamation of IADT/NCAD
6. Industry
7. Workload

### Mission and vision of School

The Head of School informed the Panel that undergraduate programmes supported the Institute vision; given the diversity of disciplines in the school, the convergence of creativity, entrepreneurship and technology was inevitable. On a practical level, convergence was supported through project based learning, a range of assessment methods (not simply traditional essays), and sharing across classes and programmes.

Noting the considerable achievements of the School to date, the Chair felt there was scope for raising the external profile of the School, and highlighting its successes to date. The Chair advised promotion and marketing should extend beyond student recruitment.

While acknowledging there is always room for wider promotion, the Head of School suggested there is a misconception about the School's identity and how it is perceived externally. Historically, the three Schools did not come into existence at the same time, and the oldest School on site might appear to have an advantage with an earlier start date.

The Head of the Department of Technology noted that against this historical backdrop, the School of Creative Technologies had a different developmental journey; declining uptake in technology programmes is acknowledged as a national issue, but despite this, numbers in the School have grown.

The Head of the Department of Learning Sciences informed the Panel that under the current leadership, the School has found its mission and place, with growth in Learning and Teaching interests extending across the School.

### Consolidation and growth

Noting the projected figure for growth in the coming year as 600, the Panel queried whether there was a push to grow beyond the comfortable 'ceiling'.

The Head of School responded that larger classes and tutor demonstrators may provide a solution on occasions, but to consider increased student numbers long-term would require a different conversation around resources.

Growing undergraduate numbers in the current climate is limited by fiscal constraints.

When asked by the Chair if the fiscal situation made management in the School err on the side of caution, the Head of School responded that staff were not shy about promoting the standard of work in the School.

The Head of the Department of Technology added that as a result of the downturn about five years ago in recruitment numbers onto technology based programmes, the School had since learned to be proactive in promoting their programmes.

While the School would have no problem with establishing the School as the leading centre for Cyberpsychology in Europe, there are also funding challenges at postgraduate level. However, funding should not be an impediment if there is enough interest.

In response, the Panel concurred that the unique aspect of Cyberpsychology had potential for a European dimension, and while still maintaining the human scale of the programme, there was a possibility of earning income from foreign student fees.

The School is currently considering offering a Masters in Teaching and Learning, with a target figure of about 25 students.

The taught Masters in Digital Media, a cross school collaboration, currently has about 18 students.

Masters by Research – the School is talking to interested staff, who have identified several projects.

### Student Experience

In response to a query about the integration of entrepreneurship and technology, the Head of School informed the Panel this happens in taught modules across programmes. Students work on projects and if work placements are not secured by all, a social engagement project comes into play.

In the third year IDEA interdisciplinary project, students choose their focus. Their work is assessed through a portfolio and presentation; this work can be submitted to potential employers when the students graduate. Currently a pilot scheme, the IDEA project will in future be available to all students, and will subsequently be reviewed.

The INTEL club house project gives school children an opportunity to use digital media. The project is supported by students on the IADT Applied Psychology programme.

Students in the School have a strong altruistic engagement with the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Dun Laoghaire, helping patients to work with computers.

Asked to distinguish the student experience in the School of Creative Technologies from others, the Head of School cited the three disciplines; multimedia, psychology and audio visual media technology. These skills enable students to straddle discipline boundaries in the market place; so using base pre-requisite technical skills with creative flair and vision, students in the School of Creative Technologies have a competitive edge.

The Head of the Department of Learning Sciences added that all students graduate with experience of internet design and media; displaying soft and practical skills through working on games, web design dash board re-design etc.

In response to the achievements cited above, the Chair noted the School was in a strong recruitment position, and urged the School to consider marketing the uniqueness of their programmes in a clearer, more robust way.

Noting there was currently no opportunity for students to repeat continuous assessment assignments, the Head of the Department of Technology informed the Panel that there are mechanisms in place to deal with illness, attendance problems etc.

Student feedback had highlighted the desire for more work experience, and the Panel queried how this aspect was integrated into programmes.

The Head of the Department of Learning Sciences informed the Panel that work experience was part of the Teaching and Learning strategy, and this was integrated into students' everyday work via projects.

The Panel asked staff about teaching the fundamentals of technology in class (fundamentals which soon become obsolete and overtaken) and aligning this with encouraging students to pursue innovative practices.

The Panel were informed that the fundamental principles are rooted in science and methodology, and these consistent, core skills are necessary for good design and development.

Noting that traditional approaches to media production are struggling, the Panel queried how the School planned to move forward in an uncertain environment.

The Head of School replied that in teaching the principles of multimedia programming staff are continually dealing with changing technology, and the fundamentals are passed on to students by an interested and engaged staff.

### Research – achievement and vision

The Panel began the discussion around Research by acknowledging the problems staff had between balancing their teaching/workload and their research work - publishing papers, attending conferences etc.

The Panel were informed that some areas of research funding had been reduced, for example, the Strand 1 (TSR).

The Head of the Department of Learning Sciences informed the Panel the School was working to put in place a strategy for supervising postgraduate students. The HOD also commended a staff member from the Department of Learning Sciences (Ms. Grainne Kirwan) for her considerable contribution in helping to secure funding for the CAVE project, on behalf of the Institute. The HOD concluded by affirming the strong leadership within the School of Creative Technologies in spearheading research, while acknowledging the different disciplines across the three Schools.

The Panel were informed a research strategy is supported by all staff. The calibre of research interests were outside traditional areas, domains being informed by research focus, liaison and pedagogy.

The Chair queried the priorities of the School's research strategy, and asked the Head of School to elaborate on how decisions were made when selecting which staff research projects to support.

