



National College of Art and Design  
*A Recognised College of University College Dublin*

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES**

University College Dublin (UCD), as a Designated Awarding Body under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act (2012), considered and approved the Quality Assurance Procedures provided by the National College of Art & Design (NCAD) in July 2016 (a Linked Provider of UCD), as required under the 2012 Act.

In accordance with the 2012 Act, these procedures will be published and a copy lodged with UCD and Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI). These procedures will be periodically reviewed and enhanced by NCAD to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and appropriately aligned with relevant sectoral, national, international and UCD policy/procedural changes.

UCD will periodically monitor the implementation of these procedures in accordance with, *inter alia*, the QQI Core Statutory QA Guidelines; the Qualifications and QA Act (2012) and UCD QA Procedures.

UCD will also review the effectiveness of these procedures as required under section 28 (2012 Act), at least once every seven years from the issue of these procedures, and from time to time as UCD considers appropriate (section 37).

### Note:

These procedures have been mapped to the 'Procedures for the Approval of UCD Linked Provider Quality Assurance Procedures 2018'.

The UCD general and specific QA criteria draw on: *QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016)*; *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015) [ESG] Part 1: Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance*; *QQI's Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines (2014)*; *QQI Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies (2016)*

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## Introduction

### Brief introduction to the College

The origins of the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) date from 1746, when Robert West had a private drawing school in George's Lane, Dublin, which was taken over by the Dublin Society (later the RDS). Throughout the eighteenth century the college was home to three schools: Figure Drawing, Landscape and Ornamental Drawing, and Architectural Drawing. The School of Modelling was added in 1811. From 1854 the institution was controlled by the Department of Science and Art, London. In 1877 it was renamed The Dublin Metropolitan School of Art. The Department of Education took control in 1924, and twelve years later it became the National College of Art.

In 1971 the National College of Art and Design was established by an act of an tOireachtas and is governed by a board (An Bord) appointed by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science. Governance provisions within The NCAD Act (1971) have been updated through the HEA Act 2022.

NCAD has been a recognised college of the National University of Ireland since 1996, and in 2011 became a Recognised College of UCD. Today, NCAD offers the richest and most diverse education in art and design in Ireland.

### **Futures, Bold and Curious, NCAD's Strategic Plan 2019-2024**

Making is at the core of NCAD and [Futures, Bold and Curious](#) sets out our vision for a studio-based learning experience that responds to both the digital and material world. NCAD today is an organisation strengthened by close connections to our community in Dublin 8 and partners across the fields of Irish education, industry, culture and social enterprise.

Our era is one of fast and sometimes troubling change, and as a society we face many challenges. We cannot predict the kind of world our graduates will be working in – although it is certain that they will encounter new and as yet unknown opportunities and challenges. Imagination, creativity and critical thinking – central elements of learning at NCAD – are what is required to meet this future.

### **Our vision: Changing the world through Bold and Curious Thinking**

#### **Areas of Strategic Focus 2019-2024**

- Embed BOLD and CURIOUS LEARNING at our core
- CONNECT and be CONNECTED
- An EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION

# 1. General Criteria

A. The quality assurance system is embedded and maintained on a cross institutional basis.

## Commentary/Evidence Source

### Overarching Institutional Quality Assurance System

NCAD operates an integrated system for quality assurance and enhancement *informed* by QQI guidelines, legislation and international best practice, and *overseen* by University College Dublin in their role as NCAD’s Designated Awarding Body. The aim of our quality assurance system is to enhance the effectiveness of learning, teaching and research, and of the College’s management of these core activities and of the operational and governance structures that enable them.

[NCAD’s Quality Assurance \(QA\) System](#) is described within and supported by our:

- Quality Assurance Policy,
- Quality Assurance Procedures (*this document*),
- Quality Assurance Handbook: Principles, Framework and Guidelines.

The role of the Director of NCAD is clearly articulated through the HEA Act 2022. The Director, as Chief Officer, has overall responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement, and the Head of Academic and Student Affairs is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the College’s quality assurance system. The operational management of quality assurance reviews is co-ordinated by the Quality & Academic Support Officer, who reports to the Head of Academic and Student Affairs. The embedding and maintenance of NCAD’s quality assurance system is supported through cross-institutional representation on, and accountability to, the College’s Quality Assurance Steering Committee.

### Systems and Procedures

NCAD has a range of systems and procedures for assuring and enhancing the academic standards of awards and the quality of its educational provision.

The NCAD Quality Assurance framework and the governance of quality in NCAD is represented in the following diagram:

Regular	Annual	Periodic	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Module Design and Approval</li> <li>•Programme Design and Approval</li> <li>•Student feedback and representation</li> <li>•Staff feedback and representation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•External examining</li> <li>•End of year student survey</li> <li>•Programme planning reports</li> <li>•Annual Quality Enhancement Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Programme review</li> <li>•Department and School review</li> <li>•Support and administrative unit review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Accreditation by professional or regulatory bodies</li> <li>•Annual Irish Survey of Student Engagement</li> <li>•HEA Graduate Survey</li> <li>•Enhancement-led Institutional review</li> </ul>

**Regular** (in-year and ongoing) mechanisms for assuring and supporting the enhancement of the quality of our provision include:

- Robust module and programme approval and curriculum review processes (School Board, NCAD Programmes Board, NCAD Academic Council, and UCD as appropriate).
- Student Representation at all levels within all Departments, on School Boards, on NCAD's Programmes Board, on NCAD's Quality Assurance Steering Committee, on Academic Council and An Bord. In addition, the NCADSU meets regularly with senior members of NCAD management, including the Director; the Director meets with the NCADSU Student Council (all Student Reps and Union Officers) twice per year.
- Staff Representation in operational and governance forums at Department and School level, including on School Boards, on NCAD's Programmes Board, on NCAD's Quality Assurance Steering Committee, on Academic Council and An Bord, and through regular engagement between the SIPTU Section Committee and representatives from College Management.

**Annual** mechanisms include:

- Subject External Examiner Reports in respect of all programmes & areas of specialisation.
- Systematic student feedback through an End of Year Student Survey, a Winter Survey (culture focused), and annual Programme Review Forums (referred to as 'Student Forums', focused upon module-level feedback).
- Systematic staff feedback through a Staff Survey.
- Annual Programme Planning Reports responding to feedback from students, staff, technical officers and subject external examiners.
- Development of a College-level Quality Enhancement Plan through the Quality Assurance Steering Committee; Approval through Academic Council and An Bord; internal publication through Workvivo.

**Periodic** mechanisms include:

- Regular Peer Review of Programmes and of Academic and Support Units.
- Systematic student participation in QA/QE processes.
- Annual updates in respect of all Quality Improvement Plans arising out of Peer Review processes.

**External** mechanisms include:

- Accreditation / Audit by Professional and Regulatory Bodies as appropriate; for example, of Initial Teacher Education programmes by the Teaching Council of Ireland.
- Participation of students in the Irish Survey of Student Engagement, the results of which are aggregated and published at a national level.
- Participation of recent graduates in the HEA Graduate Survey, the results of which are aggregated and published at a national level.
- External review of QA/QE processes through an Institutional Review process led by University College Dublin.

## Quality Assurance Decision-making Fora

Under the National College of Art and Design Act, 1971, and the HEA Act 2022, **An Bord** has responsibility for protecting, maintaining and developing the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the College. **Academic Council** has responsibility in relation to all aspects of academic governance.

An Bord and the Academic Council recognise the role of UCD as a Designated Awarding Body for the accreditation of programmes offered by NCAD. As NCAD's Designated Awarding Body, UCD provides for the validation and accreditation of NCAD's academic programmes; the award of degrees and qualifications; and the establishment of appropriate quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms.

All academic programmes of NCAD are governed by the UCD Academic Regulations and the NCAD Addendum. In this context, as well as acting under the delegated authority of An Bord, NCAD's Academic Council serves as the Governing Board for all NCAD programmes, as per sections 1.3 to 1.11 of the UCD Academic Regulations.

Oversight and cohesion in the delivery, development and enhancement of NCAD's academic provision across its schools and programmes is assured through a structure of Boards and Academic Committees that report to Academic Council (see Figure 1 below).

**School Boards** play a key role in the design, development, delivery and enhancement of NCAD's programmes, and in the development and implementation of College strategy.

- School Boards report directly to the Academic Council in respect of the development and implementation of College strategy.  
In respect of programme developments, School Boards report to the NCAD Programmes Board; in proposing programme developments and enhancements in accordance with academic regulations, the key focus of assurance from School Boards pertains to disciplinary relevance and currency.
- In respect of quality assurance, School Boards report to NCAD's Quality Assurance Steering Committee. The key focus of responsibility for School Boards pertains to the quality of the student learning experience and of the teaching and assessment strategies through which the School's programmes are delivered.

Student and staff representation are a vital component of the School Boards. Terms of Reference for School Boards and meeting minutes are available to all staff on Google Drive.

The **NCAD Programmes Board** supports the work of the Academic Council in reviewing the design, development, regulation and delivery of NCAD's programmes across all Schools. The key focus of assurance from the NCAD Programmes Board pertains to appropriateness and coherence of programme design from a cross-College perspective, and compliance with academic regulations.

Student and staff representation are a vital component of the Programmes Board. Terms of Reference for Programmes Board and meeting minutes are available to all staff on Google Drive.

The **Quality Assurance Steering Committee** supports the work of the Academic Council in monitoring and driving the enhancement of the academic quality of programmes and the student learning experience.

School, staff and student representation is a vital component of the Quality Assurance Steering Committee. Terms of Reference for the Quality Assurance Steering Committee and meeting minutes are available to all staff on Google Drive.

