

Periodic Review Report Template

Department and Faculty	Department of Arts Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences
Date of Review	11 & 12 March 2019
Review Panel (approved by Academic Registry)	Ruth Crabtree, Head of International Development, Health and Life Sciences (Chair) Dr Jakki Holland, Senior Lecturer, Business and Law Dr Jon Robinson, Principle Lecturer, Arts, Design and Social Sciences Keldyne Wilson, SU Sabbatical Officer Suzanne Crozier, Principle Lecturer, Academic Registry Dr Oliver Bray, Head of Subject Performing Arts, Leeds Beckett University Professor Alec Shepley, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Wrexham Glyndwr University
Method of Review	This review was conducted using the periodic review procedure defined by Northumbria University Review Framework
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review reports are expected to be short and succinct, typically 3 to 4 sides of A4 Sections highlighted in blue below, together with the header above, make up the published summary of this review. This will be published on the University's Quality and Teaching Excellence web pages (Periodic Review Reports) 	

Section 1	Department Context
<p>Scope of review: programme areas, staff and students</p> <p>The Department of Arts within the Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences is organised into three subject areas: Drama; Film; and Fine Art & Visual Cultures. The most recent restructuring from the beginning of 2018/9 placed Animation, Film & TV Studies and Film & TV Production into one subject area (Film).</p> <p>The department has a Foundation Year in Arts, in its second year of delivery, which feeds into Art, Drama and Animation undergraduate programmes. There are five undergraduate programmes delivered at Newcastle in Fine Art, Animation, Film and TV Studies and Film & TV Production, and Drama. The department also teaches History and Theory of Art and Design into various School of Design programmes.</p> <p>At postgraduate level, the department has a Masters in Fine Art (MFA), MA Theatre and Performance, MA Conservation of Fine Art, MA in Creative and Cultural Industries Management (both on campus and by distance learning), MA Preventive Conservation by distance learning, MA Animation and a MRes in Arts.</p> <p>The department delivers franchised programme at Academy of Design in Sri Lanka (with Animation), and other franchised/validated programmes currently running out with partners in UK, not included in the scope of the review.</p> <p>The department has 63 academic staff, 50% of which have PhDs and 34% are members of the HEA (17 Fellows and 3 Senior Fellows). 77% are currently classed as research-active who may apply for sabbaticals on a 1 in 7 semester basis, although all staff have allocated research mentors. The department are supported by a team of 17 technicians to support the diverse range of activity including specialist areas. The Head of Department leads a Departmental Executive team of 10 staff inclusive of the three Subject Heads responsible for each of the subject areas. There are also 10 Professors leading on research activity.</p> <p>There are approximately 845 students enrolled in the Department of Arts programmes comprising of 37 Foundation Year students, 591 other undergraduates, and 66 students enrolled on franchised/validated programmes delivered through partner organisations. There are 217 postgraduate students including 53 distance learners.</p>	

Main aims of the department

The department aims to deliver programmes that have pedagogy engaged with the various practices in relation to cultural and creative industries, and in anticipation of future professional practice. The integration of academic and professional subject-specific skills is at the core of a multidisciplinary department, in which partnerships and engagement with industry professionals provide an input into helping students better understand employability as part of the student journey through their programme. The department is committed in the development of high quality research activities to inform curriculum development, and for the enhancement of the student learning experience. There is a student centric approach to develop the critical thinking and reflective practice required to become independent life-long learners, and to enhance employability.

Contextual information (e.g. physical and organisational location, any recent restructuring etc.)

The Department of Arts is primarily situated across five buildings: Lipman, Squires, Squires Annex, Baltic 39 and Burt Hall. This estate comprises of artist's studios, drama rehearsal and performance studios, animation computer and editing suites, Conservation studios, dark rooms, photography studios and wood and metal workshops. Staff offices are accommodated across these spaces in a mixture of shared and single occupancy offices. The MFA is accommodated at Baltic 39 in the centre of the city and the Conservation of Fine Art and Preventive Conservation is delivered in Burt Hall. Technical challenges in the suitability of the estate has meant that drama has developed closer working relations with the Students Union to secure access to a performance space with a fixed structure, as well as investing time in working with colleagues at Live Theatre to explore the redevelopment of a formal partnership.