The Head of School responded while staff are encouraged to pursue their personal research objectives, adjustment is sometimes necessary to include a reflection of the School's interests.

The Head of the Department of Learning Sciences informed the Panel that innovative research on Cyber bullying was being carried out by a postgraduate student within the School.

The School will always make a bid for larger funded projects, such as the CAVE.

The Head of Development at IADT monitors national developments on behalf of the Institute.

### Proposed amalgamation of IADT/NCAD

When queried about the reaction in the School to the proposed amalgamation between the National College of Art and Design and IADT, the Panel were informed that from a Teaching and Learning point of view there were similarities between both institutions. It was also noted that a staff member in the School of Creative Technologies was a graduate of NCAD. The proposed amalgamation was more of a challenge for the School of Creative Arts, with a potential overlap of disciplines.

### Industry

The Chair was interested to know how the School prepared students for effective involvement with Industry.

The Head of School confirmed a good, ongoing rapport with Industry, and added the calibre of the School's graduates was acknowledged by companies such as Microsoft and Google, who report positive experiences when hiring students from the School.

The School organises an Annual Showcase, in the form of a 'Business Breakfast', and this provides a meeting space for student and industry representatives.

The Panel were informed that industry stakeholders form part of the Creative Technologies community and also act as collaborators on student projects.

Students attend national industry events, and make contacts in these network environments.

The School organises a rolling programme of speakers from industry throughout the year.

From an industrial point of view, the Panel referred to the growing influence of the Multimedia industry for the foreseeable future, and the importance of embracing this technology. Aligned to this, the marketing point of view dictates a need for the School to adapt to the new marketing strategies of 21<sup>st</sup> century business.

The Head of School replied the School was able to compete in a high value, high service market because of the mix of disciplines across programmes.

The Panel noted that a lot of Arts projects were dependent on technological expertise and skills, and observed that on the ground recognition of this support could be more visible.

The Panel congratulated the School on the positive growth since its inception, and while cognisant of future challenges, commended the School's unique aims.

### Workload

The Panel recognised the inevitable tensions between Research ambition and teaching hours, and enquired about the measures put in place by the School to facilitate staff.

The Head of School informed the Panel that staff were working their full contract hours, but there was still a good publishing record in the School.

The Head of the Department of Learning Sciences outlined a thematic approach which the School was implementing; projects were progressing - such as an innovative IT project - and the quality of such work had potential for development by research. The HOD added that the School was attempting to carry out research on its teaching methods also.

When asked by the Panel if programme coordinators receive a remission of hours to allow for coordination duties, the Head of School replied that there was no remission of hours for programme coordination. Programme coordinators had a number of duties which included student tutorials.

## **Student Feedback**

The Panel met with representatives from the IADT Student Union and student class representatives from programmes. The Panel initiated the discussion by asking students to express their point of view on the student experience at IADT, in relation to the following issues. Student responses included:

### Programmes

#### AVMT

- Students on the three year AVMT programme would like to see an add-on year, to bring their award up to Level 8

#### Applied Psychology

- The new pathway structure of Applied Psychology was received well. Students felt they got a good grounding in both aspects of the programme
- In 2009 the number of first year students on Applied Psychology doubled, and this was a concern for some students, who felt they would not benefit from increased class sizes

#### Multimedia

- Year 4 of the Multimedia programme had undergone a lot of change. Students felt software needed to stay updated for all years of programme, so people did not miss out on technology updates

#### Cyberpsychology

- Students were very happy with the teaching staff and programme content. They felt it was a good model for research or consultancy work in industry.
- Students stated they stumbled across information relating to the programme, and felt it should be marketed more forcefully
- Students would like to see an induction process at the start of the programme
- Students complained about lack of access to the Library (open 1 Saturday per month), given that they were on campus for a limited number of days
- Technology issues were a concern; not all lecturers use Blackboard for posting assignments, and there were problems with remote access to IADT servers
- Students felt the 4pm submission deadline on Saturday was too tight a timeline
- Students felt the workload was onerous, spread over a part time programme. Some students would welcome the introduction of a full time Masters programme

### Electives on programmes

- AVMT did not offer electives, but students acknowledged the nature of the programme was learning mandatory core subjects
- Students expressed an interest in choosing subjects outside of core curriculum
- Applied Psychology offered a choice in Year 2, and this was welcomed by students

### Facilities

- Students noted there were problems with the functionality of Blackboard, and experienced problems gaining access to class notes
- Students in AVMT noted there is no full time designated Lab technician to repair equipment
- Students under pressure with deadlines to meet were unable to find lead clips

### Student Experience

- Students felt they had a good rapport with staff, and could discuss problems
- Feedback from staff was informative, outlining where students went wrong. An Electronics project is designed to build on feedback received by students
- Feedback was informal (a chat with the lecturer), or the more formal, criteria referenced, written feedback
- Issues that are raised by students are acted upon by staff, and changes are implemented. For example, last year there was no dedicated Lab for third year students (due to timetabling issues), but this year an automatic lock has been put on the Lab door to facilitate students who need to use the resources
- While students in AVMT received an approved course schedule at the start of the year, they noted it did not always match what happened in reality
- Students felt engaged with their programmes; Psychology students informed the Panel they were represented on a Review Board, which was due to meet next week

### Employment

- A number of students expressed a preference for entrepreneurship skills to be embedded across programme modules, in preparation for future employment. The students informed the Panel that currently they are taught an Entrepreneurship module in Year 3

## **Industry/Stakeholder Feedback**

The Panel met with 3 representatives from Industry:

1. Ms. Cathy Holohan, Enterprise Ireland
2. Dr. Yseult Freeney, School of Business, Trinity College Dublin
3. Dr. Séamus Ó Canainn, Director, Blackrock Education Centre

Dr. Ó Canainn informed the Panel the Blackrock Education Centre used graduates from IADT to manage a number of projects, such as creating websites. He added the Centre won a digital award with one such website, beating off competition from industries such as BBC Northern Ireland. He affirmed the high quality of students, and identified a role for IADT in teaching professional development at Blackrock Education Centre. Dr. Ó Canainn anticipated collaborations being developed between IADT and his college.

