

Periodic Review Report Template

Faculty	Arts, Design and Social Sciences
Discipline Name	Performing and Visual Arts
Date of Review	1 and 2 April 2014
Review Panel (approved by Review Sub-Committee)	Margaret Rowe, Associate Dean Business and Engagement, H&LS (Chair) Dr James McConnel, Director of Studies (History), AD&SS Dr Tony Purdie, Director of Programmes Strategic Management and International Business, B&L Jamie Thompson, Vice President Welfare and Equality Dr Simon Murray, Senior Lecturer in Theatre Studies, University of Glasgow
Method of Review	This review was conducted using the periodic review procedure defined in Northumbria's Review Handbook (September 2013 version), available from http://northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/qualitysupport/review/intrev/

Section 1	Discipline Aims and Context
------------------	------------------------------------

The Department of Arts, established in 2006 is one of 5 academic departments which comprise the Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences. The Department's academic staff, specialist technicians and administrative staff are engaged in the management and delivery of a vibrant and diverse portfolio of creative and critical undergraduate and postgraduate programmes designed to meet the needs of the arts and culture sector. The Department is based upon three distinctive areas that address practice and theoretical concerns around Fine Art, Performing Arts and Visual Cultures. The Department has within its portfolio 5 undergraduate degree programmes and 11 post-graduate programmes. It co-delivers a Foundation Diploma in Art and Design (Overseas) with the Department of Design and Department of Social Sciences and Languages.

The following programmes in the Department's portfolio are the subject of this Periodic Review:

- BA(Hons) Fine Art
- BA(Hons) Contemporary Photographic Practice
- BA(Hons) Performance
- BA(Hons) Drama and Applied Theatre
- BA(Hons) Drama and Scriptwriting
- Foundation Diploma in Art and Design (Overseas)
- MA Fine Art
- MA Art and Education.

Also in scope but reviewed within Collaborative Ventures re-approval processes were:

- Foundation Degree in Popular Music (Gateshead)
- BA(Hons) Contemporary Popular Music (Gateshead)
- BA(Hons) Acting, (Motherwell)
- BA(Hons) Dance - Completion Award (Edinburgh, Dundee, Ballet West)
- BA(Hons) Dance Professional Practice (Gateshead)

This review includes 685 full-time students of which 11 are Masters students plus 9 part-time Masters students

The Department of Arts staff consists of an enthusiastic and highly research active group of arts practitioners and skilled theorists who provide a rich and diverse range of subject expertise. Arts staff are committed to enabling the development of confident and independent students; well supported lifelong learners who are able to demonstrate the skills required of the reflective practitioner and creative, critical thinker; and creative individuals and collectives who will contribute to our society and cultural economy. The provision (including Visual Cultures) is supported by a Department executive (9), an Academic team (27.5 WTE), a technical team (6), Professional Support team (2).

The Department's key resources are its specialist studio and technical workshop provision. In Fine Art these include purpose built facilities for Painting, Sculpture, Printmaking, Papermaking and Photography with supporting wood and metalwork fabrication workshops. Project spaces located throughout the Squires and Squires Annexe buildings provide opportunities for student experimental site-specific activities. In 2008 the Department opened Gallery North in the Squires site main entrance. This is the main contemporary art venue in the University and a programme of exhibitions, events and conferences are scheduled throughout the academic year linked to learning and teaching, professional practice and research. The University Gallery located at the entrance to the City Campus hosts historical survey exhibitions and national touring shows from institutions like the Hayward Gallery.

An important development in the past 2 years has been the creation of the BxNU Institute of Art in partnership with the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art. Located in a refurbished warehouse on High Bridge in Newcastle, the BALTIC 39 studios are the home of the MFA and PhD Visual Arts research community as well as the Woon Foundation and Warwick Stafford Fellows. BxNU won the Times Higher Education award for 'Arts and Innovation', 2012.

Performing Arts have seven dedicated studios for all aspects of performance related workshop and rehearsal activity and include TV and recording facilities. There are two black box theatre spaces on campus used for student productions; Stage 2 in the Students Union and the Theatre in Lipman Building. Both are fully equipped with lighting rigs and sound amplification systems. The resource also has a wardrobe and equipment store. In 2013 the Department launched a new programme of final year Performance productions in Northern Stage alongside a showcase of work from graduating students from all Performing Arts Programmes. Running parallel to this evolving collaboration, Northumbria University has also established a new partnership agreement with Live Theatre in Newcastle which is the centre for new writing in the North East. Alongside links to staff research, this relationship strengthens our Drama and Scriptwriting Programme and the proposed new MA. All Performing Arts Programmes have a professional and industry focus and are embedded within the relevant sectors. Drama and Applied Theatre, for example, sustains links with multiple community based organisations that include Seven Stories International Centre for Children's Books, Gateshead Council's Children's Services, Equal Arts (reminiscence) and Barnardos.