NCAD's Academic Council has established an **Examination Board** for all of the programmes of the College. The Examination Board is responsible for:

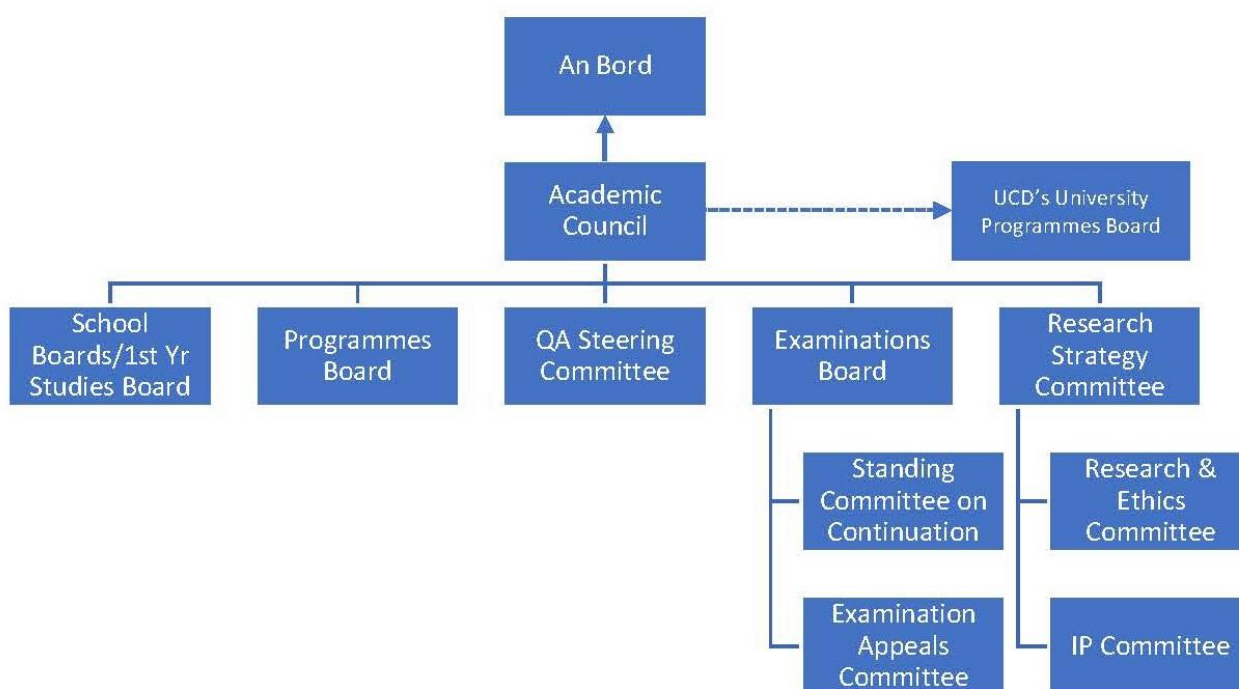
- the consideration and approval of grades submitted by Schools;
- approval of the progression of students on NCAD programmes;
- consideration of circumstances and approval of appropriate actions;
- recommendation of final award (and class, if appropriate) to UCD’s Academic Council or its relevant committee;
- reflection on student performance, grade distributions and other assessment matters;
- making recommendations to the Academic Council for future action.

As noted above, **UCD’s University Programmes Board (UPB)** oversees the approval of NCAD Programmes, with NCAD representation on UPB supporting that process.

The **NCAD-UCD Strategic Management Committee** establishes and supports inter-institutional agreement and cooperation as specified within the Memorandum of Agreement.

<a href="http://www.ncad.ie/about">About NCAD:</a>	<a href="http://www.ncad.ie/about">http://www.ncad.ie/about</a>
<a href="http://www.ncad.ie/about/strategic-plan/">NCAD’s Strategic Plan:</a>	<a href="http://www.ncad.ie/about/strategic-plan/">http://www.ncad.ie/about/strategic-plan/</a>
<a href="http://www.ncad.ie/about/history/">NCAD’s History:</a>	<a href="http://www.ncad.ie/about/history/">http://www.ncad.ie/about/history/</a>
<a href="http://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/">NCAD’s Quality Assurance:</a>	<a href="http://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/">http://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/</a>

Figure 1: Quality Assurance Decision-Making Fora



B. The quality assurance system should support public confidence in the provider institution and its capacity to provide programmes to agreed standards.

### Commentary/Evidence Source

Public confidence in NCAD's capacity to provide programmes to agreed standards is supported through a wide range of measures including: publication of NCAD programmes, admission processes, and regulations; published quality assurance procedures informed by QQI, ESG and UCD guidelines and involving external review, publication and implementation of quality improvement plans, as well as periodic institutional review; benchmarking of programme standards with reference to national and international peer institutions (external examiners) and with reference to Ireland's NFQ; and, as mandated through the NCAD Act 1971 and the HEA Act 2022, through the involvement of students in the academic development of programmes through representation across key decision making fora (School Boards, Programmes Board, Academic Council and An Bord) and through systematic collecting of student feedback (*see further section C below*).

- All programme information is published on the NCAD website to an agreed format, citing NFQ level, learning outcomes and individual module descriptors:  
<https://www.ncad.ie/students/programme-information/>
- The NCAD Prospectus is published as an interactive page on the website:  
<https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/ncad-prospectus/>
- Application methods and information are published on the website:  
<http://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad>
- Academic and wider Regulations and policies are published on the website:  
<https://www.ncad.ie/students/academic-student-affairs-registration-regulation/>  
<https://www.ncad.ie/students/examination-regulations/>  
<https://www.ncad.ie/students/academic-student-affairs-registration-regulation/policies-procedures-regulations/>
- The Academic Calendar is published interactively on Google Calendar and in pdf on the website:  
<https://www.ncad.ie/staff/academic-calendar/>
- Quality Assurance Policy, Procedures and Guidance are published on the website:  
<https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/quality-review-procedures-and-guidelines/>
- Quality Assurance Review Reports and Quality Improvement Plans are published on the website:  
<https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/cycle-1-reports/>
- The NCAD Annual Report to the Minister and the Oireachtas are published on the website:  
<https://www.ncad.ie/about/key-policies-and-documents/ncad-annual-reports/>

C. Quality assurance findings are systematically analysed and drive enhancement.

### Commentary/Evidence Source

#### Regular/Annual Processes

**At Programme Level**, regular/annual analysis of QA findings and consequent enhancement initiatives are driven through an Annual Programme Planning Report. The Report is generated as part of a programme's



end of year planning processes, and is submitted to the College Management Team and to the Quality Assurance Steering Committee.

The Annual Programme Planning Report is based upon analysis of and response to:

- **Student feedback** – gathered through annual Programme Review Forums (also known as ‘Student Forums’), NCAD’s End of Year Student Survey (broken out by Department/School), and NCAD’s Winter Survey.
- **Subject Extern Examiner Feedback** – shared verbally with the programme team and through a written report submitted to the Department/School and College, and shared with UCD.
- **Technical Officer feedback** – gathered locally as part of assembling the Annual Programme Planning Report.
- **Staff feedback** – gathered locally as part of assembling the Annual Programme Planning Report.

**At College Level**, regular/annual analysis of QA findings and consequent enhancement initiatives are primarily driven through an Annual Quality Enhancement Plan. The Plan is generated through the work of both the College Management Team and the Quality Assurance Steering Committee, and serves to gather a College-level picture of priorities for, and progress against identified quality enhancement opportunities.

The Annual Quality Enhancement Plan is based upon analysis of and response to:

- **Student feedback** – Both the College Management Team and the Quality Assurance Steering Committee consider student feedback from a range of sources: NCAD’s End of Year Survey, NCAD’s Winter Survey, Reports from NCAD’s annual Programme Review Forums (‘Student Forums’), the Irish Survey of Student Engagement and the HEA Graduate Survey. This allows for cross-cutting themes to be identified and addressed as necessary – either through engagement with programme leaders or through developing College-led initiatives.
- **Staff Feedback** – A survey is issued annually to all staff of the College, with feedback considered by the College Management Team and the Quality Assurance Steering Committee, and informing both the QEP and School/Area level planning as appropriate.
- **Subject Extern Examiner Feedback** – The College Management Team is a primary driver in the College-level analysis of Subject Extern Examiner Reports. All reports are reviewed on a cross-college basis, with attention given to shared issues and opportunities to learn from good practice elsewhere in the College.
- **Annual Programme Planning Reports** – Annual Programme Planning Reports are considered by the Quality Assurance Steering Committee, with attention paid to local responses to issues raised in terms of effectiveness and opportunities to share practice across the College.

Important oversight and an opportunity for further insight is created through **reports to An Bord** in respect of Quality Assurance and Enhancement at NCAD. Reports to An Bord address and give members access to:

- Student Feedback (arising from NCAD-led processes and HEA-led processes)
- Subject Extern Examiner Feedback
- NCAD’s Annual Quality Enhancement Plan

## Periodic Processes

**At Programme and Unit Level** Peer Review Group Reports are read and responded to by the programme/area under review. A Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is written with timelines for completion of each recommendation. The Quality Improvement Plans are submitted via the Quality Assurance Steering Committee to Academic Council and published on the NCAD website.

Implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan is monitored by the Quality Assurance Steering Committee through an annual update in respect of progress against the QIP. Once signed off by the QASC, the update on progress is published on the NCAD website.

**At College Level**, all Quality Improvement Plans and reports on progress against same, are considered by the Quality Assurance Steering Committee. The QASC reports on progress to the Academic Council. Where opportunities for cross-College learning are identified, they are addressed with the support of the Quality Assurance Office and the College Management Team.

Outcomes of Period Reviews are reported to An Bord as they are completed, with opportunity for discussion as appropriate.

## Institutional Processes

The effectiveness of NCAD's QA procedures is assessed by external peer review, conducted by NCAD's Designated Awarding Body: UCD. The most recent such Institutional Review took place in 2019/20.

In response to the Institutional Peer Review Group Report, NCAD developed an Institutional Quality Improvement Plan (IQIP) that was submitted to UCD for approval. Progress against the implementation of this IQIP will be reported on an annual basis to NCAD's Academic Council, An Bord and UCD.

D. Key findings from quality review are published and agreed actions are followed-up.

### Commentary/Evidence Source

Peer Review reports are published on the NCAD website:

<https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/cycle-1-reports/>

Quality Improvement Plans (agreed actions) arising from Peer Review recommendations are published on the NCAD website:

<https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/cycle-1-reports/>

Agreed actions are monitored by Heads of School and annually by the Quality Assurance Steering Committee and the College Management Team, with updates published on the website:

<https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/cycle-1-reports/>

E. Quality assurance policies and procedures are documented and accessible, and their effectiveness periodically reviewed.

