



**Royal Irish Academy of Music  
Associated College Degrees Committee**

**A meeting of the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Associated College Degrees Committee (RIAM ACDC) was held on 12 November 2024 at 10.00am at the Royal Irish Academic of Music, Westland Row.**

Present: Professor Neville Cox, Registrar (*Chair*)  
Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies  
Professor Vinny Wade, Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies  
Professor Deborah Kelleher, RIAM Director  
Professor Jonathan Rodgers, second representative from the School of Creative Arts  
Dr Joanne Banks, DUTL School of Education (on behalf of Professor Ann Devitt, Head of the School of Education)  
Professor Susan McCormick, Second Representative from the School of Education  
Mr Conn McCluskey, School of Education Manager  
Professor Lynsey Callaghan, Head of Programmes, Research and Academics, RIAM  
Dr Peter Tuite, Chair of Doctoral Committee, RIAM  
Mr. Padraig Rynn, Administrative Officer, Registry, RIAM  
Ms Jo McNamara, School of Creative Arts Manager  
Ms Rima Fitzpatrick, Assistant Academic Secretary: Academic  
Dr Michael Cleary-Gaffney, Quality Office (on behalf of the Quality Officer, Trinity)

Apologies: Professor Justin Mac Gregor, Head of School of Creative Arts; Professor Ann Devitt, Head of School of Education; Professor Kathleen Tynan, Chair of Undergraduate Committee, RIAM; Professor Diane Daly, Chair of the Postgraduate Committee, RIAM

In attendance: Dr Liz Donnellan, Academic Affairs, Trinity College Dublin

**Welcome and Introductions**

The Registrar welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the following changes to the RIAM ACDC membership for 2024/25:

Professor Ann Devitt – Head of the School of Education  
Professor Vinny Wade – Senior Lecturer and Dean of Undergraduate Studies  
Dr Peter Tuite – Chair of the Doctoral Committee  
Ms Ellen Kampinga, Academic Affairs – Secretary to the ACDC

**RIAM/ACDC/24-25/001 Draft minutes of the RIAM ACDC meeting 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024**

The following changes to the minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024 were requested:

*Item RIAM/ACDC/23-24/021 Standing items on communication:*

- Replace “*acquired*” with “*increased its use of*” in the sentence relating to the Arts Technology Research Laboratory (ATRL). The revised wording to read “*The School has also increased its use of the Arts Technology Research Laboratory (ATRL) located on Pearse Street.*”
- Add “*in the Discipline of Music*” after the reference to the new Associate Professor. The revised wording to read “*The School of Creative Arts noted the appointment of a new Associate Professor in the Discipline of Music to the School*”.



The minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024 were approved, subject to the amended wording.

**RIAM/ACDC/24-25/002 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**RIAM/ACDC/24-25/003 External Examiner Reports 2023/24**

The Director of RIAM spoke to the 2023/24 external examiner reports from Professor Kathleen Coessens, advising the Committee that 2024/25 will be Professor Coessens' last year as examiner. Due to the small student population in RIAM, Professor Coessens has acted as examiner for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes but given the increasing student numbers, Professor Kelleher advised that consideration is being given to appointing separate examiners for the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the next cycle.

Professor Coessens observed a range of piano performance exams in RIAM during her visit in February 2024 and her comments on the quality of the student performances and the balance of programmes were very positive. Her comments on the deliberations, which feature screened marking and discussion supported by objective marking criteria, were also positive and Professor Kelleher reported that these are a well-honed aspect of conservatoire assessment. With regard to the time considerations pointed out by the examiner, Professor Kelleher reported that RIAM will review these recommendations.

Professor Coessens also met with a focus group of five masters' students and obtained some useful insights. For RIAM students moving from the Bachelor to the Masters, those that elect to do a dissertation as their academic component find that there are gaps in their research skills. Professor Kelleher suggested that the newly revised undergraduate Capstone project will provide a solid research foundation and hopefully address this issue going forward. With regard to non-RIAM students joining the Masters programme, Professor Kelleher reported that performance levels are an issue causing stress for some. To address this, RIAM will look at the workload/expectations in the first year with a view to providing time for students to settle in. She reported that students with a range of abilities and backgrounds are accepted to RIAM programmes, and that the Academy is then generous with its time in order to support them and bring them on.

The Dean of Graduate Studies queried Professor Coessens' comments regarding the continuous review of the trajectory of the Bachelor in Music (B.Mus.) and the workload associated in making the consequent changes to the handbooks. Professor Kelleher reported that while the handbooks are regularly updated, changes are also relayed verbally to students. The Senior Lecturer noted that more critical thinking is required in the masters and that the undergraduate capstone projects are helping to develop these skills. In response to a query, Professor Kelleher reported that RIAM will submit its nominations for the appointment of separate external examiners for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in September 2025, using the new online external examiner system.