These practical programmes are underpinned by a wide range of technical equipment including film cameras and lighting equipment, stage lighting equipment, specialist editing and animation software, x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy equipment, printing presses, costume provision, audio recording equipment. Much of the portable technical equipment is bookable by students.

The Department also has responsibility for curating and supporting Gallery North, The University Art Collection and the Woon Gallery of Asian Art.

The Department of Arts has formal and informal relationships with various cultural partners. There are formal partnerships with: Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, BxNU, Live Theatre, Tyneside Cinema, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, as well as a host of other cultural industry relationships which the Department fosters, in part through the success of its graduates employed within these partners and organisations.

Section 2	Judgement Criteria	
Focus of judgements	Judgements	Outcome
The setting and maintenance of threshold academic standards	• meets UK and NU expectations,	✓
	• requires improvement to meet UK and NU expectations,	
	• does not meet UK and NU expectations.	
The quality of students' learning opportunities	• commended,	✓
	• meets UK and NU expectations,	
	• requires improvement to meet UK and NU expectations or,	
	• does not meet UK and NU expectations.	
Information about higher education provision	• commended,	
	• meets UK and NU expectations,	✓
	• requires improvement to meet UK and NU expectations or,	
	• does not meet UK and NU expectations.	
The enhancement of	• commended,	✓

students' learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> meets UK and NU expectations, 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> requires improvement to meet UK and NU expectations or, 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not meet UK and NU expectations. 	

Section 3	The setting and maintenance of threshold academic standards
<p>The Panel identified the following strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Examiner reports and responses demonstrate positive engagement in the maintenance of academic standards. The Peer Observation Scheme being used across the subject areas. The extent to which theory into practice is demonstrated within the provision. The opportunities for interdisciplinary working across the department and the wider Faculty. <p>The Panel made the following recommendations and timescales for further development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need to monitor completion of quality assurance compliance documentation within University timeframes to a satisfactory standard. Completion of technical staff workloading activity, and plans for contingency to cover staff absence. Ensure that there are regular Head of Department communications to staff and allow feedback mechanisms into departmental planning. Provide a strategic outline for increasing the proportion of academic and technical staff in HEA. Provide a clear strategy to support all staff to develop a research profile linked to workload allocation. 	
<p>The Panel made the following observations:</p> <p>The Panel recognises the work going into workloading, staff resource and staff development considerations, inclusive of contingency/succession planning.</p>	

Section 4	The quality of students' learning opportunities
<p>The Panel identified the following strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Foundation Year in using an innovative approach to provide positive student learning opportunities and experience. The excellence of the Technical Support team. Excellent engagement with students and opportunities to receive and respond to student feedback. The opportunities and support of organisations in the provision of short placements and guest lectures. <p>The Panel made the following recommendations and timescales for further development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To better promote the opportunities and support for study abroad and work placement. To consider the internationalisation of the curriculum and the attractiveness to a wider student body. 	
<p>The Panel made the following observations:</p> <p>The Panel acknowledges current accommodation and resources that are available to the Department, and note that the faculty should support the department in keeping resources sufficient for delivery.</p>	

Section 5	Information about higher education provision
<p>The Panel identified the following strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	

<p>The Panel made the following recommendations and timescales for further development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department needs to ensure oversight of course details on the web inclusive of additional costs, for correct and up to date information in setting student expectations from recruitment onwards. • The senior team need to manage viability of programmes with low recruitment to ensure that these are able to provide a sustainable offer to students.
<p>The Panel made the following observations:</p> <p>The Panel recognises the issue regards the entry tariffs – for example on Drama and the Foundation Year and applicants may potentially not take up an offer of Foundation Year at NU, where they have met entry requirements elsewhere.</p> <p>The University needs to provide appropriate and up to date data for periodic review purposes, inclusive of equality and diversity data.</p>

Section 6	The enhancement of students' learning opportunities
<p>The Panel identified the following strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strong links with cultural industry and community in the region. • The lasting relationships with alumni who link into sharing experience with current student. • Professional practice and the use of external speakers. • Employability runs through the curricula, and provider real world skills in line with employer needs. <p>The Panel made the following recommendations and timescales for further development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up an Industry Advisory Group, given the strong links with industry to enable continuous dialogue and input into programme development. 	
<p>The Panel made the following observations:</p> <p>No observations made.</p>	