### Commentary/Evidence Source

#### Externally Accessible Documentation

Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures have a formal standing in NCAD and are reviewed and developed annually in response to local, national and international changes. NCAD's Quality Assurance (QA) System is described within and supported by our:

- Quality Assurance Policy,
- Quality Assurance Procedures (*this document*),
- Quality Assurance Handbook: Principles, Framework and Guidelines.

Findings from periodic quality review processes and progress in terms of implementing the enhancement opportunities identified are published on the NCAD website.

### Internally Accessible Documentation

Documentation supporting access to and understanding of the College's QA and Enhancement system is available to all staff on Workvivo. Through Workvivo staff have access to:

- Programme and Unit Self-Assessment Reports
- NCAD's Annual Quality Enhancement Plan
- Outcomes of NCAD's End of Year Student Survey
- Outcomes of NCAD's Staff Survey

### Effectiveness

The effectiveness of NCAD's QA procedures is assessed by external peer review, conducted by NCAD's Designated Awarding Body UCD, and both the findings and progress in terms of implementing the enhancement opportunities identified are published on the NCAD website.

F. Procedures for quality assurance should include opportunities for student participation and independent external representation.

### Commentary/Evidence Source

#### Student Participation

Student feedback is an integral part of **Regular/Annual** QA procedures at NCAD.

Student feedback is systematically gathered and reported through annual Programme Review Forums (colloquially known as Student Forums) and two annual surveys issued by the Quality Office:

- The End-of-year Student Survey is issued to all students on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes. Results of this survey are filtered by programme and year and the resulting report(s) sent from the Quality Office directly to the Head of the Programme (Department), Head of School, Head of Academic and Student Affairs, the College Secretary and the Director. The Head of Department should ensure that all staff relevant to the programme receive a copy of the report(s).
- A Winter Survey is issued to all students to support understanding of College Culture and to follow up on issues affecting student experience.

The aim of the surveys is to enable quantitative and evidential feedback from students to indicate any areas within NCAD teaching and learning cycles that require further examination, and wider opportunities to enhance student experience and success.

- In addition to the two internal surveys, NCAD students have participated in the national Irish Survey of Student Engagement since 2014 and the HEA Graduate Survey since 2017. The ISSE was

established to develop a valuable information source on students' experiences of higher education through sector-wide study. At a local level it is intended to provide quantitative data on the student engagement with NCAD and inform NCAD of which areas require further investigation and analysis. Survey results are sent to NCAD in Excel; a comparison report and summary report are drawn up by the Quality Office for College Management discussion. The report is also discussed at the Quality Assurance Steering Committee with recommendations suggested to Academic Council.

Student representatives are elected by the students at the start of each academic year for each programme and year of programme. The 11 Year 1 student representatives together form a First Year Student Council that meets with the Head of First Year each Trimester and, should the need arise, with any Head of Department upon request. Year 2 and Year 3 student representatives meet with Heads of Department at regular intervals and attend School Boards where issues specific to the School or programme are discussed. Through this system, students are also made aware of developments within their School.

In accordance with the NCAD 1971 Act and the HEA 2022 Act, student representatives sit on the Programmes Board, Quality Assurance Steering Committee, Academic Council, School Boards, [An Bord](http://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/an-bord/) (<http://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/an-bord/>) as full board members.

Student feedback is an integral part of **Periodic/Institutional** QA procedures at NCAD.

As primary stakeholders, students meet with each peer review group at site visits to discuss the relevant School/Department/Programme under review (Site visit schedules can be seen in Peer Review Reports <https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/cycle-1-reports/>).

### Independent External Representation

Independent External Representation and engagement is central to both annual and periodic QA processes at NCAD.

Independent Subject External Examiners play a key role in **ANNUAL REVIEW AND PLANNING PROCESSES** for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes at NCAD (as described in Sections A and C).

Independent Special External Examiners play a key role in the assessment of all postgraduate research programmes (as lead examiner of MLitt and PhD submissions).

Subject External Examiners are nominated by School Boards, reviewed by NCAD's Programmes Board, approved by NCAD's Academic Council and submitted to UCD for final approval.

Independent External Peer Review is central to **PERIODIC QUALITY REVIEW PROCESSES**. Peer Review Groups are required to be made up of three external reviewers:

- Two reviewers from a comparable area within a similar-type institution (in academic reviews, one reviewer should be chosen from academia and one from the cultural industries)
- A UCD representative or external person with experience of the Irish higher education and QA systems.
- <https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/quality-review-procedures-and-guidelines/> .

Peer Reviewers cannot have served as Subject External Examiners for the area under review in the three years previous to the review.

External Peer Reviewers are nominated by Schools to the Quality Assurance Steering Committee where they are discussed and, either recommended to Academic Council or an alternate examiner sought so their independence from NCAD is not called into question.

## 2. Specific Criteria

### G. Governance and management of quality assurance (including a QA Policy)

#### Criterion 1:

There should be a system in place to oversee the education and training, research and related activity of the provider to ensure quality. Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders. Quality assurance procedures should form part of a coherent system, which is central to the promotion of a quality assurance culture within the institution – such as: a description of QA processes; identification of roles and responsibilities for the implementation and oversight of QA; systematic analysis of QA findings; evidence of self-monitoring processes – how is the effectiveness of QA processes assessed?

#### Commentary/Evidence Source

##### A QA System in Place

As described in Sections A and C, NCAD has a system in place to oversee the education and training, research and related activity of the College, to assure quality and to support and drive enhancement.

As described in Section A and made explicit in Sections B and D, that system is made public through NCAD's website.

As described in Section E every effort is made to support strong awareness and understanding of NCAD's QA system by all staff across NCAD.

NCAD's [QA Policy, QA Procedures, and QA Handbook: Principles, Framework and Guidelines](#) are developed through the Quality Assurance Steering Committee which oversees all QA processes in NCAD and covers the spectrum of: education and training, research and related activity; and organisational governance, management and operational processes.

Internal stakeholders play a key role in developing and implementing QA policy through: School Boards, the Quality Assurance Steering Committee, the College Management Team and An Bord, as well as through participation in periodic and institutional review processes.

External stakeholders contribute to the development and implementation of QA processes and procedures through acting as Subject External Examiners, Peer Review Group members, and participating in Periodic Review processes (in the development of Self-Assessment Reports and in meeting with Peer Review Group panels).

##### A Quality Assurance Culture

Establishing a close relationship between institutional strategy and NCAD's quality assurance system is at the heart of enhancing and sustaining NCAD's quality assurance culture.

NCAD's [Strategic Plan 2019-24, Futures, Bold and Curious](#), was strongly informed by understandings gained through the College's 2017 Institutional Review. Implementation of the Plan is explicitly linked to issues to be resolved identified through the Institutional Review. The importance of NCAD developing and implementing a strategic development plan on an ongoing basis is clearly articulated in the HEA Act, 2022.

Quality Assurance is a standing item on NCAD School Board agendas, and all Quality Improvement Plans are explicitly structured to reflect the three areas of strategic focus within *Futures, Bold and Curious*.

An annual Quality Assurance ‘Show and Tell’ event takes place at the start of each academic year (early September) to share recent experiences of each stage in the Periodic Review process with all those about to embark on the journey or on the next stage of a journey: Preparing the Self Assessment Report, The Peer Review Group Visit, Developing a Quality Improvement Plan, Implementing and Reporting on Your QIP.

## Effectiveness

The effectiveness of NCAD’s QA procedures is assessed by external peer review, conducted by NCAD’s Designated Awarding Body: UCD. The [most recent such Institutional Review](#) took place in 2019/21.

## H. Documented Approach to Quality Assurance

### Criterion 2:

The quality assurance system should be documented; there should be robust, documented policies and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of provision. The documented quality assurance system sets out the provider’s commitment to quality in terms of programme provision, research and related activities as appropriate. It also refers to arrangements for the internal evaluation or review and continuous improvement of the effectiveness of the policies and procedures.

### Commentary/Evidence Source

NCAD operates a fully documented and integrated system for quality assurance and enhancement, the aim of which is to enhance the effectiveness of learning, teaching and research, and of the College’s management of these core activities.

NCAD’S Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures have formal standing within the institution, address all areas of NCAD’s activity, and are regularly reviewed and developed in response to local, national and international changes in the higher education, quality assurance, and sectoral landscape.

- QA Policy, Procedures, and Principles, Framework and Guidelines are published on the website: <https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/>
- The College’s QA Review Schedule is published on the website: <https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/quality-review-schedule-cycle-2/>
- Peer Review Group Reports and Quality Improvement Plans (and updates) are published on the website: <https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/cycle-1-reports/>
- All programme information is published on the NCAD website to an agreed format, citing NFQ level, learning outcomes and individual module descriptors: <https://www.ncad.ie/students/student-academic-information/>
- Application methods and information are published on the website: <http://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad>
- The NCAD Prospectus is published annually as an interactive webpage on the website: <https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/ncad-prospectus/>
- The Academic Calendar is published interactively on Google Calendar and in pdf on the website: <https://www.ncad.ie/staff/academic-calendar/>

- A link to The UCD Examination Regulations is available on the NCAD website at:  
<https://www.ncad.ie/students/examination-regulations/>  
This is supported by the 'NCAD Addendum to the Academic Regulations and Policy' detailing local derogations and arrangements; published on the same web page.
- The wider policy and procedures framework affecting the student across their educational journey at NCAD is published on the NCAD website at:  
<https://www.ncad.ie/students/academic-student-affairs-registration-regulation/policies-procedures-regulations/>
- NCAD Programme Specification Form and Module Descriptor forms are available from Academic and Student Affairs/QA Office, on Google Drive and through the Staff Intranet (Workvivo). Sample documentation may be seen at:  
<https://www.ncad.ie/students/programme-information/>

### Research Quality

The academic regulations of NCAD and UCD specifically address postgraduate and research degrees, at Masters and Doctoral level. NCAD is developing a Structured PhD framework in compliance with UCD's Academic Regulations. Each student has a Principal Supervisor and a co-supervisor assigned to them in order to provide quality supervision, mentoring, guidance and advice throughout their programme of study. Supervisors also endeavour to make students aware of all regulations, policies and codes of practice relevant to their study. Currently, the progress of all students is reviewed on an annual basis by a panel that includes supervisors, Head of School and a PhD-holder external to the research and to the School. Full compliance with UCD's Academic Regulations in respect of research degrees is expected to be achieved during 2023/24.