**RIAM/ACDC/24-25/004 Standing updates on Quality Assurance of Linked Providers by the Quality Office**

The Quality Office administrator stated that the RIAM Institutional Quality Review Report had been received. The Report affirms that RIAM meets the quality standards as set out in the QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. Within the report, the panel noted 24 commendations and nine recommendations. The Review Report was considered by the Quality Committee in November and



recommended for approval to University Council in November and College Board in December. Once approved, the report will be submitted to QQI and can then be published online. RIAM will now commence work on developing an Implementation Plan arising from the recommendations set out in the Review Report.

On foot of the some of the recommendations from the panel, RIAM have submitted two revised policies to Trinity – a Student Complaints Policy and a Student Code of Conduct. These revised policies were noted by Quality Committee in November and will be noted by College Board in December.

The TrustEd Ireland statutory quality mark (formerly the International Education Mark (IEM)) launched in September. There are two windows to apply for the mark and RIAM has indicated that it will apply in the first window, which closes on the 28th of March.

### **RIAM/ACDC/24-25/005 Standing items on communication:**

#### **a. Inter-institutional collaboration**

With regard to inter-institutional collaboration, Dr Callaghan reported that she is co-teaching with Professor Orla Flanagan on the Trinity Elective module *'Music Making: The Arts and Society'* and that work on a publication arising from the module is underway. There have also been some early discussions regarding sustainability and a possible collaboration on a Music and Climate module with the School of Music. The School of Creative Arts Manager reported that there's an appetite for embedding sustainability in the curriculum. Speaking to Trinity's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) strategy, the Senior Lecturer reported that four ESD fellows have been appointed to work with the Centre for Academic Practice to develop resources for staff. He highlighted the success of a one-semester ESD module introduced in the Trinity Business School which has been completed by 520 first year students.

Professor Kelleher reported that the Music Department at Trinity, the Royal Irish Academy of Music, and the Trinity Long Room Hub will hold an international conference and collaborative symposium, "The Expansive Canvas: Large-Scale Form in the Music of 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Women Composers" which will take place in Dublin in August 2025. Dr McCormick reported that Assoc. Prof. Nicole Grimes appointed to the School of Creative Arts and whose specialism is in musicology, would be involved in the Trinity Elective in 2024/25 as a guest lecturer. Professor Kelleher advised that a new relationship has been established with the Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation (TCLCT) around the application of translation theory to musical text, arising from the work of Dr Peter Tuite in this new area, and that a joint conference is planned next year with Goldsmiths University of London. Calls are open for participants and it is hoped that a publication may arise from the conference.

#### **b. Policies and procedures relevant to RIAM**

The Dean of Graduate Studies spoke to the ongoing work of the postgraduate renewal project in Trinity in relation to the doctoral student journey and related supports. She highlighted a recent social event for Trinity and RIAM PhD students, hosted by RIAM, as important in developing ties between postgraduate students in the two institutions. The Dean advised that a call for applications for a Trinity Research Doctorate Award supporting Group-based Research Projects in 2025-26 had opened, with the aim of building interdisciplinary research under four themes. Professor Kelleher suggested that the recent PhD social event might help to establish connections between research students in the two institutions that might lead to an application for such group-based projects.

The Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies reported that Trinity's Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI was being considered by Council and that a Gen AI hub, available on the



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Centre for Academic Practice website, had been developed to provide supports to academics in this area. The next stage will be the development of additional guidance and support for students, 80-90% of whom are already using Gen AI. Reporting on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) upgrade, the Senior Lecturer stated that an upgraded version of Blackboard will be piloted in Semester 2, with a view to implementing it College-wide in 2025/26. He advised that an initiative to mainstream universal design and inclusion (EDI) was underway and that the provision of supports and training for staff would be driven by the Centre for Academic Practice. With regard to new inter-disciplinary research, a project on the important links between the brain and music by an academic in the School of Natural Sciences was highlighted. Professor Kelleher cited an ongoing creative collaboration with Mercers Institute for Ageing (MISA) at St. James Hospital, the purpose which is to create site-specific compositions and concerts for the patients and staff of, and visitors to St. James Hospital. She stressed the importance of this exciting new area of research in terms of public health.

### **RIAM/ACDC/24-25/006 Any Other Business**

The School of Creative Arts manager highlighted the importance of having sustainability as an operational prerequisite when organising events, and they suggested that the planned tripartite conference may need to consider using a range of technologies to facilitate speakers and reduce the carbon footprint of the event. Professor Kelleher agreed that the sustainability of all events should be a consideration, given that there is a requirement to report annually to the SEAI. She mentioned that RIAM had adopted the SHIFT-Culture Eco-guidelines for networks in their recent conference for the Association of European Conservatoires (AEC) in September. The School of Creative Arts manager reported that Trinity has sustainability event guidelines which provide guidance on how to plan and execute events in an environmentally friendly way.