Section 7	<p>Further Quality Assurance Monitoring</p> <p><i>This section is copied from the self-evaluation document to acknowledge actions which the Department/Faculty has already identified and is already actioning.</i></p>	
Affirmations ¹	Please list any affirmations identified and accompanying actions (<i>add extra rows as needed</i>)	
	Issue	Action
	NSS Results Fine Art and Film and TV Production	<p>Detailed action plans have been written and will be available to the panel. Fine Art have made a fundamental change to their teaching and assessment practice in order to address this ongoing issue.</p> <p>Film and TV Production having slipped from a very strong result last year are also making fundamental changes. Some of the difficulty has been around the rapid growth of student numbers in the area and this has led to overstretch for some colleagues. This is being addressed by (at the time of writing) two new academic posts. A professor/associate professor in Film, and a lecturer/senior lecturer. It is hoped that the action plan coupled with new appointments to support the team will address this drop in satisfaction.</p>

¹ examples of developments, planned or in train which seek to address issues previously identified

	DHLE	<p>Although the last survey produced a slight rise in our performance, we are conscious that there is much to be done.</p> <p>Employability provision is being reviewed across all programmes, and subject specific action plans being put in place. See section 4.9</p>
	MA Preventive Conservation	<p>There were two serious failings in our delivery for this on line programme at the start of the academic year. The first was that the new Blackboard Ultra platform failed to support a large quantity of the materials for the online delivery – this led to a delay in this material being available to students. The other problem was that workload allocations were not entirely clear among colleagues supporting the course, leading to patchy support for students. This was due to late workload changes. While the Blackboard issue was addressed as fast as possible with IT support, the workload issue didn't become fully clear until raised by student representatives at the SSPC. Remedial measures were put in place immediately. The experienced programme Leader is now looking after the programme again and a series of meetings are ongoing to ensure that these problems do not happen again. An extension has been given to students to first semester assignments and a TEC has been placed over these assessments to monitor performance to make sure that students are not being disadvantaged by these difficulties.</p>
Audit Trails	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foundation Year Name Change 2. Drama Employability week programme changes – and delivery. 3. Introduction of Fine Art Learning and Teaching Plan and revision to Teaching strategy. <p>All received and noted.</p>	
Compliance Checks	Compliance report received and noted.	

Section 8	Department Response to Report
<p>Short summary response by Department on follow up action for inclusion in published report:</p> <p>This is factually accurate, and we welcome its supportive tone and the recognition of our positive achievements.</p> <p>We are preparing a detailed action plan in response to the recommendations in the report. Here is a brief summary.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a need to monitor completion of quality assurance compliance documentation within University timeframes to a satisfactory standard. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A schedule for this is now in train. Programme Leaders will be briefed next month on details b. plans to manage this and the June Panning week will provide dedicated time for colleagues to complete these tasks. 2. Completion of technical staff workloading activity, and plans for contingency to cover staff absence. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The technical workload document is being prepared by Faculty leads and the department is 	

actively supporting this process.

3. Ensure that there are regular Head of Department communications to staff and allow feedback mechanisms into departmental planning.
 - a. HoD to attend Subject Group meetings across next month to talk with colleagues about this and to create transparent modes of communication
4. Provide a strategic outline for increasing the proportion of academic and technical staff in HEA.
 - a. A dedicated HEA Co-ordinator to be appointed and properly workloaded.
 - b. HEA to be clearly prioritised in PDA meetings and identified staff to receive appropriate workload allocation for completion of this.
5. Provide a clear strategy to support all staff to develop a research profile linked to workload allocation.
 - a. The current arrangements need to be clearly communicated to colleagues. This process to begin with HoD visit to Subject group meetings – then supported by research mentors.
6. The Department needs to ensure oversight of course details on the web inclusive of additional costs, for correct and up to date information in setting student expectations from recruitment onwards.
 - a. Improved liaison with marketing a priority.
 - b. PLs to review website at key moments in the cycle and report situation to marketing.
7. The senior team need to manage viability of programmes with low recruitment to ensure that these are able to provide a sustainable offer to students.
 - a. Curriculum review and identification of areas for growth or reorganisation to be identified as part of the developing Department plan.
8. Set up an Industry Advisory Group, given the strong links with industry to enable continuous dialogue and input into programme development.
 - a. This group to be set up by Business and Engagement Lead with support of the Director of Placements and Employability. For meeting to be in dairy before end of Summer 2019.