Dr. Freeney related her positive professional experience with Psychology staff at IADT, noting the School's ability to identify niches in the market and develop modules and programmes to a high standard. Dr. Freeney was of the opinion that the School should publicise their strengths more. The Chair agreed with this, and felt such a smart group of staff should be more assertive in marketing not just their suite of programmes, but their many innovations and achievements to date.

Ms. Cathy Holohan informed the Panel that Enterprise Ireland was a 'bridge' between IADT and industry. The calibre of students from the School recommended to her had exceeded expectations, students always willing to tackle and resolve issues. Ms. Holohan was of the opinion that the School should market itself more on the international stage, and while accepting there may be an issue of space on campus, highlighted the huge potential for overseas students from China, an as yet untapped market. Ms. Holohan was also of the opinion that a culture gap may exist between IADT and industry in general, with a lot of companies not being aware of the college's existence. She suggested marketing the number of successful graduates going into business, to highlight the profile of the School.

On possible improvements for the School/Institute, the stakeholders noted:

- The School should consider more proactive marketing to highlight its activities
- The Institute should review its marketing strategy, considering the following aspects:
  - impediments
  - how to develop a strategy
  - was it too ad-hoc?
  - should it be more dynamic?
- The Institute should consider looking outwards to promote recruiting and marketing on an international scale
- A graduate alumni Wall of Fame could be a good marketing opportunity
- A professional creative sector – mid range level – possibility for collaborative work
- The day to day skills that students achieve need to be marketed in terms of employability, especially in the current economic climate



## **Private Panel Meeting to review first day of Process**

The Panel reviewed the information gleaned from the various groups they spoke with, and noted the following impressions at the end of the first day of the Programmatic Review process:

### Research and Strategy

- The Panel noted a more structured overall School research strategy would be helpful, at the same time acknowledging this was linked to an overall IADT strategy
- Is IADT a research performing organisation or research informed – is the Institute clear on what this means?

### Marketing/Branding

- The School has a good story to tell, but a more sophisticated understanding is required of the importance of a marketing strategy, including different marketing strategies for different audiences
- Does the School have the marketing tools to do what it needs to do?
- Should the School consider forming a committee to decide on a strategy, and resources to be delegated

### Entrepreneurship

- Is entrepreneurship fully articulated and built into the programmes? Strategic planning around this unclear. Students choosing own pathways needs to be more fully developed

### Programmes

- The Panel noted the School was unique in the applied nature of its programmes
- Aspirations for some programmes seem to be higher than others
- Should the School consider a three year Honours degree, instead of adding on a fourth year to the AVMT programme? An alternative instead of a fourth year in AVMT could be the development of a Masters programme
- The Panel noted the documentation around the Masters in Cyberpsychology was very high quality

### Student Experience

- Overall positive, but would like to see more formal student involvement in curriculum design. Entering competitions etc. not linked up to Teaching and Learning Strategy

### School Vision

- Need for overarching School strategy around:
  - External relations
  - Research
  - Student experience
  - Entrepreneurship

The Panel identified no student risks, noting the overall positive atmosphere in the School. However, the School might want to review some issues around Assessment:

- Consistent assessment strategy within the School
- Students' understanding of assessment – clarify in strategy

The Panel concluded with the following observations:

- The School had been hugely successful in a short space of time
- In the current uncertain financial climate the use of online resources may help
- The Institute should recognise and use the leverage it has to benefit the School
- Looking outwards (internationalisation) must be part of the strategy and culture of the Institute

### **Initial Feedback to Institute**

The Panel relayed their initial impressions to the IADT Registrar, Head of School of Creative Technologies and Head of Department of Learning Sciences. (The Head of Technology was unable to attend).

Issues the Panel would pursue on the following day included:

1. Research Strategy, allocated hours and support for research
2. Strategic plans in relation to choices of programme development
3. Entrepreneurship – is this fully integrated in programmes or simply a single module
4. Intellectual property – how can this be developed? Is it a potential source of income?
5. Teaching and Learning in School very good, students positive. T & L Research – a need for greater consistency across suite of programmes will help with greater efficiencies
6. Student experience is positive, but a need for more formal involvement of students in teaching and learning and curriculum development
7. Excellent staff in School. School needs to develop its own identity further
8. Consider using teaching hours more creatively to free up staff to pursue research interests. Strategic partnerships – collaboration is important. Institute and School could be more proactive in informal links and discussion in relation to potential collaborations
9. Erasmus –international strategy needs to be developed to build on strengths. International links should not be driven by money, but by relationships
10. Convergence – are the aspirations fully articulated in the student experience?
11. AVMT – inclusion of a fourth year on the programme is a strategic issue? Can the Institute continue to defend four year Honours degrees in the light of diminished resources? Is the 3 + 2 model the way forward?
12. Master by Research – MSc in Cyberpsychology – to consider offering

The day's proceedings concluded with the Chair noting the session had been positive and productive, involving interesting discussions with staff, students and stakeholders.