- A link to NCAD's Postgraduate Policy and Procedures is available on the website at:  
<https://www.ncad.ie/staff/policies-procedures-regulations2/>
- Guidance in respect of Research Ethics is given at:  
[https://www.ncad.ie/files/download/NCAD\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_on\\_Research\\_Ethics.pdf](https://www.ncad.ie/files/download/NCAD_Code_of_Practice_on_Research_Ethics.pdf)
- Guidance for research supervisors is given in NCAD's Postgraduate Supervisor's Handbook:  
<https://www.ncad.ie/staff/policies-procedures-regulations2/>

Documentation relating to the annual progression and final examination of research students is published on the shared Google Drive. All postgraduate research students are examined by a panel consisting of at least one NCAD/UCD examiner and at least one external examiner. Institutional approval must be sought for all external examiners through School Board, Programmes Board and NCAD's Academic Council and UCD.

Support for the financial administration and quality review of research activity in NCAD is provided by the office of the Head of Academic and Student Affairs. Information on staff research activity is collated by School Boards and submitted to Academic Council. Research at NCAD is also developed and supported through NCAD's Research Development Officer, Head of Innovation & Engagement, and NCAD's Research & Innovation Committee: <http://www.ncad.ie/research-and-innovation/>



## I. Programmes of Education and Training

### Criterion 3:

- 3.1 Programme development and approval: the development and approval of new programmes should be conducted in a systematic way, and be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education.
- 3.2 Learner admission, progression and recognition: there are pre-defined and published regulations, which are consistently applied, covering all areas related to learner admission, progression, recognition and certification of awards. Access policies, admission processes and criteria are established and implemented consistently and in a transparent manner, and as appropriate, in accordance with national policies and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression.
- 3.3 Programme monitoring and review: Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of a programme is used as an opportunity to evaluate and enhance the programme with the benefit feedback from staff, students, external examiners, employers, student progression data etc.

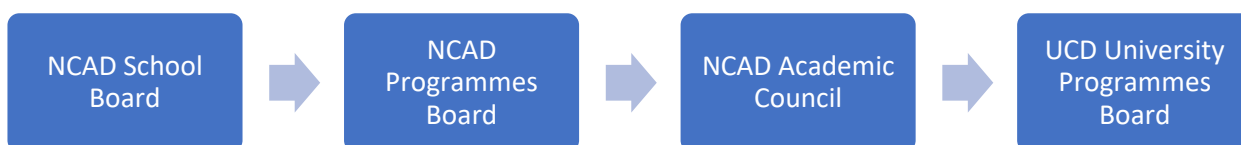
### Commentary/Evidence Source

- 3.1 Programme development and approval: the development and approval of new programmes should be conducted in a systematic way, and be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education.

All undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by NCAD are validated by UCD and adhere to the UCD Academic Regulations alongside an NCAD Addendum to the Academic Regulations and Policy that addresses alignments and differences across the two institutions. Together the UCD Academic Regulations and the NCAD Addendum to the Academic Regulations and Policy define the parameters within which NCAD programmes may be designed and developed. This includes support for a modularised and semesterised curriculum, using the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), and mapping of all programmes to the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) through articulation of learning outcomes and their alignment with the relevant NFQ level.

Support for programme and module design is available through NCAD’s Quality and Student Support Officer, published guidance, workshops organised by the Teaching and Learning Office, and UCD online resources.

The process for the development, approval and review of NCAD programmes is mapped below:



This process is implemented in the context of UCD’s Programme Development, Approval and Review Framework (PDARF) which sets out the formal institutional processes within UCD. Document templates relating to all stages in the process are available:

- UCD:
- PDARF 3 New Programme Academic Structure Proposal
  - PDARF 7 Programme Change Proposal
  - PDARF 9 Module Derogation Request

Available from: <https://www.ucd.ie/registry/staff/registryservices/curriculum/programmeapprovalpdarf/>

- NCAD:
- Programme Specification Form
  - Module Descriptor

Available from Academic and Student Affairs/QA Office and Workvivo. Sample documentation available from: <http://www.ncad.ie/students/student-academic-information/>

The NCAD Programme Specification Form includes details of:

- Qualification
- Programme & stage learning outcomes
- NFQ level of qualification
- Credits assigned

The NCAD Module Descriptor includes details of:

- Credits assigned
- Module learning outcomes
- Assessment method
- NFQ module level

<https://www.ncad.ie/students>

3.2 Learner admission, progression and recognition: there are pre-defined and published regulations, which are consistently applied, covering all areas related to learner admission, progression, recognition and certification of awards. Access policies, admission processes and criteria are established and implemented consistently and in a transparent manner, and as appropriate, in accordance with national policies and procedures for Access, Transfer and Progression.

### Recruitment and admission

In order to build and maintain a positive and supportive learning environment, NCAD has regulations, codes and policies covering all phases of the student 'life cycle'. These are available online:

<http://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad>

<https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/undergrad-portfolio/>

<https://www.ncad.ie/school-and-community-outreach-programme>

<https://www.ncad.ie/postgraduate/scholarships-and-funding-opportunities/>

<http://www.ncad.ie/continuing-education>

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/support-services/student-learning-support-service/>

<http://www.ncad.ie/students/registry-student-services-admissions/policies-procedures-regulations/examination-regulations/>

### Access, Transfer and Progression

As articulated in the NCAD Act 1971 and the HEA Act 2022, NCAD is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and access to higher education. NCAD actively seeks to widen participation in third level art and design education through its **Access** programme, designed to specifically increase access by applicants who meet specific socio-economic and disability criteria. NCAD is part of the national HEAR and DARE schemes, with places offered based on a concession around the portfolio score for the majority of NCAD programmes, and in relation to the academic score in relation to NCAD's BA in Visual Culture.

<https://www.ncad.ie/undergraduate/undergraduate-year-1/ncad-access-scheme/>

**Transfer** from other institutions to NCAD is supported through Advanced Entry admissions and the College RPL policy. Opportunities to transfer into some programmes within NCAD have been reduced in the last 2-3 years due to the pressure of student numbers into First Year.

<https://ncadprospectus.com/how-to-apply/making-an-application>

[https://www.ncad.ie/files/download/RPL\\_NCAD\\_Policy\\_and\\_Practices\\_2013.pdf](https://www.ncad.ie/files/download/RPL_NCAD_Policy_and_Practices_2013.pdf)

<https://www.ncad.ie/undergraduate/undergraduate-year-1/ncad-access-scheme/>

Progression of students from further education to third level is fully supported by NCAD. Students progressing from further education make up approximately 30% of NCAD's undergraduate year 1 intake each year. This progression is supported through a policy of admission through FETAC minimum entry requirements + portfolio submission, rather than a reserved quota policy.

<https://www.ncad.ie/undergraduate/making-an-application-undergraduate/ncad-entry-requirements/>

### Programme Delivery and Assessment

School Boards have explicit responsibility for the governance, management and quality assurance of their programmes, are responsible for articulation of programme learning outcomes and objectives, and management of the programme curriculum, while also developing the appropriate mode of delivery for all of the programmes for which they are responsible. School Boards undertake this activity under delegated authority from NCAD's Academic Council, which serves as the Governing Board for all NCAD programmes (in accordance with UCD's Academic Regulations and described in the NCAD Staff Academic Handbook, available to all staff on Workvivo).

There are three main **approaches to assessment** in NCAD: tutor-led assessment (where work is submitted and graded by tutors), peer review or crit (where the student work is reviewed by peers and tutors, and formative feedback is given) and group assessment (where a mark or grade is assigned to the group based on overall performance). Consistent assessment criteria are used across studio modules and written work; the NCAD Grade Descriptors align with UCD grade descriptors as per the Academic Regulations. Students are given regular feedback on their assignments and their learning at key points in the year, usually after modules or assignments are completed.

There are generally three **types of assessment** that take place in NCAD:

1. Formative assessment - which takes place orally and/or in writing to students on their progress. This does not usually involve a mark and is diagnostic.

2. Continuous assessment happens throughout the programme, particularly in Fine Art where in the final year semester one and two are considered as one long module in order for students to be able to synthesise a body of work for an exhibition over an extended period of time.
3. Summative assessment takes place at the end of each semester or at the end of a module and this type of assessment takes place at the end of a shorter period or project.

NCAD uses all three types of assessment in different programmes in the different disciplines of Fine Art, Design, Education and Visual Culture.

The delivery of, and assessment of progress within NCAD's programmes is governed by UCD Academic Regulations, and the NCAD Addendum to the Academic Regulations and Policy. NCAD's Assessment Appeals Policy sets out the procedures for making an appeal in relation to the outcome of an assessment, and the Academic and Student Affairs office is responsible for handling all such appeals.

A link to The UCD Examination Regulations is available on the NCAD website at:

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/examination-regulations/>

This is supported by the 'NCAD Addendum to the Academic Regulations and Policy' detailing local derogations and arrangements; published on the same web page.

