

PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW OF THE CIT CRAWFORD COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN 2015/16

Phase 2: Programme Review

PROGRAMME PANEL REPORT

SCHOOL: CIT Crawford College of Art & Design
DEPARTMENT: Media Communications
DATE: 27 – 28 April 2016

PROGRAMMES SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW

Major Awards

Master of Arts in Journalism with New Media (90 ECTS credits)
Master of Arts in Public Relations with New Media (90 ECTS credits)
Master of Arts in E-learning Design and Development (60 ECTS credits)

Non-Major Awards

Certificate in Digital Media Design & Development (SPA, NFQ L8, 30 ECTS credits)
Certificate in Media Production (SPA, NFQ L6, 20 ECTS credits)
Certificate in Radio Broadcast Media (SPA, NFQ L6, 20 ECTS credits)

PROGRAMME REVIEW PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Dr Francis Xavier Carty, emeritus director MA Public Relations programme, Dublin Institute of Technology
Jill O'Sullivan (panel chair), Editor Landmark Digital;
Tom O'Mara, Online Learning Project Manager - Office of the Vice-President for Teaching and Learning, University College Cork
Dr Susan O'Regan, Department of Musicianship & Academic Studies (CIT Cork School of Music)

PROGRAMME REPRESENTATION

Programme Staff

Ms Rose McGrath, Head of Department of Media Communications
Mr Emmett Coffey, Lecturer / Programme Coordinator, Department of Media Communications
Mr Brian Doyle, Lecturer, Department of Media Communications
Ms AnneMarie Green, Department of Media Communications
Mr Frank O'Donovan, Lecturer / Programme Coordinator, Department of Media Communications
Dr Gearóid Ó'Súilleabháin, Head of Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning
Ms Jessica Shine, Lecturer, Department of Media Communications

Learner Representatives *(Joint Meeting of Both Media Communications Panels)*

Mr Stephen Dorney, MA in Journalism with New Media
Mr Brendan Flaherty, BA (Hons) in Multimedia, Stage 3
Ms Rebecca Heald, BA (Hons) in Visual Communications, Stage 4
Ms Triona McCarthy, BA (Hons) in Multimedia, Stage 4
Ms Laura Martin, BA (Hons) in Visual Communications, Stage 2
Mr Samuel Rathwell, BA (Hons) in Visual Communications, Stage 3
Ms Kate Sexton, BA (Hons) in Multimedia, Stage 2
Ms Jesse Wiesblatt, MA in PR with New Media

External Stakeholders *(Joint Meeting of Both Media Communications Panels)*

Ms Fiona Collins, Regional Development Coordinator at Chartered Accountants Ireland / Chair of Guinness Cork Jazz Festival / Graduate of HDip & MA in PR with New Media
Mr Shane Cronin, Lead E-learning Designer, Dep't of Techn.-Enhanced Learning, CIT / Graduate of BA (Hons) in Multimedia & MA in E-learning Design & Development
Mr Paul Delaney, Artist & Graphic Designer, Cork / Graduate of BA (Hons) in Visual Communications
Mr Jim Horgan, Director, Horgan Communications, Cork
Ms Lisa Moran, Festival Administrator & Marketing, Kerrygold Ballymaloe Festival of Food & Wine / Good Start Coordinator, CIT / Grad. of MA in PR with New Media & BA (Hons) in VisComms
Mr James Mullighan, Director, Cork Film Festival
Mr Pat O'Hare, H+A Marketing+PR
Ms Karen Twomey, Freelance PR / Graduate of MA in PR with New Media

A. PROGRAMME SUMMARY AND MAJOR CHANGES PROPOSED

1. MASTER OF ARTS IN JOURNALISM WITH NEW MEDIA

1.1 Programme Summary

The Master of Arts in Journalism with New Media is a full-time, one-year course attracting 90 ECTS credits that offers the opportunity to gain a strategic and systematic understanding of the theory and practice of Journalism. It aims to equip graduates with the knowledge, skills and competencies required to effectively function as a professional journalist in the fast-growing professional communications sector.

1.2 Major Changes Now Proposed

To transfer the course online.

2. MASTER OF ARTS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS WITH NEW MEDIA

2.1 Programme Summary

The Masters in Public Relations with New Media is a three-semester course attracting 90 ECTS credits with full-time and part-time options. It aims to provide students with a strategic and systematic understanding of the theory and practice of public relations. It aims to equip graduates with the knowledge, skills and competencies required to effectively function as a public relations professional.

2.2 Major Changes Now Proposed

1. To introduce a mentorship/work placement aspect to the final, 30-credit thesis. The placement will partner the student with an industry professional mentor. This is intended to inform the student's final thesis, as well as provide real-world experience of the practice of Public Relations.
2. Introduce career theory, to encourage students to plan their careers and work towards career goals.