## **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

### **Private Panel meeting to identify follow-up Issues**

The Panel reflected on the previous day's process, and identified some issues to follow up with the School:

#### Level 9 Programmes and Research Capacity

- Constraints on research in current fiscal climate
- What does IADT mean by research; what does it measure itself against?
- Who drives research at IADT?
- Research strategy
- Risk register
- Supports
- Liaison
- Collaborative partners; smart research methods/new ways of thinking
- Research and commercial outputs? (SFI considering outputs in current climate)
- Research was not always about funding; time was also a key resource. Strategy needs to be attacked on different points; advance planning, incentivising staff, finding 'clever' solutions

#### Marketing

- The School could market more than programmes on offer, i.e. achievements, links etc.
- School could consider developing marketing skills on site
- It was noted a budget was necessary to deliver a marketing strategy, and this could not be left to individuals in the School, but should be resolved at Institute level
- Three annual networking lunches was suggested by the Panel. However, the Head of School informed the Panel there was currently no budget for this
- An external committee was suggested to help get more vigorous marketing off the ground

#### Teaching and Learning

- The teaching and learning ethos within the School was palpable, supported by hard working, supportive staff
- The Panel noted the superb quality of the School programme documents.
- The Panel noted the phrase 'programmes are about people' used by the Head of School; does the rhetoric play out in actual delivery?
- The unique convergence of psychology and multimedia on the MSc in Cyberpsychology was noted
- Difference in assessment processes in three Schools
- While the School are good at picking niche courses and finding a market for these, the Panel wondered about the ability to compete by duplicating courses on offer in other institutions

### Growth

- The Student Union representative on the Panel noted there was potential for a conflict between two IADT aspirations; to grow student numbers and develop research. Both these aims could put increasing pressure on available resources. The Panel were informed by the Registrar that the current HEA strategy required institutes to grow in order to be sustainable. Promoting research would benefit the reputation of the Institute, and generate income

The Panel split into two at this point, to focus on programmes submitted for re-validation in the two departments; Learning Sciences and Technology.

## **Programmes from the Dept. of Learning Sciences**

For the purposes of this session, Professor Jan Noyes acted as Chair.

Observations include:

### Revalidation of the MSc in Cyberpsychology

First cohort of students in 2009. Currently run on part time basis, students attending on Saturdays. A full time programme is under consideration, and this will have enormous implications with regard to the current part time provision. Scheduling of a part time and full time programme will need to be very carefully worked out in order to preserve the student experience and make optimum use of staff time and resources.

Suggestions include greater use of 10 credit modules, and distance learning. The nature of an MSc in a topic such as Cyberpsychology means that the area is fast moving, and this has implications for the indicative learning resources. Books published a decade ago may not be appropriate, and greater use of e-resources might better meet the students' needs. Also better use of technology in the teaching and student support area should be considered.

The course coordinator must remain vigilant about the 'no show' rate in future years, as it increased rapidly between 2008 and 2009.

It was noted that the documentation relation to this programme is excellent. Overall, this is a unique programme meeting the pedagogic criteria as defined and expected of a Level 9 programme.

### Revalidation of the BSc in Applied Psychology

The programme is relatively young, having been developed and accredited in 2000. Over the last 10 years, it has continually been reviewed, both internally and externally by the Psychological Society of Ireland, and by external examiners. It is a unique programme, blending the disciplines of psychology and technology. Programme content reflects this, and the recent introduction of two pathways, (Psychology and Design, and Psychology and Practice) is intended to help students develop their interests in one of the core areas.

Elective modules in the two pathways have implications for student choice, programme management and assessment procedures. These need to be monitored.

The CAO points on entry, as shown in figure 1.2 of the School document, dipped in 2009. If this trend continues, it may have implications for teaching and student support, and this may also need monitoring.

Finally, with reference to the SWOT conducted by the programme team, staff development opportunities are identified as a weakness. Looking to the future, it would be good if career break opportunities could be utilised; an initial consideration would be for staff to make use of the summer time outside of the 30 week teaching year.

Overall, this is a robust programme, taught by an informed and dedicated staff.

## **Meeting of Panel members and Dept. of Learning Sciences**

### **DL141 BSc Honours in Applied Psychology**

#### Introduction of two pathways

- The team confirmed the introduction of the two pathways was working well, citing more options for students and an increase in numbers applying for the course
- Student feedback was positive, and student preferences and performance are being collated by the School for review
- Management of teaching the two streams was working at present, with negotiated swaps between students helping with the smooth running of the programme.
- When queried about the possibility of one stream outperforming the other, the Panel were informed that assessment is criteria referenced. Students are monitored to ensure they achieve the learning outcomes of modules, and this may consequently affect student choice
- Both pathways have been approved by the Psychological Society of Ireland
- The group project in Year 4 changed to an individual projects, on advice from the Psychological Society of Ireland

#### Supports/Resources

- When queried about additional supports for increased numbers, particularly in Year 1, the Panel were informed that the School is used to dealing with students on average points, and have a tutor/pastoral care system in place. There are two tutors in Year 1, and a Peer Assisted Learning Project.
- For the coming year, the numbers into both streams will be capped at 40, which may increase CAO points criteria

#### Staff Development

- School staff noted the lack of funding this year for Strand 1 projects was a setback in terms of potential for staff development. The Panel were also informed that staff on career breaks cannot be replaced under the current government directed financial constraints, and this had a negative impact on staff development

#### Retention/Attendance

- Retention and attendance were encouraged in various ways, ie. seminars with interesting speakers attracted student attention, and attendance was also monitored. Students with attendance issues received a series of 'traffic light' letters, informing them of the problem