Additional student interaction with academic processes and procedures is also mediated through the following codes of practice, guidelines and procedures:

- NCAD Student Code
- NCAD Policy on Dignity and Respect
- NCAD Student Handbook
- Specific Programme Handbooks
- Policy on Plagiarism
- NCAD Postgraduate Policy and Procedures
- NCAD Postgraduate Supervisor's Handbook
- NCAD Code for Good Research Practice
- NCAD Intellectual Property Policy
- NCAD RPL Policy and Practices

All of these documents can be accessed at:

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/academic-student-affairs-registration-regulation/policies-procedures-regulations/>

Throughout a student's programme of study, additional support is provided through a variety of mechanisms, including:

- NCAD Students Union
- NCAD Evening Students Union
- NCAD's Student Learning Support Office
- NCAD's Assistive Technology Service
- NCAD's Student Mentoring Programme

- Additional wellbeing services: Doctor, Counsellor, Career Guidance

Information on these supports can be found at:

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/support-services/student-learning-support-service/>

In relation to the completing of an NCAD programme of study and awarding of degrees, NCAD's Academic Registry handles all relevant details of arrangements for the graduation ceremony and all associated protocols, and provides all official documents required by students, including:

- Certificate of Attendance
- Graduate Research Transcript
- Statement of Results
- Transcript
- Diploma Supplement

<https://www.ncad.ie/students>

3.3 Programme monitoring and review: Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of a programme is used as an opportunity to evaluate and enhance the programme with the benefit of feedback from staff, students, external examiners, employers, student progression data, etc.

### In Year Programme Monitoring

Heads of Department meet with Department staff as a group at regular intervals, with the frequency of such meetings varying from weekly to once every six weeks. Heads of Department also meet with student representatives from their programme, upon request and ahead of meetings of the School Board. Heads of School meet with Heads of Department (where applicable) on a weekly basis to address operational and module/programme enhancement considerations. In the School of Visual Culture staff meetings are held every six weeks; in the School of Education staff meetings are held on a monthly basis.

School Boards meet four times in the year. Each Department submits a formal report to the School Board and Quality Assurance is a standing item on the agenda of School Boards. Proposed changes to programmes requiring formal approval are discussed at School Boards, brought to NCAD's Programmes Board for consideration and to Academic Council for approval. Where proposed changes are significant, the changes are also brought to UCD's University Programmes Board for approval.

Programme Review Forums (also known as Student Forums) are held annually and involve all students in module-level discussion of their programme and learning experience. A record is made of Programme Review Forums and these are discussed at School Board and by the Quality Assurance Steering Committee. They also inform Annual Planning at Department and School level and inform NCAD's Annual Quality Enhancement Plan.

### Annual Programme Review

In June of each year, annual programme planning meetings take place at Department and School level based on developments over the year, student feedback on modules and programmes, end of year student survey results, and external examiner reports. Where external examiner reports are not yet available, recommendations arising are addressed during the subsequent academic year, through staff meetings at the start of the academic year and October School Board meetings.

Academic staff across the College also take an active role in external examining duties within the Higher Education sector in Ireland, as well as in Europe and internationally. These duties cover undergraduate and postgraduate up to PhD level and provide the College with ongoing exposure within the sector to crucial benchmarking and exemplars of best practice.

### Admission, Transition and Retention

Student data relating to application and admission numbers is discussed by the College Management Team (CMT) and, through the Heads of School, informs planning (spatial and curricular) at School and Department level.

All first year students on a studio programme in NCAD (95%) participate in a common first year programme which is diagnostic in nature and works towards the student's choice of a studio area for degree specialisation. For the majority of its first year places, NCAD does not operate an admission process based on academic points. College places are offered based on a portfolio score to applicants who meet minimum academic entry criteria.

Student data relating to retention rates is presented to CMT and reported to the HEA:

<https://hea.ie/statistics/data-for-download-and-visualisations/students/completion/completion-data-release-march2021/>

### Periodic Review

All undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at NCAD are subject to Periodic Review by a Peer Review Group that is required to be made up of three external reviewers:

- Two reviewers from a comparable area within a similar-type institution (in academic reviews, one reviewer should be chosen from academia and one from the cultural industries)
- A UCD representative or external person with experience of the Irish higher education and QA systems.

Peer Reviewers cannot have served as Subject External Examiners for the area under review in the three years previous to the review.

External Peer Reviewers are nominated by Schools to the Quality Assurance Steering Committee where they are discussed and, either recommended to Academic Council or an alternate examiner sought so their independence from NCAD is not called into question.

The Self-Assessment Report at the heart of the periodic review process is an invaluable opportunity to reflect upon and seek to enhance an established programme. NCAD's experience of periodic reviews to date is a positive one; they are frequently insightful and generally useful in the development of provision across all areas of the College.

## J. Teaching and Learning

### Criterion 4:

The quality of the learning experience is monitored on an on-going basis. The provider should have an open community that values critical reflection and fosters personal and professional development for both learners and staff. Staff should be appropriately qualified and experienced. The linked provider should demonstrate that it engages with the wider national and international community of practice to enhance

teaching and learning. The provider should also ensure that the programme level and each programme's learning environment are appropriate – this will include: physical premises, equipment and facilities; learning off-campus; collaborative learning contexts; learning resources.

## Commentary/Evidence Source

### QUALITY OF THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS

Students are encouraged to engage in active learning through a range of student-centred learning activities in all disciplinary areas. Lecturers use a range of methodologies to encourage active participation in learning including: problem-based learning, project-based learning, student-led presentations, peer learning, studio critiques, community-based placements, placement in formal educational settings and learning in non-formal contexts. In respect of academic staff and students alike, NCAD promotes and seeks to uphold the principles of academic freedom as mandated in the NCAD Act 1971 and the HEA Act 2022, and described in NCAD's Academic Freedom Policy.

The quality of the learning experience for students is monitored through the contribution of elected student representation at academic forums across the College. Student representatives are elected by the students at the start of each academic year for each programme and year of programme. The student representatives meet with Heads of Department at regular intervals and attend School Boards where issues specific to the School or programme are discussed. Through this system, students are also made aware of developments within their School.

Student representatives sit on School Boards, the NCAD Programmes Board, Academic Council, and An Bord (<http://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/an-bord/>) as full board members.

First year students are supported in making the transition into third level education through a **First Year Student Council**. At the start of the year one student is elected from each of the 11 groups in 1<sup>st</sup> year, and that group of elected representatives constitutes the First Year Student Council. The Council meets with the Head of First Year each semester, and at any time at either the Head of Department's or the Council's request. Notes of each meeting are taken by one of the students. These notes are then distributed to all Council members and the information passed on to the full group of First Years. Students from the Council also act as representatives on the First Year Board and on the School Boards for Fine Art, Design, Education and Visual Culture.

The quality of the learning experience is also systematically monitored through gathering and reporting student feedback based upon annual Programme Review Forums and the annual surveys issued by the Quality Office.

NCAD works to create a learning environment that is attractive to school leavers, regardless of socio-economic background or disability, adults beginning higher education, and people who wish to continue learning and pursue intellectual and creative enrichment and fulfilment. Additional support to this end is provided by NCAD's Centre for Continuing Education in Art and Design and NCAD's Access Office.

<http://www.ncad.ie/continuing-education>

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/support-services/>

### Enhancing Learning and Teaching

Learning and teaching are central to art and design education at NCAD, and are the focus of one of four strategic projects through which NCAD's Strategic Plan 2019-2024 is being implemented: NCAD's Teaching & Learning Strategic Project.

Responsibility for NCAD's Teaching & Learning Strategic Project rests with the Head of Academic & Student Affairs, supported by NCAD's Teaching and Learning Development Officer, and by a Project Team drawn from across the College. The Head of Academic and Student Affairs and the Strategic Project team report to both the College Management Team and An Bord in respect of progress against the project plan.

The enhancement of teaching and learning at NCAD is informed by national priorities, as articulated through the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, and by institutional ambitions as articulated by staff in a comprehensive audit and consultation process undertaken as part of the Strategic Project. As the College establishes and commences delivery of our Teaching and Learning Action Plan, building strong connections between annual programme planning processes, periodic programme review findings and T&LE planning will present further opportunities for the enhancement of our students' learning experience.

## The Learning Environment

NCAD provides numerous supports to enhance the Learning Environment of students:

**The Student Learning Support Service**, delivered by the National Learning Network and NCAD's Assistive Technology service, offers a confidential academic support service which provides assistance to students in managing the demands of College life. Learning support at NCAD is available to all students at all levels of study.

<http://www.ncad.ie/students/support-services/>

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/support-services/student-learning-support-service/>

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/support-services/student-learning-support-service/guidelines-on-managing-disabilities-1>

[www.ncadat.blogspot.ie](http://www.ncadat.blogspot.ie)

**The Edward Murphy Library** at NCAD has an unrivalled collection of over 93,000 books and exhibition catalogues. The major emphasis is on 19th, 20th and 21st century art and design, but material from a large number of other subject areas is also acquired. Students also have access to a range of image databases and a large lending collection of DVDs.

A key student/researcher resource at NCAD is **The National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL)**, a public research resource dedicated to the documentation of 20th and 21st century Irish visual art and design. NIVAL collects, stores and makes accessible for research an unparalleled collection of documentation about Irish art in all media.

**NCAD Gallery** supports contemporary practice and critical debate in visual arts practices and reflects the diversity and strengths of the College by developing and promoting the future of art and design in Ireland.

On-site student learning is complemented by the use of the **Virtual Learning Environment, Canvas**. Prior to 2020 and during the Covid-19 Pandemic NCAD used Google Classroom to support student learning. The move to Canvas commenced in 2022/23, with roll-out to be complete in 2024/25.

An **IT Support** helpdesk is open for students from 1:30pm to 4:00pm, Monday to Friday. Students in NCAD are provided with an NCAD Google Apps Account (Email; Calendar; and Drive for document storage) for use during their time of study in NCAD. The NCAD has a wireless network available to staff and students.



**Eduroam** (education roaming) a secure, world-wide roaming access service developed for the international research and education community, is available to students and staff at NCAD. It allows students, researchers and staff from participating institutions to obtain internet connectivity across campus and when visiting other participating institutions by simply opening their laptop.

<http://www.ncad.ie/library/>

<http://www.nival.ie/>

<http://www.ncad.ie/about/gallery/>

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/it-support2/>

Additional student support services such as the **Careers Advisory Service** provides careers advice to students throughout their programme, and in particular to students in their final year or pursuing postgraduate studies.

