



**A meeting of the RIAM ACDC was held on 2 February 2022 at 9.00 am via Zoom.**

Present: Professor Neville Cox, Registrar (*Chair*)  
Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies  
Professor David Shepherd, Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies  
Professor Ruth Barton, Head of School of Creative Arts  
Professor Evangelia Rigaki, Second Representative from the Creative Arts  
Professor Carmel O Sullivan, Head of School of Education  
Professor Marita Kerin, Second Representative from the School of Education  
Ms. Roisin Smith, Quality Officer

*RIAM:*

Professor Deborah Kelleher, RIAM Director  
Mr. Pdraig Rynn, Administrative Officer, Registry  
Professor Colma Brioscú, Chair of Doctoral Committee  
Professor Sarah Sew, Chair of Undergraduate Committee  
Professor Lynsey Callaghan, Research Representative  
Professor Kathleen Tynan, Chair of Postgraduate Committee

In attendance: Ms Ciara Conlon, Academic Affairs; Ms Linda Darbey, Assistant Academic Secretary; Mrs Jo McNamara, School of Creative Arts Manager; Mr Conn McCluskey, School of Education Manager; Ms Geraldine Fitzgerald, Assistant Librarian (for item RIAM/ACDC/21-22/010).

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**RIAM/ACDC/21-22/008 Minutes of the meeting of 10 November 2021**

The minutes of the meeting of 10 November 2021 were approved.

**RIAM/ACDC/21-22/009 Matters arising**

**RIAM/ACDC/20-21/021** The Registrar advised that the change in abbreviation of the Bachelor in Music from Mus.B. to B.Mus. warranted an amendment to the Statutes which lists the degrees Trinity offer, and these were approved by Board last week.

**RIAM/ACDC/21-22/010 Trinity Library - Ms. Geraldine Fitzgerald (Assistant Librarian) to update**

The Registrar requested that this item be brought forward from item 4 to item 3 to facilitate the Assistant Librarian's attendance and invited her to give an update on Library activities. The Assistant Librarian advised that since restrictions were lifted, regular term-time access to the Library has returned, however, the group study rooms and the laptop loan system remain unavailable and external readers have not been granted access yet. She highlighted that the inter-library loan service is available and that the Library has expanded its e-book collection, as well as added two new online resources to its collection: the SAGE Research Methods, which contains many resources on qualitative research methods and the Gale Reference Complete, which holds a number of music related resources.

The Assistant Librarian highlighted that the individual memberships currently held by two RIAM staff members is due for renewal in March and May of this year and will communicate with said staff members and the RIAM Director regarding maintaining this access.

She advised if RIAM students want to access the Library as external readers, ID cards can be distributed to facilitate this, and a meeting will be held at the end of February regarding re-admission for external readers. She advised that if RIAM wants to negotiate further access for particular cohorts of students, this can be revisited, however, a cost will incur due to high costs associated with online resources. The RIAM Administrative Officer stated that RIAM has received requests from students on library access, and that this can be addressed in discussions relating to the Collaboration Agreement.

**Action/Decision RIAM/ACDC/21-22/010:** The RIAM Director to contact the Assistant Librarian re renewing the Library membership of two RIAM staff members.

#### **RIAM/ACDC/21-22/011      Update on Covid-19 response from RIAM Director**

The Registrar invited the RIAM Director to provide an update on the COVID-19 response in RIAM. The RIAM Director confirmed that RIAM has adhered to plans outlined during the previous meeting. She highlighted the role of antigen tests in the recent annual opera, Purcell's 'King Arthur', and that the number of performers were reduced in RIAM's symphony performance, which will take place this Friday.

The Registrar advised that the commencement ceremonies for graduating students of 2021 and those who opted to defer will be completed by this summer. He advised that a public celebration for those who opted to graduate online will be offered to students and he invited eligible RIAM students to participate.

#### **RIAM/ACDC/21-22/012      Proposal to lower IELTS Requirements for Diploma, Bachelor and Master Programmes**

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A memorandum from the RIAM Director, dated 26 January 2022, was circulated.

The RIAM Director spoke to the item by way of a presentation. The RIAM Director stated that an IELTS score of 5.5 is within the typical range found in UK conservatoires, many of which would be regarded as the gold standard internationally. Assessment components in music programmes are heavily practice based and RIAM students' practice and study consists largely of performing through instrument or voice. Within the Diploma and Bachelor programmes, just 5 ECTS are given for written or research components. The RIAM Director highlighted the difficulties in recruiting exceptionally talented students from Asian countries due to the current IELTS minimum score and in the context of the expansion of RIAM's campus, this presents a challenge that undermines the financial model of the RIAM. The RIAM Director stated she would welcome the opportunity to match international peers in terms of admission requirements and stated that RIAM will initially pilot the proposal, with the aim of reviewing it in two years' time.