#### Assessment Methods

- The Panel were informed that indicative assessment gives a spectrum of learning outcomes for modules, with integrated assessment aimed wherever suitable
- Staff are conscious of using a variety of assessments across the year

- There are group and individual assessment. For group work, each student presents their piece for two minutes
- The anti plagiarism software Turnitin is currently being piloted in the School
- Late submission procedures have been formalised, and this has helped to alleviate the potential for assessment bottleneck situations
- External examiners' comments have been positive

#### Assessment schedules

- Schedules are distributed to students at the beginning of each year. In compiling the schedules, staff work to ensure an even distribution of the workload over the year

### **The Panel recommended revalidation of programme DL141 BSc Honours in Applied Psychology, subject to recommendations and/or conditions**

#### **DL155 MSc in Cyberpsychology**

##### Programme content

- An overlap with content of Level 8 programme DL141, to ensure students understand the principles underlying psychology. However, the Masters provides students an opportunity to engage in higher level critical analysis
- Considerable interest in the Masters from students on the Level 8 psychology programme
- In line with the content of the programme, the Panel noted that teaching resources need to be current and up to date

##### Schedule

- Programme runs part time on Saturdays throughout the year for two years
- The Panel noted the 4pm submission deadline on Saturdays was a problem for students. Staff informed the Panel that the deadline will be reviewed, although currently submissions via Blackboard do not have a 4pm deadline
- The 5 credit module was identified by the Panel as being resource intensive, and the School were encouraged to consider 'fatter' 10 credit modules

##### Full Time proposal

- Staff were looking at possibilities to offer the programme full time, and were conscious that a full time structure would allow students access to grants, while completing a Masters in one year. The Panel noted the full time aspiration, and support the idea
- Staff acknowledged that should a full time programme be on offer, this would have implications for the part time programme

#### 'No Show' take up rates

- Noting the 'no show' rate had risen from 0 to 40%, the Panel queried the School's strategy for confirming future interest and viability. Staff acknowledged this could be problematic, as the decision to run such programmes is dependent on:
  - Student uptake numbers
  - Dates of management decisions as to whether or not a programme will run
- Ways of encouraging prospective students to commit to the programme could include:
  - A cut off date for application
  - A non refundable booking deposit

**The Panel recommended revalidation of programme DL155 MSc in Cyberpsychology, subject to recommendations and/or conditions**



## **Programmes from the Dept. of Technology**

For the purposes of this session, Mr. Simon Perkins acted as Chair.

Observations include:

### General programme issues

1. How are creative technology programme kept relevant, given the changing nature of technology knowledge? How is this managed so that students consistently receive appropriate and contemporary instruction?
2. Are students provided with a rubric for interpreting 'Indicative Assessment' (as appears on most module specifications)? For example is a description provided that identifies specific assessment requirements, which students can refer to as they respond to the module? Criterion referenced assessment is an obvious example of this.
3. Some formatting issues to be addressed. Details were given to the Head of the Department of Learning Sciences

### DL133 Bachelor of Engineering in Audio Visual Media Technology – issues

1. There appears to be a mismatch between the rationale (1.2) and the specific curriculum of the AVMT programme. While the rationale describes a human-centred approach to technology the individual module specifications describe a more traditional approach that is purely limited to the technology. The Panel noted that relevant module specifications make explicit mention of their human-centred approach to curriculum. This should be reflected in module Learning Outcomes. For example for the Audiovisual Computer Applications module the Learning Outcome: "Create basic animation material and incorporate this into video" might be changed to something like: "Demonstrate the ability to make appropriate communication design choices in the production of an animated video sequence".
2. The section "empathise with artistically gifted individuals" seems to point to a limited concept of creative practice/practitioners. We recommend that this be revised –perhaps reading something like "ability to recognise the needs of creative projects through their engagement with media content producers".
3. There appears to be some inconsistency between the Title and the Module Aims described in the Audiovisual Engineering Practice module specification. While the title points to the general practice of audiovisual engineering its aims identify a specific focus on project management and team related skills.
4. There appears to be a trend indicating a drop off in admissions of female students (as indicated by Figure 1.5: Gender composition (%), 1999-2009). How is this being addressed?

## **Meeting of Panel members and Dept. of Technology**

### **Multimedia Programmes**

**DL131 Bachelor of Science in Computing in Multimedia Programming (Level 7)**

**DL142 Bachelor of Science Honours in Computing in Multimedia Systems/Web Engineering (Level 8 - One year add on)**

**DL143 Bachelor of Science Honours in Computing in Multimedia Systems/Web Engineering (Level 8)**

### **Changes to Modules - rationale**

- Database Management Systems moves from Year 3 to Year 2: students need expertise earlier, and prior to Project
- Computer Modelling moves from Year 2 to Year 3. Introduction of Algorithms in Year 2 will enhance Year 3 learning, with Maths concepts applied to Animation
- Multimedia Communications in Year 2 – five credits for Web Design and five credits for Content Production
- Programming in Year 2 – Java, started in Year 1 is still taught in Year 2, but PHP now introduced for web design
- IDEA Project – students choose from a selection of electives
- New module – Introduction to Games Programming. This evolved out of a series of workshops which worked well with students, and was subsequently built into the curriculum

### **Resources**

- Citing student comments on using 'Director' in Year 1 to 'Action Script' in Year 2, the Panel queried the School's strategy for maintaining up to date technology. In response, staff acknowledged there were challenges, but noted the programme document was like a snapshot in time; changes in technology were inevitable to those first cited in the programme document. 'Director' was currently being phased out. Staff informed the Panel there was a synergy between 'Action Script' and 'Java'. Two years from now, the School speculated they would be in the area of cloned computing and project based workshop. However, students would always be taught the fundamentals (ie. mobile computing taught with Java, which teaches stable principles), which would equip them to fill in the gaps themselves via Project modules