Student support is also provided by the NCAD Student **Counselling Service**, which is a confidential and free service for students of the College and is staffed by a professionally qualified psychologist and counsellor. The service offers support, counselling and psychotherapy for students who may be experiencing personal difficulties. The **College doctor** is available to students on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings throughout the academic year.

NCAD's **College Community Welfare Committee** is chaired by the Head of Academic and Student Affairs and comprises staff members from student support services, including counselling, access, learning support, career guidance, Visual Culture and academic representation from First Year studies. The committee seeks to develop measures to support student retention and provide support to staff through development of training and guidance in welfare matters.

The **Staff Prize** is intended to help students of exceptional ability with their final year expenses. It is funded by staff contributions. Each School may nominate a suitable student from each Department towards the end of the final year to go forward for the prize, and a selection committee chooses the final award winner(s). The sum awarded is a substantial one, which can help considerably with final year costs.

The **Student Assistance Fund** is available to students experiencing particular or unexpected hardship during their programme of study. This may be as a result of family breakdown, bereavement, accidents, health problems or other crises that result in unexpected financial difficulty.

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/support-services/financial-advice-and-support/>

The **Childcare Support Fund** is funded by the Irish Government and part funded by the European Union under Ireland's EU Structural and Investment Funds Programme 2014 – 2020. The purpose of the Childcare Support Fund is to provide assistance towards the cost of registered childcare (nursery, crèche etc.) for children of full-time students of NCAD, whose ability to participate in education may be adversely affected by childcare responsibilities.

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/support-services/financial-advice-and-support/>

## Physical Premises, Equipment and Facilities

The quality of the learning environment is monitored by each School and Department where workshops, studios and technical support specific to each discipline are maintained by Technical Assistants, overseen

by Heads of Department and School. Feedback from Technical Officers plays a key role in annual programme planning processes.

NCAD's Health and Safety Officer maintains a close working relationship with Technical Officers across the College, to understand the pressures and constraints being experienced across workshops, and to support effective engagement with NCAD's Facilities Manager in order to plan for and prioritise investment in the enhancement of facilities.

## K. Assessment of Learners

### Criterion 5:

The linked provider's assessment framework establishes the institution's approach to the assessment of learners in both formal (where it leads to certification) and, as appropriate, in-house assessment. The framework should also include the administration of assessment, procedures and systems for the security and integrity of the assessment process, such as assessment materials and processes; assignments; exam scripts; project work, appeals and records of learner achievement.

### Commentary/Evidence Source

#### Assessment at NCAD

Assessment drives and informs student learning. In an outcomes approach, NCAD lecturers are assessing what has been learnt, not what the tutor has taught. Therefore, linking assessment to learning outcomes is very important. All programmes in NCAD have an assessment strategy which addresses assessment methods / techniques, criteria for assessment, grading structures, when assessment takes place, and feedback processes for learners. It also sets out how assessment is regulated and what happens in respect of repeats failures, etc (Hunt, 2010). Enhancing the Assessment framework and environment at NCAD is a key focus for the Teaching and Learning Strategic Project team and NCAD's Teaching and Learning Enhancement Development Officer.

There are generally three **types of assessment** that take place in NCAD:

1. Formative assessment - which takes place orally and/or in writing to students on their progress. This does not usually involve a mark and is diagnostic.
2. Continuous assessment happens throughout the programme, particularly in Fine Art where in the final year semester one and two are considered as one long module in order for students to be able to synthesise a body of work for an exhibition over an extended period of time.
3. Summative assessment takes place at the end of each semester or at the end of a module and this type of assessment takes place at the end of a shorter period or project.

NCAD uses all three types of assessment in different programmes in the different disciplines of Fine Art, Design, Education and visual Culture.

There are three main **approaches to assessment** in NCAD. Tutor-led assessment (where work is submitted and graded by tutors), peer review or crit (where the student work is reviewed by peers and tutors, and formative feedback is given) and group assessment (where a mark or grade is assigned to the group based on overall performance). Consistent assessment criteria are used across studio modules and written work; the NCAD Grade Descriptors align with UCD grade descriptors as per the Academic Regulations. Students are given regular feedback on their assignments and their learning at key points in the year, usually after

modules or assignments are completed. (See further *NCAD Guidelines for New programme Design*, 2010, N. Hunt).

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/programme-information/>

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/academic-student-affairs-registration-regulation/new-and-returning-students/>

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/academic-student-affairs-registration-regulation/>

[https://www.ncad.ie/files/undergrad\\_files/NCAD\\_Student\\_Handbook\\_D3\\_\(1\).pdf](https://www.ncad.ie/files/undergrad_files/NCAD_Student_Handbook_D3_(1).pdf)

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/examination-regulations/>

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/examination-results/>

### Integrity of the Assessment Process

The delivery of, and assessment of progress within NCAD’s programmes is governed by UCD Academic Regulations and the NCAD Academic Regulations Addendum.

NCAD’s Constitution of the Examination Appeals Committee sets out the procedures for making an appeal in relation to the outcome of an assessment, and the Academic & Student Affairs office is responsible for handling all such appeals. NCAD’s Extenuating Circumstances Policy offers guidance on and a means to support recognition of the range of serious and unanticipated difficulties that may adversely affect students’ ability to study, complete assessments, or attend their required classes and other learning activities.

All academic programmes at NCAD are modular and the NCAD Academic Calendar is organised in three trimesters, with the majority of academic delivery taking place in the Autumn and Spring Trimesters. Student progress is recorded through a series of Exam Board meetings across the year. The robustness of the examinations process is assured through detailed scrutiny and discussion across the whole of the process.

The security of the assessment information held on the Student Record System is assured through clear constraints upon who can edit and publish the assessment information.

The credibility of the assessment process as a whole is assured locally (at the level of assessment teams, Departments and Schools by clear processes in respect of assessment teams, levels of moderation within and across Departments and Schools and through the scrutiny of Subject Extern Examiners), and centrally through the analysis of overall award outcomes being presented for discussion at Academic Council on an annual basis.

## L. Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

### Criterion 6:

Institutions should take responsibility for the quality of their staff and provide them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively. For example, they should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

### Commentary/Evidence Source

Recruitment processes at NCAD are fair and transparent. All permanent roles are advertised internally and externally, shortlisting and interview panels are gender balanced, and all permanent academic roles include an external panel member.

Where additional hours are available, the College is compliant with the Cush Report in that additional hours are available internally to part-time staff with the requisite skill set (including people who have been in our employment), and application is through an expression of interest. HR are involved in the process to ensure consistency in approach and to eliminate bias.

All HR-related protocols, policies and procedures are up to date, reviewed regularly and implementation is monitored. All HR Policies are available to all staff through Workvivo (NCAD's Staff Intranet).

Recruitment Policies include:

- Recruitment & Selection Policy
- NCAD Staff Handbook
- NCAD Staff Academic Handbook

Employment Policies include:

- Induction Policy
- Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy
- Absence Management Policy
- Academic Freedom Policy
- Adoptive Leave Policy
- Annual Leave Policy
- Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy
- Career Break Policy
- Circular 05-2018 Arrangements for Paid Sick Leave
- Circular 142009 – Shorter Working Year Scheme
- Code of Conduct for Employees Policy
- Code of Practice for Employment of People with Disabilities
- Complaint Handling for Staff Policy
- Dignity and Respect at Work Policy (Incorporating Bullying and Harassment)
- Disciplinary Policy
- Force Majeure Leave Policy
- Gender Identity and Expression Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Maternity Leave Policy
- Parental Leave Policy
- Parent's Leave Policy
- Paternity Leave Policy
- Personnel File Access Request – Data Subject Access Request
- Protected Disclosures Policy

- Right to Disconnect Policy
- Safety, Health and Welfare Policy
- Shorter Working Year Policy
- Working from Home Policy

Professional Advancement & Development Policies include:

- Further Education Policy
- Sabbatical Leave Policy
- College Academic Promotion Scheme to Grade of Lecturer Policy

Wider Staff Policies include:

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Electronic Communications Policy
- Garda Vetting Policy
- Staff Garda Vetting Policy
- Social Networking and Social Media Policy

Required training - such as in manual handling, first aid, use of the defibrillator - is provided. Compliance with respect to such training is closely monitored by HR.

A wider programme of management training and continuous professional development opportunities is being developed, with attention also being given to developing appropriate and sustainable career progression opportunities for staff.

As noted in Section J above, mandated through the NCAD Act 1971 and HEA Act 2022 and reflected in NCAD's Academic Freedom policy, no member of the academic staff of the College, subject to the provision of any enactment or role of law, is disadvantaged, or subject to less favourable treatment by An Bord, College Management, Academic Council or any of its subcommittees, arising from his/her/their questioning and testing of received wisdom, putting forward of new ideas or stating of controversial or unpopular opinion in his/her/their teaching, research and any other activities either in or outside of the College.

## M. Support for Learners

### Criterion 7:

Institutions should ensure that the learning environment is appropriate to support student learning and a positive student experience generally. Learning resources should be updated and expanded as necessary to reflect up-to-date approaches and student needs. The range of learning resources and student supports should be reflected in a coherent and integrated framework and include: academic and pastoral supports; careers and other guidance; access to library, information and computing services/resources; and appropriate student representation opportunities for students to communicate feedback.

## Commentary/Evidence Source

There is a strong culture in the College of collective responsibility for students, in terms of both academic and pastoral support. Promoting awareness, understanding and access to the supports available to students is achieved through student induction, [through the website](#), through a [Support Services Guide](#) aimed at students, through student handbooks and a recently developed staff handbook.

A range of **PASTORAL SUPPORT** services are delivered by a very committed team, with strong communication and coordination of efforts, and a strong relationship with NCAD's Students' Union.