3. CERTIFICATE IN DIGITAL MEDIA DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT (L8 SPA, 30 CREDITS)

3.1 Programme Summary

The Certificate in Digital Media Design and Development was validated in 2013, but has not run up to this point. It is intended as a bridging route to the Masters in E-Learning, and also to enrich the work practices of multimedia professionals.

3.2 Major Changes Now Proposed

To launch the course for the first time since 2013 validation.

4. MASTER OF ARTS IN E-LEARNING DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Programme Summary

The 60-credit Master of Arts in E-learning Design and Development is an online, two-semester course. The course seeks to produce developers of cutting edge, educationally effective e-learning solutions.

4.2 Major Changes Now Proposed

No major changes proposed.

5. CERTIFICATE IN MEDIA PRODUCTION / CERTIFICATE IN RADIO BROADCAST MEDIA (L6 SPAs, 20 CREDITS)

5.1 Programme Summary

The 4 X 5-credit Special Purpose Awards in Media Production and Radio Broadcast are certificate programmes that allow self-paced learning, with no strict time limit for completion of the courses. The Radio Broadcast programme includes a block-based placement module run with RTÉ and Red FM.

5.2 Major Changes Now Proposed

No major changes proposed.

B. PANEL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. OVERALL RECOMMENDATION TO ACADEMIC COUNCIL ON REVALIDATION

Contingent upon confirmation of the successful completion of the internal programme and module moderation process, the Panel **recommends to Academic Council that the listed programmes be revalidated** for five years or until the next Programmatic Review, whichever is sooner, with effect from May 2016.

No Panel conditions are attached to this recommendation.

2. GENERAL

Commendations

2.1 We commend the CIT course developers for the energy and focus they have brought to the development of all of these courses, and are happy to revalidate them.

2.2 While we have some recommendations below, overall we think the course content is robust and wide-ranging.

2.3 We observed an extremely positive collegiate atmosphere among staff, to the betterment of communication and course development in these programmes. Co-operation and sharing of knowledge between courses was very evident.

2.4 We were impressed by the staff's commitment to ensure their courses remain relevant in industry, and bring unique offerings to students.

Recommendations

2.5 That where possible and practical, courses would contain a work-placement module, either as direct industry placement, or using the mentorship model;

2.6 That CIT onsite equipment be updated so students can access all necessary tools to complete their studies. Specifically, that computers in room B131 be updated. Studio space for recording should also be considered for upgrading if possible.

2.7 Aside from work and study space, the students indicated a lack of space for them to congregate and 'hang out' between classes. Additional provision of this type of space would go some way towards alleviating stress and help to further develop class dynamics.

2.8 That consideration be given to ringfence a percentage of revenues (especially from profitable courses) back into development of those courses, whether that be into equipment, staff development or course enhancement.

3. ENTRANT AND GRADUATE PROFILE, AWARD AND PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Recommendation – *Master of Arts in Journalism with New Media:*

It was unclear from talking to staff that there existed an objective basis for moving the course online. We observed there is an established appetite for the in-college CIT journalism Masters, even if numbers have become a little more challenged over the last year, and feel that it is not unreasonable to think this appetite will convert for an online course in the existing catchment area in Munster, and perhaps will expand outside those limits. The main reasons given by programme staff for a move to online delivery were a desire to broaden the appeal of the course geographically – amongst others as there had been a number of international enquiries – and the creation of a unique selling point for the CIT Masters nationally.

While we found the rationale of the staff and the prior existence of and demand for this course adequate grounds for validating the change online, we agreed that research would be useful - and should be arranged - to support the staff belief there is demand for an online masters.

Recommendation: The Panel therefore recommends that independent market research should be considered to determine if the demand exists and if this will provide a Unique Selling Point for the CIT Journalism offering.

3.2 Recommendation – *Master of Arts in Journalism with New Media:*

That current industry trends be reassessed each year with a view to keeping course content current and relevant, and targeted examinations of these explored with students, perhaps through the guest lectureship hours already scheduled into the programme, or within existing modules. Examples of such trends relevant in 2016 are below, and we recommend these for inclusion in the upcoming year's programme for 2016 entrants:

- Purely digital means of story-telling, such as live blogging;
- 'Viral' story trends - writing listicles for example;
- Composing advertorial content for commercial purposes, that sits natively within a website or app;
- Data-informed editorial decisions - using live analytics platforms to gain deeper insight into reader preferences; frequent longer-term reviews e.g. of Google Analytics data;
- The 'right' video for news / viral purposes - generally no more than two minutes long for breaking news;
- The new social media trends - Facebook Instant Articles and Google's Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMPs) in 2016 for example;
- Your personal brand online - what you can and should say if you are associated with a media brand + your power to drive/market your own stories;
- Copyright in digital - many grey areas, somewhat clarified at European level by the Bestwater case. How this informs decisions in newsrooms.