### **Student Experience**

- Student feedback was positive
- Good access initiatives – dormant account money, FIS etc.
- Gender balance - the Panel queried whether the Maths content was being addressed. In response, staff informed the Panel that the School provided extra maths classes and additional tutorials, and students were encouraged to ask questions in lectures. Staff pointed out that the maths issue was dependent more on points than on gender, with CAO points being the deciding factor over maths alone

### Assessment

- The Panel asked if students were provided with clear assessment guidelines, over and above indicative strategies. Staff informed the Panel that lecturers provide students with a clear marking scheme appropriate to each assignment. Programme teams are in the process of formalising assessment strategies and these will be rolled out slowly. In the interim, procedures for assessment are solid.

## **DL133 Bachelor of Engineering in Audio Visual Media Technology (Level 7)**

### Changes to Modules - rationale

- Possibility of portfolio in Year 2
- Audio Visual Engineering Practice in Year 2 now centres on task oriented, smaller projects
- Electronics designed towards more systems level
- Modules' focus more practical and applied, in response to the needs of industry
- Page 4 of programme document refers to 'artistically gifted individuals' and 'human content'; the Panel enquired how these assertions are put into practice in terms of a curriculum which has to meet the demands of traditional engineering concerns (testing, analysis of systems etc.) Staff cited modules in Year 1 (Computer Applications) and Year 2 (Audio Visual Production), where students are encouraged to use hard core knowledge in creative ways, such as Music Technology and Video Production. Teaching and Assessment of these modules is also creative, with assignments submitted in film form. In conclusion, the Panel noted they had seen good examples of creative work on their tour of the School, but felt the module specifications in the programme document should encapsulate the creative strategy more explicitly.
- The Panel noted there was scope for the audio visual aspect to be developed. At present it was more audio centric than visual centric. Staff responded by informing the Panel that students tend to go for audio, and this runs in conjunction with the Radio and Television studio at IADT. Video editing and video content are also covered, and when the new Film/Media block is established on campus, this facility will allow for more scope on the AVMT programme

### Programme Document

- The panel felt some details on learning resources were slight, ie Document 3A, page 71. The module aims and learning resources could be reviewed
- Given the utilitarian word 'Engineering' in the title, the Panel queried whether this may influence female students in their programme choice, and suggested the massive creative content of the programme may not be sufficiently highlighted in the programme title. Staff agreed that the perception of the programme needs to be enhanced

- The Panel advised on a change of wording on page 4 of programme document; change 'artistically gifted individuals' to 'practitioners engaged in a rigorous design process'
- The Panel were of the opinion the programme document could be more explicit about the high level and human aspect of the programme, and how this is reflected in the curriculum
- The Panel noted different styles in documents across the School, and felt these should be more consistent

#### Resources

- The Panel referred to students' comments about lack of remote access to the Institute server and the Blackboard facility, adding there was a clear demand by students for such remote access. The Head of School confirmed that both systems exist; Blackboard is supported by IADT, but there are sometimes problems, in which case students try to gain access via the server. Staff confirmed that the server (Sideshow Bob) is available remotely.
- The School strives to deliver materials in a flexible manner, with access available in a variety of ways

**The Panel recommended revalidation of all programme in the Department of Technology, subject to recommendations and/or conditions**

## Panel Findings and Recommendations:

For ease of reference, the findings and recommendations in this section are organised around the issues and themes identified during review

The Programmatic Review Panel (PRP) noted the high quality of the documentation, and the information provided.

The PRP noted Management and School staff should be proud of the many achievements of the School of Creative Technologies to date.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### 1. Research

- If research is to be an integral part of the Institute mission, the Panel **recommend** that management look at new ways to release staff to develop research aspirations. Staff have the burden of a heavy teaching load, and creative ways need to be explored to make way for research opportunities
- IADT and the School need to be clear in their definition of research, and could consider a bold and distinctive approach; there is no onus to copy established models. The Panel **recommend** as an important pre requisite for a research definition the concept of Peer Review
- The Panel **recommend** a clear Institute and School research strategy, involving staff ownership and engagement

#### 2. Programme Development

- The Panel **recommend** a clear programme development strategy, outlining the basis for decision making. The Panel were of the opinion that choices do not always have to be virgin territory, but could be something already offered in the mainstream market (eg. Music Technology), providing an opportunity for IADT to compete. An expanded programme portfolio could also provide more research opportunities

#### 3. Entrepreneurship

- The Panel **recommend** the concept of Entrepreneurship be embedded deeply in all curricula, and not simply delivered as isolated modules. Ideas will inevitably surface, and IADT must have a clear view on Intellectual Property, by addressing issues around incentivising staff and shared ownership.