Pastoral Support at NCAD encompasses:

- **The NCAD Student Counselling Service**, which is a confidential and free service for students of the College and is staffed by a professionally qualified psychologist and counsellor. The service offers support, counselling and psychotherapy for students who may be experiencing personal difficulties.
- **Medical services** are provided on Monday, Wednesday and Friday throughout the academic year.
- **The Careers Advisory Service** provides careers advice and guidance to students throughout their programme, and in particular to students in their final year or pursuing postgraduate studies.
- **The Student Assistance Fund** is available to students experiencing particular or unexpected hardship during their course of study. This may be as a result of family breakdown, bereavement, accidents, health problems or other crises that result in unexpected financial difficulty. This has been extended to include part-time learners on accredited programmes.
- **The Childcare Support Fund** is funded by the Irish Government and part funded by the European Union under Ireland's EU Structural and Investment Funds Programme 2014 – 2020. The purpose of the Childcare Support Fund is to help towards the cost of registered childcare (nursery, crèche etc.) for children of full-time students of NCAD, whose ability to participate in education may be adversely affected by childcare responsibilities.
- **A Staff Prize** is awarded annually to help students of exceptional ability with their final year expenses. It is funded by staff contributions. Each School may nominate a suitable student from each Department towards the end the final year to go forward for the prize, and a selection committee chooses the final award winner(s). The sum awarded is a substantial one, which can help considerably with final year costs.
- **A Student Mentor programme** in support of all first year students.
- **Student-led SMART Consent workshops** are scheduled as part of the first year programme for all students.

A range of [Academic Supports](#) is available to NCAD students, along with a strong commitment on the part of staff across the College to support students in achieving their full potential. Academic Support at NCAD encompasses:

- The **Student Learning Support** Service, delivered by the National Learning Network, is a confidential academic support service which assists students in managing the demands of college life. Learning support at NCAD is available to all students at all levels of study. Support is automatically provided to students registered with NCAD's disability office, and is also available to students who do not have a formal diagnosis/condition but find they need assistance during their time in NCAD. (NCAD would have a high proportion of students with learning support requirements.)

- The **Assistive Technology** (AT) service in NCAD provides students with software, IT facilities, advice and training to assist them with writing and research. Specialised software is available for students with specific learning difficulties or disabilities.
- Supporting Student Learning resources are available on the College website and reasonable accommodations are agreed nationally across all HEIs in the DAWN network.
- The [Edward Murphy Library](#) at NCAD has an unrivalled collection of over 93,000 books and exhibition catalogues. The major emphasis is on 19th, 20th and 21st century art and design, but material from a large number of other subject areas is also acquired. Students also have access to a range of image databases and a large lending collection of DVDs.
- A key student/researcher resource at NCAD is **The National Irish Visual Arts Library** ([NIVAL](#)), a public research resource dedicated to the documentation of 20th and 21st century Irish visual art and design. NIVAL collects, stores and makes accessible for research an unparalleled collection of documentation about Irish art in all media.
- [NCAD Gallery](#) supports contemporary practice and critical debate in visual arts practices and reflects the diversity and strengths of the College by developing and promoting the future of art and design in Ireland.
- On-site student learning is complemented by the use of the **Virtual Learning Environment, Canvas**. Prior to 2020 and during the Covid-19 Pandemic NCAD used Google Classroom to support student learning. The move to Canvas commenced in 2022/23, with roll-out to be complete in 2024/25.
- An [IT Support](#) helpdesk is open for students from 1:30pm to 4:00pm, Monday to Friday. Students in NCAD are provided with an NCAD Google Apps Account (Email; Calendar; and Drive for document storage) for use during their time of study in NCAD. The NCAD has a wireless network available to staff and students.
- **Eduroam** (education roaming), a secure, world-wide roaming access service developed for the international research and education community is available to students and staff at NCAD. It allows students, researchers and staff from participating institutions to obtain internet connectivity across campus and when visiting other participating institutions by simply opening their laptop.

Students who enter NCAD through the supplementary admissions scheme, the **NCAD ACCESS SCHEME**, avail of additional financial, academic and learning supports throughout their undergraduate and postgraduate study.

The importance of learner representation within NCAD's governance structures is clearly articulated in the NCAD Act, 1971, and the HEA Act, 2022. There is good **learner representation** across the College and at all levels of decision making. Student representatives are elected by the students at the start of each academic year for each programme and year of programme. The student representatives attend School Boards where issues specific to the School or programme are discussed. Through this system, students are also made aware of developments within their School. Student representatives also sit on the Programmes Board and Quality Assurance Steering Committee, Academic Council, and An Bord (NCAD's governing body) as full board members.

The President and Vice-President of NCAD's Students' Union (NCADSU) meet every two weeks with NCAD's Facilities Manager, Finance Officer and Access Officer and participate in two College Management Team meetings per annum. In addition, the Director meets the Student Council (all Class Reps and Officers of NCADSU) twice per annum.

## N. Information and Data Management

### Criterion 8:

Reliable information and data should be available to inform decision making and to ensure that the linked provider knows what is working well and what needs attention. Controls and structures should be in place to generate specific data/reports for the management of self-monitoring and planning processes. Evidence should also be provided that relates to, for example: information systems to support data capture and analysis e.g. progression data; KPIs; student information systems e.g. maintain secure student records; policies and procedures for data protection and freedom of information requests.

### Commentary/Evidence Source

NCAD uses a range of data sets to inform decision-making across and at different levels within the institution.

Reliable information in support of programme planning and effective quality enhancement is presented to, and disseminated by, NCAD’s College Management Team on the basis of the following data sources:

- Student Feedback Reports – from Quality Assurance Officer
- Student FTEs – from Academic Registry
- Student Recruitment Reporting – from Academic Registry
- Access and Lifelong Learning Students – from NCAD’s Access Officer
- Retention and Progression Rates – from Academic Registry
- Annual Programme Planning Reports – from Heads of Department / School
- HR Staff Report – from HR & Heads of Department
- Finance Reports – from Head of Corporate Services & Registrar
- Facilities Development (physical and digital) – from Head of Corporate Services & Registrar

This information enables self-monitoring and planning at programme, Department and School level.

NCAD gathers and analyses a range of student feedback, such as an End of Year Student Survey, annual Programme Review (Student) Forum reports, and the Irish Survey of Student Engagement. This information, external examiners reports and key institutional data (student information via Quercus, HR reports and Finance reports) are considered as part of the periodic quality review of Schools and Support units.

<a href="#">Annual Reports:</a>	<a href="https://www.ncad.ie/about/key-policies-and-documents/ncad-annual-reports/">https://www.ncad.ie/about/key-policies-and-documents/ncad-annual-reports/</a>
<a href="#">Quality Assurance:</a>	<a href="https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/">https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/</a>
<a href="#">Quality Review Reports:</a>	<a href="https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/cycle-1-reports/">https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/cycle-1-reports/</a>
<a href="#">Quality Review Procedures and Guidelines:</a>	<a href="https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/quality-review-procedures-and-guidelines/">https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/quality-review-procedures-and-guidelines/</a>



<a href="#">Student Feedback and Consultation Policy:</a>	<a href="https://www.ncad.ie/files/download/Student_Feedback_and_Consultation_Policy.pdf">https://www.ncad.ie/files/download/Student_Feedback_and_Consultation_Policy.pdf</a>
<a href="#">Data Protection Policy:</a>	<a href="https://www.ncad.ie/files/download/NCAD_Data_Protection_Policy_v0.3(1).pdf">https://www.ncad.ie/files/download/NCAD_Data_Protection_Policy_v0.3(1).pdf</a>
<a href="#">Freedom of Information:</a>	<a href="https://www.ncad.ie/about/key-policies-and-documents/freedom-of-information/">https://www.ncad.ie/about/key-policies-and-documents/freedom-of-information/</a>

## O. Public Information and Communication

### Criterion 9:

Public information refers to the information that linked providers communicate and publish about their activities, including their education and training programmes, research and related services; their quality assurance policies, procedures and reports relating to quality review and other appropriate quality evaluation processes. Public information should be clear, accurate, objective, current and accessible. What are the processes to review and update information?

### Commentary/Evidence Source

Clear, accurate, up-to-date and accessible information is provided by NCAD through the publication of a wide range of information about its activities, including programmes, admissions and assessment. This information is updated on an ongoing basis, as needed.

For *prospective students*, there is a lot of information relating to entry requirements and application procedures as well as a wide variety of policy, procedures and other supporting documents relating to the student lifecycle included on the Study at NCAD web pages and the NCAD Student web pages. The Programme Information pages in the Student section give the breakdown of programme structure as well as detailed module information. This information is collated and managed by Student Services and Admissions, working with Schools and the Quality and Academic Support Office.

For *graduate admissions*, information on entry requirements and the application process is available through Study at NCAD. The NCAD Postgraduate web pages give information on postgraduate study in the Schools of Design, Education, Fine Art and Visual Culture and includes resources such as a Postgraduate Student Handbook and guidance on The PhD Journey in NCAD.

For *current students*, the Students web pages provide information on registration, term dates, and examinations, as well as on policies and procedures relevant to their experience as students of the College, including examination regulations.

NCAD's Quality Assurance Policy, Quality Assurance Procedures and QA Handbook: Principles, Framework and Guidance are published on the College website, along with Quality Review Reports and Quality Improvement Plans. NCAD Annual Reports are also published, and NCAD participates in the annual Irish Survey of Student Engagement and the HEA Graduate Survey.

### Processes for Review & Update

- All information relating to the **recruitment and admission** of students is reviewed and renewed by NCAD's Academic Registry team annually as part of the student recruitment cycle. (*Undertaken by Academic Registry*)

- **Programme information** is updated annually as part of the roll-over process for programmes and students on the College SRS, prior to the start of each academic year. (*Undertaken by Academic Development in consultation with Academic Registry*)
- **Academic Regulations** are updated annually by UCD, which is reflected on the NCAD website and in the NCAD Addendum (*Undertaken by Academic Development & Academic Registry*)
- **Policies, procedures** and other supporting documents **relating to the student lifecycle** are updated across the academic year for publication and implementation from September of the subsequent academic year. (*Undertaken by Academic Development*)
- Policies, procedures and documents relating to NCAD's **Quality Assurance System**, including review findings, are reviewed annually and updated as appropriate. (*Undertaken by Academic Development*)
- **All HR and other operational policies and procedures** are reviewed and renewed on a regular basis by the Corporate Services team and in consultation with relevant stakeholders. (*Undertaken by Corporate Services*).