The proposal was discussed by ACDC and members were generally supportive of the proposal to reduce the IELTS score to 5.5 on a pilot basis. The Dean of Graduate Studies noted that as assessment on the programmes concerned is largely performance based there is a case to reduce the IELTS score to 5.5 on a trial basis. In response to concerns raised about students with lower English competency being able to effectively communicate with peers and perform academically, the RIAM director highlighted the supports already in place in RIAM to support the development of international students' language skills, namely spoken English classes facilitated by a tutor and student support leaders who offer informal language classes to students. She stated that RIAM has connections to English language schools and can free time in the student's schedule to attend if necessary. She also pointed out that it is normal practice in RIAM to interview prospective students and this can be used to gauge student's oral proficiency. She emphasised the unique circumstances of the Academy's students in that music pedagogy and performance introduces a different dynamic in terms of communicating and connecting through music practice.

Members agreed that while they are generally not in favour of lowering IELTS requirements, the unique circumstances of the Academy and its programmes justify the request in this instance, on a trial basis. The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies noted that IELTS requirements range from 5.5-6.0 in

comparative UK Conservatoires and stated that a reduction to 6.0 may not be sufficient to determine the extent to which a reduction will enhance recruiting or impact student performance. He stated 5.5 would be a more meaningful change for this pilot, to which the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Registrar agreed.

In response to queries from the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies relating to the academic supports provided to Masters students undertaking a dissertation, the RIAM Director advised that students are presented with a choice re the nature of the dissertation - students can opt for a dissertation that is performance based. 16 hours of one-to-one supervision is allocated to those who undertake the written dissertation, supplemented by an additional 12 hours of small group research seminars. The RIAM Research Representative also outlined initiatives recently implemented to sufficiently scaffold students in written assessment components. For example, Master students who undertook the dissertation last year submitted research proposals in advance, which proved successful in ensuring students can complete the dissertation to the necessary standard.

Members highlighted that significant supports are needed to ensure that international students have a positive student experience and to face challenges that may arise in socially integrating and in securing housing. In response, the RIAM Director stated that RIAM is currently trying to scale up supports to students and has provisionally implemented a system to support students to source accommodation.

The Dean of Graduate Studies highlighted the need for ongoing reviews of the pilot and suggested that a report be provided to ACDC after the first year.

ACDC agreed to implement a two-year pilot of the reduction of IELTS requirements to 5.5 due to the nature of the programmes, which are largely performance based, the uniqueness of the provider, and with additional supports being put in place to support the students concerned.

**Action/Decision RIAM/ACDC/21-22/012:** ACDC approved the proposal to lower the IELTS requirement to 5.5 for the Diploma in Music Teaching and Performance, the Bachelor in Music and the Master in Music Performance delivered in RIAM as a two-year pilot with a report provided to ACDC after year 1 of the pilot and recommended it for consideration by USC and GSC.

### **RIAM/ACDC/21-22/013      Update on Quality Assurance of Linked Providers from the Quality Officer**

The Registrar invited the Quality Officer to provide an update on the following items:

- i. Trinity's Institutional Quality Review  
The Quality Officer reported that the process has been confirmed with QQI to proceed the week of 7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022. The review will be conducted virtually, and invitations have been sent to Linked Providers seeking their participation in meetings with the External Review Panel. The Quality Office will work with representatives to confirm meeting arrangements once the schedule of meetings is confirmed. She advised that the External Review Panel gathered today to confirm topics and further changes may arise from this.
- ii. QQI Strategy 2022-2025.  
QQI released its statement of Strategy in December - Areas of interest to Linked Providers include:
  - a. Expansion of pathways into Higher Education
  - b. Academic Integrity
  - c. International Education Mark – QQI Policy and Revised Code of Practice for Provision of Education and Training to International Learners' to be released by the end of 2022 with a view to implementation in 2023. This will result in a new code of practice for international learners and that will need to be taken on board by Linked Providers, particularly in the context of growing into new international markets.

- iii. Procedure for Linked Provider Reviews  
The Quality Officer reported that Trinity will undertake an effectiveness review of the quality procedures approved by Trinity in May 2020. A draft of the Linked Provider review procedure was presented at the Quality Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022, and consultation will take place until the end of February. All changes will be collated, and the approval process will begin.

The Quality Officer advised that there is a cost associated with External Reviews and efforts are underway to update costs from 2019 (last calculated). She advised that she will be in touch with the RIAM Director and Administrative Officer to discuss this matter.

#### **RIAM/ACDC/21-22/014 Standing Items on Communication**

The Registrar invited an update from the Heads of School of Education and Creative Arts.

- i. Inter-Institutional Collaboration including research – Heads of School of Education and Creative Arts  
The Head of School of Education reported that while substantial work went into progressing the application to the Higher Education Authority's (HEA) Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) for funding for the Tobar Project, as funding had already been allocated the application was not successful. The HEA invited the submission of a separate proposal so further work will get underway on a proposal. The RIAM Director stated it was unfortunate that the application was unsuccessful in this instance and RIAM are actively seeking for opportunities to diversify stakeholders in order to meet RIAM Strategic Plan goals around widening access and will continue to work with the School of Education on this project.