#### 4. Teaching and Learning

- The excellent Teaching and Learning strategy at IADT was noted. The Panel **recommend** greater consistency in relation to delivery and assessment across all programmes, with an emphasis on consistent language across policies and documents. The momentum towards a Teaching and Learning Strategy needs to be finally realised

5. Student Experience
  - While noting the positive feedback and good student/staff relations in the School, the Panel **recommend** the formal involvement of students in the areas of Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Course Development
6. Staff Development
  - Noting the high quality of staff within the School, the Panel **recommend** the development of the particular strengths of individuals, and **recommend** the School develop their own mission for staff development, within the context of the Institute policy
7. Collaboration
  - The Panel **recommend** the development of both formal and informal links with appropriate FE and HE providers and innovative organisations in the creative and cultural sectors
8. International Strategy/Erasmus
  - The Panel **recommend** a swift development of the Erasmus programme to glean credibility abroad for School and staff, and to avoid missed opportunities. More international links and contacts are desirable. The School needs to be clear of its position in this regard, focusing on a planned development of connections, with a School strategy linked to programmes in other institutions
9. Convergence
  - The Panel **recommend** a clearer articulation of the creative aspect of the student experience within the School. Programme documents should reflect the aspirations embraced by staff in practice in the labs and classrooms
10. AVMT – possible fourth year
  - The Panel **recommend** the School reconsider the proposed Year 4 for the AVMT programme, noting the normal European model is a 3 plus 2 configuration or a three year honours format
11. Marketing
  - Noting there is more change happening than is actually recorded in documentation, the Panel **recommend** the School consider the initial use of an external relations/marketing group to augment publicity both nationally and abroad for the programmes, achievements and particular strengths of the School

## 12. Strategic Partnerships

- The Panel acknowledged challenging times ahead for the School, despite its excellent record to date, and **recommend** the development of networking strategies, for example lunch meetings three times a year, giving School staff an opportunity to connect with their peers and decision makers in Industry. The Panel are of the opinion that the skills and calibre of staff in the School have a great contribution to make in the arena of Irish design and technology industries

## **CONCLUSION**

From the Student Union perspective, Mr. Hugh Sullivan was satisfied that overall students' expectations of programmes in the School of Creative Technologies were realised, and students were happy and engaged.

The Chair thanked the IADT Registrar, Senior Management and all concerned for their valued comments and contribution over the two day process, and extended the Panel's support for the School and all it has achieved to date.

## Panel signatures

### Chairperson

Professor Alan Livingston \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### For IADT

Dr. Annie Doona  
Registrar \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## **June 2010: School Response to Panel Findings and Recommendations:**

The School thanks the Programmatic Review Panel for their time, expertise and supportive approach to the process of programmatic review. The context set by the chair of the panel in the opening session was that of a “critical friend” and as a result the open nature of the debate on the strengths, weaknesses and future direction of the School was constructive and frank.

The School would like to complement the Panel on their ability to gain a strong understanding of the work of the School in its various disciplines in a short space of time, and to provide insightful comment on a range of issues. The report represents a fair and balanced view of our current state of development.

The recommendations below flow from the body of the report and the School is satisfied that they largely represent the thrust of discussions between the Panel and the School over the course of the visit. In responding to the recommendations the School has sought to be positive and constructive to the suggestions of the Panel within the limits of its ability. In some small number of cases, recommendations seek to achieve outcomes which depend on inputs from outside the competence of the School. In these cases the School has sought to honestly address these and will seek to influence the spirit of the recommendation in whatever way it can.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### 1. Research

- If research is to be an integral part of the Institute mission, the Panel **recommend** that management look at new ways to release staff to develop research aspirations. Staff have the burden of a heavy teaching load, and creative ways need to be explored to make way for research opportunities

The School agrees with the panel’s assertion that a teaching load of 16-18 hours is heavy in the context of any aspiration to conduct research. The School is limited by staffing contracts developed in a time when the Institutes of Technology were seen primarily as teaching institutes. The growth of level 8 programmes, the introduction of level 9 programmes and the running of masters by research within the School and the wider sector has placed a heavy burden on academic staff but the solution to the contractual issues of our sector lie outside the competence of the School.

Despite these difficulties staff in the School have a proven record of research. Staff are supported in their research through the funding of travel to conferences and dissemination of their work. If external funding is achieved mechanisms’ to release staff are possible.

A further possible solution would be to set a target of say 20 hours of research remission across the School which staff would have to bid for through a competitive process based on the merit of their research proposal. Finding a way to free this kind of resource and then retain it within the School would present a number of challenges and no little risk. However the School Executive will continue to explore initiatives in this area and bring any such proposal to the Institute for consideration.

- IADT and the School need to be clear in their definition of research, and could consider a bold and distinctive approach; there is no onus to copy established models. The Panel **recommend** as an important pre requisite for a research definition the concept of Peer Review

Research is defined both by methodology and by discipline. Three methodologies exist in the School:

- a) In many of our programmes research means staying current with rapidly changing technologies in order to provide students with the most up-to-date industry appropriate learning experience
- b) In those programmes where more traditional research takes place peer reviewed articles and papers are encouraged, supported and tracked in order to provide evidence of the growing reputation of the School in its chosen areas of expertise
- c) Industry based research in the form of innovation vouchers from Enterprise Ireland or other funded industry project form the third strand of research in the School

In terms of discipline the focus of the School has been on the three disciplines of, psychology, technology and media. The distinctive element of the Schools research has been in the convergence of these disciplines. The most obvious example of this is the work being done in the emerging field of cyberpsychology.

- The Panel **recommend** a clear Institute and School research strategy, involving staff ownership and engagement

The School would welcome a clear Institute research strategy and is confident that researchers within the School would be well placed to support and extend that strategy within our own fields of expertise. We believe that the School's existing strategy outlined above is consistent with the overall aims of the Institute and would support any future development of an Institute research strategy. The School will ensure during the coming year that its approach to research is clearly stated in its publications and open to review by staff and students.