Library Report

The University Library delivers an excellent level of support for learning, research and the student experience at Northumbria. New services include the launch of a new digital scholarly gateway (Sept 2013), a redesign based on student feedback. This has improved navigation and access to key Library services and resources, including the Library Catalogue, NORA, Skills Plus, and Northumbria Research Link, The 'IT Place', open weekdays at the library (from Sept 2013), helps students with technical IT queries. Courses run by the library include: the Northumbria Skills Programme introduces undergraduate students, to some of the most important skills they will need at University and beyond, and a Researcher Development Week is designed for staff and postgraduate research students to develop the knowledge and skills identified in Vitae's Researcher Development Framework (RDF). A new, up-dated and searchable edition of 'Cite Them Right Online' is now available from www.northumbria.ac.uk/cite-them-right. From 2014, staff can enter reading lists online and link them to blackboard. Student use patterns can be tracked through this system and new books identified and ordered by the library. Recent improvements also include more study spaces and 110 computer workstations, a Quick Print area on the ground floor, installation of a multi-functional device whereby students can quickly print, scan or copy, and the installation of an additional 30 self-service laptops.

Section 2	Curricula and Standards
<p>The Panel identified the following strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which partnerships are optimised to enrich the curricula. • The range of approaches and opportunities which foster employability. • The embedding of research and practice in curricula which enrich the student experience. • Curricula informed by national and international perspectives. <p>The Panel made the following recommendations for further development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that programme specifications are current, that changes are recorded and dated, mapping of modules to programme learning outcomes. 	

- Continued need to review and develop partnerships as they inform curricula, research and student needs.

Section 3	Management Information Trends
------------------	--------------------------------------

The Panel identified the following strengths:

- Awareness of and responsiveness to management information, for example recruitment and retention trends.

The Panel made the following recommendations for further development:

- The development of strategies customised to increase the recruitment of international students.

Section 4	Student Experience
------------------	---------------------------

The Panel identified the following strengths:

- The quality, expertise and passion of the whole team (academic, technical and professional support) in supporting the student journey.
- The richness of learning opportunities, particularly partnerships, giving rise to enhanced employability.
- Student exposure to a range of high quality partnerships.

The Panel made the following recommendations for further development:

- Improving student access (opening times) to fine art and performance studio spaces.
- Addressing and resolving heating and ventilation issues.
- Reviewing the provision of specialist workshop/studio space for fine art.
- Revisiting and developing the management of student expectations from recruitment to completion.

Section 5	Enhancement Strategies
------------------	-------------------------------

The Panel identified the following strengths:

- The provision is proactive and responsive in enhancing the student experience through cultivating a range of collaborative opportunities.
- The contribution to the regional cultural economy, such as Baltic 39, Northern Stage, and Live Theatre.
- The strong emphasis on teaching being informed by contemporary practice and research.

The Panel made the following recommendations for further development:

- Continue and strengthen its acknowledged contribution to the university's reputation as a cultural, creative hub.
- Greater student participation in the ongoing development of contemporary curricula.

Section 6	Discipline Response to Report
------------------	--------------------------------------

Short summary response by Discipline on follow up action for inclusion in published report:

Curricula and Standards

Ensuring that programme specifications are current, that changes are recorded and dated, mapping of modules to programme learning outcomes.

Complete subject to current Programme Framework for Northumbria Awards alignment within the Faculty, BA Fine Art has gone through a programme revision for 2015/16 and is now proceeding to alignment with PFNA. All Performing Arts programmes approved and up to date with planned PFNA alignment in early 2016.

Continued need to review and develop partnerships as they inform curricula, research and student needs. The Faculty continues to review and develop partnerships to help inform the curricula.

Management Information Trends

The development of strategies customised to increase the recruitment of international students.
Internationalisation strategies have yet to be fully realised.

Student Experience

Improving student access (opening times) to fine art and performance studio spaces.
Access has been maximised within Health and Safety constraints.

Addressing and resolving heating and ventilation issues.
Estates issues remain problematic which lie outside of the control of the Faculty. These continue to be raised with Campus Services as issues arise.

Reviewing the provision of specialist workshop/studio space for fine art.
The provision of two new resources at BALTIC 39 was the subject of a new updated business plan presented to Faculty Executive and approved. Final plans and schedule of works have been signed off. Work to commence in July 15.

Revisiting and developing the management of student expectations from recruitment to completion.
Management of student expectations has been revisited. Squires reception to be permanently staffed to welcome incoming visitors, guests, academics and professional support staff, especially during interview and recruitment times. Arts Admin team to liaise with Marketing and Campus Services.

Enhancement Strategies

Continue and strengthen its acknowledged contribution to the university's reputation as a cultural, creative hub.

CAPEX bids and Periodic Review feedback over the past 2 years have addressed the need for investment in our Performing Arts resource. Bids have been unsuccessful and consequently the University still does not have a dedicated Theatre space that embeds students into a Professional working environment experience and is public facing with full front of house facilities. This remains an ambition in our 5 year plan for Arts and a review of the provision is taking place in relation to the new partnership with Live.

Greater student participation in the ongoing development of contemporary curricula.
There has been significant progress towards student engagement towards curricula development in response to the recommendation.