The Head of Creative Arts spoke about the ongoing collaboration and sharing of rehearsal spaces between the School and the Academy, such as the performances by RIAM currently taking place in the Samuel Beckett theatre. She stated that Creative Arts is currently moving to new premises, and as access to music spaces may be compromised during the move she asked RIAM for assistance.

The Registrar thanked both the Head of School of Education and Head of Creative Arts and invited an update from the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Dean of Graduate Studies.

- ii. Policies and procedures relevant to RIAM – Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Dean of Graduate Studies

The Senior Lecturer reported that work is underway to set terms of reference for a working group on integrity in an academic context with a proposal going to Council on 9 February 2022 on this.

He also highlighted the work of the [Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project](#) (Trinity-INC), which is working towards embedding inclusive curriculums in Trinity. He offered to set up a meeting of RIAM with Dr Rachel Hoare, the Academic Project Director so that RIAM can learn more about the project.

The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that Trinity's Postgraduate Renewal project is now in the consultation process, the outputs of which will be made available by the end of the academic year.

The Dean of Graduate Studies referred to the ways in which Trinity is harnessing learnings from the COVID-19 situation on conducting certain academic matters. She highlighted that

revised guidelines on conducting the viva voce examination process for PhD students online were recently approved by GSC and will be submitted for consideration at Council. The derogation from a requirement for a hard copy submission of dissertations during COVID-19 will remain in place and be reviewed on an annual basis, although work is underway to move to an electronic submission as the version of record for the university.

#### **RIAM/ACDC/21-22/015 To Note: RIAM Proposed Trinity Elective**

An overview of the proposed Trinity Elective (Music-Making, the Arts and Society) from the RIAM Research representative was circulated, and Lynsey Callaghan spoke to the item by way of presentation. She advised that the proposal was initially submitted to the Trinity Elective Sub-Committee in November 2021 and was recently revised and re-submitted for approval. The School of Education has agreed to host the module and Prof. Marita Kerin will act as secondary academic coordinator. She stated that the proposal aligns with the Academy's strategic plan and thanked those who are involved.

The Head of School of Education reported that work is underway on the inter-institutional agreement template and thanked the School of Education Manager and Academic Affairs for their support and congratulated RIAM's Research Representative on the re-submission. The Registrar congratulated all those involved in the collaboration.

**Action/Decision RIAM/ACDC/21-22/015:** ACDC noted the RIAM proposed Trinity Elective Music-Making, the Arts and Society.

#### **RIAM/ACDC/21-22/016 To Consider: External Examiners' Report 2020/21**

A memorandum from the RIAM Director was circulated and the Registrar invited the RIAM Director to speak to this item. The RIAM Director stated that it has been custom for many years for both the Bachelor and Master programmes to be reported on in one external examiner report. She stated that RIAM was pleased that good practice on examination results was highlighted in the report.

The Quality Officer stated that, from a National Framework of Qualifications standpoint, it is good practice to submit separate reports for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes as undergraduate reports are submitted to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and postgraduate reports to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

**Action/Decision RIAM/ACDC/21-22/016:** The RIAM Director to ensure that a separate external examiner's report is provided for each programme in the future.

#### **RIAM/ACDC/21-22/017 Any Other Business**

- i. The Second Representative from the School of Creative Arts stated that Creative Arts has received queries from students regarding access to a rehearsal space, which is limited in Trinity and enquired if RIAM could accommodate Trinity Students. The RIAM Director advised that practice facilities are prioritised for full-time students, however, Trinity students can be referred to the Academy's adult division classes or to other facilities available in Dublin.
- ii. The School of Creative Arts Manager advised members that Trinity has now launched a pilot blended working policy for professional staff, which will affect non-front facing services and advised members that email is the best first point of contact.
- iii. The Registrar drew members attention to the Collaboration Agreement, a copy of which was circulated prior to the meeting. He stated that this is now due to be reviewed and a meeting will be arranged with the RIAM Director and Pdraig Rynn to discuss next steps and will report on this to the next ACDC.
- iv. The Second Representative from the School of Creative Arts advised that Creative Arts hopes to implement a revised curriculum in 2022/23 and to strengthen collaboration with RIAM by

developing a Trinity Elective associated with the Academy. The RIAM Director welcomed this suggestion as an exciting prospect. The Quality Officer advised that quality procedures have been updated since the Collaboration Agreement was implemented and requested to be involved in any discussions on quality aspects.

- v. The Registrar reported that the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Bill 2022 was published and highlighted that this has significant implications for RIAM in that Section 7, Chapter 2 § 54 allows for higher education providers to make an application to An tÚdarás for designation as a designated institution of higher education. The Registrar stated that Trinity's legal team is meeting regularly to discuss the Bill and that he would seek advice as to implications arising from Section 7 (which might apply to RIAM).
- vi. The Registrar enquired if members would prefer to hold the next ACDC meeting on 11 May 2022 on Zoom or face to face. Members agreed to meet via Zoom.

#### **RIAM/ACDC/21-22/018      Minutes (Section B)**

RIAM ACDC noted and approved the following set of minutes:

- i.      Board of Studies
- ii.     Bachelor Course Committee
- iii.    Master in Music Performance
- iv.     Doctorate in Music Performance