## 2. Programme Development

- The Panel **recommend** a clear programme development strategy, outlining the basis for decision making. The Panel were of the opinion that choices do not always have to be virgin territory, but could be something already offered in the mainstream market (eg. Music Technology), providing an opportunity for IADT to compete. An expanded programme portfolio could also provide more research opportunities

Existing programmes are reviewed annually by programme boards and updated as required through the programme validation procedures of the Institute. The School has no plans to introduce new undergraduate or post graduate programmes in the short term. This is due to the current employment embargo and annually reducing resources. A number of programme development initiatives are in an advanced stage of planning and the School will be well placed to take quick advantage of any change in these circumstances. Any such developments will take place within the framework of the Institutes existing procedures for programme development. The School will continue to look at options such as flexible learning and special purpose awards as ways of expanding the capabilities of the School within the current resource envelope.

### 3. Entrepreneurship

- The Panel **recommend** the concept of Entrepreneurship be embedded deeply in all curricula, and not simply delivered as isolated modules. Ideas will inevitably surface, and IADT must have a clear view on Intellectual Property, by addressing issues around incentivising staff and shared ownership.

The School welcomes and supports the recommendation that the concept of entrepreneurship be more deeply embedded in all of our programmes. The HoS will personally lead an initiative to better understand how this can be done in a way that best meets the needs of the students and the learning outcomes of the programme. This review will take place in the academic year 2010/11 as part of the development of the IDEA project and a report produced. The School supports and is bound by the existing Institute/sectoral IP policy.

### 4. Teaching and Learning

- The excellent Teaching and Learning strategy at IADT was noted. The Panel **recommend** greater consistency in relation to delivery and assessment across all programmes, with an emphasis on consistent language across policies and documents. The momentum towards a Teaching and Learning Strategy needs to be finally realised

The Head of Department of Learning Science is taking the initiative in this area. The Teaching and Learning subcommittee of Academic Council is implementing the 2008 Institute Learning Teaching and Assessment strategy. All programmes in the School will have programme assessment strategies by June 2010 and training in this area for all staff is in progress.

#### 5. Student Experience

- While noting the positive feedback and good student/staff relations in the School, the Panel **recommend** the formal involvement of students in the areas of Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Course Development

The School welcomes the input of our students. Currently students play a full part in the review and development of programmes. Students are full members of all programme boards, students are represented on the Programme Validation committee, on Academic Council and all other subcommittees of Academic Council.

The Head of School will meet with the Education Officer of the Student Union before the end of the current academic year to seek to better understand any concerns the students might have in relation to their involvement and how the School and the Union might work together to clarify to students any issues.

#### 6. Staff Development

- Noting the high quality of staff within the School, the Panel **recommend** the development of the particular strengths of individuals, and **recommend** the School develop their own mission for staff development, within the context of the Institute policy

The School notes and supports this recommendation. The Head of School undertakes to collate the current staffing development plans and identify opportunities for further staff development during the academic year 2010/11.

#### 7. Collaboration

- The Panel **recommend** the development of both formal and informal links with appropriate FE and HE providers and innovative organisations in the creative and cultural sectors

The School notes and supports this recommendation. In addition to the existing links with colleges of further education the School will identify the appropriate bodies to develop further links with and initiate discussions in the academic year 2010/11. In addition to the sectors mentioned the school will also include associated professional bodies and organisations. It is the intention of the School exec to examine the best way of identifying the best way of building these links and a small working group of staff will likely be formed to capture the best range of skills and contacts.

#### 8. International Strategy/Erasmus

- The Panel **recommend** a swift development of the Erasmus programme to glean credibility abroad for School and staff, and to avoid missed opportunities. More international links and contacts are desirable. The School needs to be clear of its position in this regard, focusing on a planned development of connections, with a School strategy linked to programmes in other institutions

The School notes and supports this recommendation. Work is ongoing with two institutes and it is hoped that agreements will be in place in the coming academic year.

9. Convergence

- The Panel **recommend** a clearer articulation of the creative aspect of the student experience within the School. Programme documents should reflect the aspirations embraced by staff in practice in the labs and classrooms

Programme handbooks will be updated to reflect the specific comments made by the panel relating to this issue by June 2010 and programme handbooks will issue to students in September 2010.

10. AVMT – possible fourth year

- The Panel **recommend** the School reconsider the proposed Year 4 for the AVMT programme, noting the normal European model is a 3 plus 2 configuration or a three year honours format

The School has no plans to introduce a 4<sup>th</sup> year to the AVMT programme at this time due in the main to issues of resources as outlined earlier. However if circumstances change and further development of this programme occurs in the future the School will be mindful of the advice of the panel and the developing norms both nationally and in Europe. Moving to a 3 year honours degree would represent a significant change and would need some discussion outside of the competence of the School. The School will be reviewing the programme during 2010/11 with a view to establishing pathways for our students to an honours degree programme should they wish.

11. Marketing

- Noting there is more change happening than is actually recorded in documentation, the Panel **recommend** the School consider the initial use of an external relations/marketing group to augment publicity both nationally and abroad for the programmes, achievements and particular strengths of the School

The School will endeavour to capture and record all the changes and developments in the School to show the achievements and particular strengths of the School. The School is however mindful that overall Institute responsibility for marketing is outside the remit (and budget) of the School.

12. Strategic Partnerships

- The Panel acknowledged challenging times ahead for the School, despite its excellent record to date, and **recommend** the development of networking strategies, for example lunch meetings three times a year, giving School staff an opportunity to connect with their peers and decision makers in Industry. The Panel are of the opinion that the skills and calibre of staff in the School have a great contribution to make in the arena of Irish design and technology industries

The School welcomes and fully supports this recommendation. The School will explore the possibility of formal networking events of the type suggested, within the context of the limited financial autonomy of the School.