## P. Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

### Criterion 10:

Review and self-evaluation of quality (both internal and external processes), including review of programmes of education, training and research and related services, is a fundamental part of a provider's quality assurance system. The purpose of such self-evaluation includes monitoring standards and the student experience; ensuring that modules and programmes remain up-to-date; to identify areas that need improvement; and to evaluate the effectiveness of the quality assurance mechanisms used. This monitoring and review should lead to continuous improvement of the institutions provision and supporting systems. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

### Commentary/Evidence Source

Academic staff at NCAD are passionate about their disciplines and strongly committed to education and creating opportunities for their students' art and design education. In this context, self-evaluation and monitoring of the standard of the College's educational offerings is a key component of NCAD's Quality Assurance processes.

### Regular/Annual Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

Student feedback, particularly through annual Programme Review Forums and representation on School Boards and Programmes Board supports in-year review and enhancement processes at programme level.

NCAD appoints Subject External Examiners with international expertise in their field as moderators of the final year assessment process for all taught programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and Special Extern Examiners are appointed in relation to all research degrees.

An annual review and planning process allow Programme Teams, Schools, the College (through Academic Council), and An Bord to assure themselves that the programmes delivered meet the expectations and needs of staff and students. That is, as part of NCAD's annual quality review processes, Schools and Departments are required to undertake a review of their programmes using, for example, extern reports and student feedback to inform reflection

Alignment of our programmes with contemporary developments in the creative and cultural industries and professions is an important aspect of NCAD's ongoing programme monitoring and review process. This is achieved through engaging with industry (from SMEs to major cultural institutions) in delivering real-world projects at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, and securing Professional/Regulatory Body accreditation and/or recognition as appropriate for our programmes (for example The Teaching Council).

### Periodic Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

All Schools, Departments and Administration areas of NCAD have participated in comprehensive quality assurance review and enhancement processes since 2005. Preparation for quality review requires Schools to assess the effectiveness of the processes they use to monitor and review programmes.

Periodic quality assurance reviews are led by a Peer Review Group that is required to be made up of three external reviewers, and involve consultation with students, staff and external stakeholders. The findings of the Peer Review Group are published through the NCAD website alongside a Quality Improvement Plan developed by the programme team and annual updates in respect of progress.

The schedule for the current [cycle of Periodic Reviews](#) can be found here:

<https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/quality-review-schedule-cycle-2/>.

[Peer Review Group Reports and related Quality Improvement Plans](#) can be found here:

<https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/cycle-1-reports/>

### Communication

**Regular/Annual Processes:** Improving communication to stakeholders regarding actions taken in response to their feedback and as part of wider quality enhancement processes is a priority for NCAD. A 'You Said, We Did' communication plan addressed to both students and staff is planned for 2023/24, with a view to becoming established as a robust aspect of the College's QA system.

**Periodic/Institutional Processes:** Findings from Periodic and Institutional Review processes are reported to School Boards, the Quality Assurance Steering Committee and Academic Council, and noted to An Bord. Peer Review Group Reports, Quality Improvement Plans and updates on progress are publicly available through being published on the NCAD website.

## Q. Other Parties involved in Education and Training

### Criterion 11:

- 11.1 Peer relationship with the broader education and training community: collaborative and partnership arrangements, both in Ireland and overseas, should be made with reputable bodies and are subject to appropriate internal and external quality assurance. The nature of all such arrangements that are in place with national and overseas educational establishments should be published on the provider's website.
- 11.2 External Partnerships: quality assurance procedures include provision for engagement with external partners, and should include a formal due diligence stage. Any transnational arrangements in which the provider is involved should be published.
- 11.3 Expert panellists and extern examiners: the quality assurance procedures should include explicit criteria and procedures for the recruitment and engagement of external, independent, national and international experts (where appropriate). The names and affiliations of expert panellists,

examiners and other external experts associated with the provider should be collated and monitored by the provider.

### Commentary/Evidence Source

11.1 Peer relationship with the broader education and training community: collaborative and partnership arrangements, both in Ireland and overseas, should be made with reputable bodies and are subject to appropriate internal and external quality assurance. The nature of all such arrangements that are in place with national and overseas educational establishments should be published on the provider’s website.

NCAD has a number of postgraduate programmes that are delivered in partnership with several Irish Universities:

- MSc in Medical Devices Design, delivered in partnership with UCD and TCD, two of Ireland’s leading universities. The quality assurance policies and procedures of the partner institutions are regularly reviewed by Ireland’s statutory body for promoting the quality, integrity and reputation of Ireland’s further and higher education system.
- MA in Interaction Design, delivered in partnership with UCD. The quality assurance policies and procedures of UCD are regularly reviewed by Ireland’s statutory body for promoting the quality, integrity and reputation of Ireland’s further and higher education system.

### International Educational Partnerships

The Lifelong Learning Programme, Erasmus+, supports higher education students with a study period of traineeship in one of 32 participating European countries as part of their undergraduate or postgraduate degree. NCAD has 90+ Erasmus partners, and undergraduate exchange (incoming and outgoing) takes place in during an optional year of study – Studio+ / Visual Culture+ - between Year 2 and Final year of NCAD’s undergraduate programme.

<a href="http://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/international/Applications">International Undergraduate Applications</a>	<a href="http://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/international/">http://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/international/</a>
<a href="https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/exchange/">International Exchange / Erasmus</a>	<a href="https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/exchange/">https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/exchange/</a>
<a href="https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/exchange/ba-international/">BA International</a>	<a href="https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/exchange/ba-international/">https://www.ncad.ie/study-at-ncad/exchange/ba-international/</a>

11.2 External Partnerships: quality assurance procedures include provision for engagement with external partners, and should include a formal due diligence stage. Any transnational arrangements in which the provider is involved should be published.

NCAD seeks to be a College of engaged learning, in which all students are actively engaged in real world learning projects in the culture, society and the economy. To this end, and at any one time, NCAD is engaged with a relatively large number of external partners. The College exercises due diligence in so far as partners are selected on the basis of their good reputation and standing within the cultural sector, the field of social enterprise, community development/education, or national/international enterprise.

11.3 Expert panellists and extern examiners: the quality assurance procedures should include explicit criteria and procedures for the recruitment and engagement of external, independent, national and international experts (where appropriate). The names and affiliations of expert panellists, examiners and other external experts associated with the provider should be collated and monitored by the provider.

Independent external peer review is central to quality review procedures at NCAD.

Independent Subject External Examiners play a key role in **Annual Review and Planning Processes** for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes at NCAD (as described in Sections A and C).

Independent Special External Examiners play a key role in the assessment of all postgraduate research programmes (as lead examiner of MLitt and PhD submissions).

Subject External Examiners are nominated by School Boards, reviewed by NCAD's Programmes Board, approved by NCAD's Academic Council and submitted to UCD for final approval.

Independent External Peer Review is central to **Periodic Quality Review Processes**. Peer Review Groups are required to be made up of three external reviewers:

- Two reviewers from a comparable area within a similar-type institution (in academic reviews, one reviewer should be chosen from academia and one from the cultural industries)
- A UCD representative or external person with experience of the Irish higher education and QA systems.

<https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/quality-review-procedures-and-guidelines/>.

Peer Reviewers cannot have served as Subject External Examiners for the area under review in the three years previous to the review.

External Peer Reviewers are nominated by Schools to the Quality Assurance Steering Committee where they are discussed and, either recommended to Academic Council or an alternate examiner sought so their independence from NCAD is not called into question.

## R. Comprehensive Quality Assurance Framework

### Criterion 12:

Institutions should have Quality Assurance mechanisms that are interconnected and reflect a coherent system. The Quality Assurance Framework should be comprehensive and embedded at all levels of the institution's activities. The quality assurance procedures should also be consistent with Section 28 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act 2012.

### Commentary/Evidence Source

NCAD has published a substantial suite of QA procedures and associated policies and guidelines on its website (publicly available information) and on Google Drive and Workvivo (internal information, e.g. External Examiner Reports and responses). NCAD QA Policy is available to staff and students and includes guidance on each person's role in relation to Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement.

NCAD's Quality Assurance System is based on the following principles:

- Quality assurance is understood to be the responsibility of the whole College, both staff and management;
- Students play a key role in quality assurance procedures through their presence and engagement with academic board meetings and feedback measures;
- Where examples of good practice across the College are identified, they are acknowledged, shared and implemented in a collegial manner;

- Review processes are locally driven at programme, Department and School level, with subsequent quality enhancement plans devised at the relevant level. Development of the plans is monitored during the year at the next level of management (e.g. Head of Department, Head of School or the College Management Team) and annually by the Quality Assurance Steering Committee, with progress reported to Academic Council, noted to An Bord and published on the College website.
- Programme documentation is produced locally and conforms to an agreed and standardised format College-wide to facilitate shared resources and quality enhancement;
- Programme documentation is both locally and centrally held and updated annually. Programme and end-of-year student feedback surveys are systemised and issued centrally, but are evaluated, and the actions implemented by Programme Leaders, Heads of Department and Heads of School;
- External Examiner Reports are responded to and acted upon where appropriate;
- The NCAD Access, Transfer and Progression Policy is published and accessible to applicants and students.

NCAD's QA Policy, Procedures and Handbook: Principles, Framework & Guidelines are published at:  
<https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/quality-review-procedures-and-guidelines/>

Quality Review & Student Feedback:

<https://www.ncad.ie/about/structure/head-of-academic-affairs/quality/student-feedback/>

Applicant & student policies, procedures & regulations:

<https://www.ncad.ie/undergraduate/undergraduate-year-1/>

Postgraduate: <https://www.ncad.ie/postgraduate>

Undergraduate/Postgraduate programme information & module descriptors:

<https://www.ncad.ie/students/programme-information/>

Examinations: <https://www.ncad.ie/students/examination-regulations/>

Continuing Education: <https://www.ncad.ie/continuing-education>

Staff Resources: <https://www.ncad.ie/staff> and on Workvivo (internal staff intranet)

Google Drive and Workvivo (internal staff intranet):

- External Examiner Reports and responses year by year
- Programme Board reports
- Academic Council reports
- An Bord reports
- Student Feedback reports