3.3 Recommendation – *Master of Arts in E-learning Design and Development:*

It became clear in discussions that the aim of the programme was to focus more on the recruitment of students with multimedia backgrounds and to produce graduates with good technical skills and some background in the educational underpinnings of online learning.

The e-learning industry has changed significantly over the last 10 years in how e-learning is produced with a requirement for workers with more rounded skills. It was pointed out that exceptions have been made to accommodate entrants without qualifications in multimedia, but because this isn't explicitly stated in the Entry Requirements, it may put off applicants with broader qualifications.

Programme staff highlighted that those without a multimedia background will also now be able to take the 30-credit Certificate in Digital Media Design and Development as a bridging route for undertaking the 60-credit Masters in E-learning Design and Development. The Panel suggests this 'bridging route' be mentioned explicitly in promotion of the Masters to highlight a possible route into the Masters for those without qualifications in multimedia.

The Panel also notes the point made by programme staff that the graduates of the MA in E-learning Design and Development are meeting industry requirements, as supported by a survey (n=44) originally carried out in 2013 with potential employers in the field, results of which were mapped to the curriculum design process.

4. PROGRAMME OPERATION AND PERFORMANCE

No recommendations here.

5. PROPOSED PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION (INCL. DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT)

5.1 **Recommendation** – *Master of Arts in Public Relations with New Media:*

That as the work placement aspect is incorporated into the Masters in Public Relations with New Media, the ethos of robust research be maintained so the thesis remains relevant as a piece of independent research.

The ongoing mentorship programme is highly commended but the reduced length of the thesis to 8,000- 10,000 words means that the literature review, suggested as 4000 words, is too long and might not allow sufficient space for justification of chosen methodologies, presentation and analysis of findings and recommendations. It has also been required that two methodologies be used. It would be hoped that those two methodologies be within either the quantitative or the qualitative approach rather than mixing the two and risking diminished reliability and validity in the findings.

5.2 **Recommendation** – *Master of Arts in Journalism with New Media:*

We make a strong recommendation that the Masters in Journalism and New Media be adapted to incorporate a work placement, either as a direct placement in industry or observing the model being developed in the Public Relations Masters to match students with mentors in industry.

Such a work placement would of necessity be strongly routed towards digital media, allowing students exposure to the realities of producing content for the digital sphere, and impressing on them this is only the start of their content's journey - 'marketing' their content across social platforms and building their own brand online are other key aspects, as is tracking the performance of their own content, and developing an interest in how all content on the site / app is performing. Specifically, a work placement of any model (direct in industry or mentorship) would cover:

- The application of Intellectual Copyright considerations to aggregated / eyewitness media content;
- Developing content for online - an overview of sport, news, showbiz and 'viral' where a work placement can facilitate this;
- An opportunity to develop the student's own story ideas, under guidance;
- Building story packages - content has moved beyond simple text and picture packages. How to include tweets, Facebook embeds, Instagram posts, video etc;
- 'Marketing' your content across Facebook in particular. Also on twitter, Snapchat, Whatsapp (+ other new platforms);
- Using data to track content performance and inform editorial decisions.

5.3 Recommendation – *Master of Arts in E-learning Design and Development:*

We recommend industry site visits for students' benefit, so they can see e-learning principles in practice in industry. Staff expressed a reservation that students who are geographically distant could be disadvantaged if such visits were onsite, and an option was suggested for VR visits instead, which would be accessible to all students. That seems a workable solution.

Equally, having industry input in the form of guest lectures would be useful in showing students the real world context for their developing skillsets. The Panel therefore notes and approves the Semester 1 module (MMED9005 New Media Workplace) based around weekly online guest lectures, with most weeks seeing two such lectures taking place.

6. MODULES

This section presents the findings and recommendations from an indicative review of modules carried out by the members of the Peer Review Panel. The Panel notes that a comprehensive survey of module specifications could not be carried out in the context of this review.

Therefore, a recommendation of the Panel to revalidate the programme(s) under review is contingent on the successful completion of the subsequent internal programme and module moderation process carried out by, or on behalf of, the CIT Registrar's Office.

6.1 Recommendation – *Master of Arts in Journalism with New Media / in PR with New Media:*

Staff commented some issues remained to be teased out in how the modules shared between Public Relations and Journalism will be accessed by PR students once the course moves online. This aspect should be resolved as soon as possible so the courses begin with a clearly defined structure for all students in September 2016.

6.2 Recommendation – *Master of Arts in Journalism with New Media:*

Module JOUR9001 *News Writing and Editing*

Regarding Learning Outcome 3 (LO3) – the Panel noted that the first part of this statement is not clearly articulated in either Indicative Content, nor is the means for addressing it clear in the Course Work Description. The Panel recommends that documentation concerning this issue be appropriately amended.

6.3 Recommendation – *MA in Public Relations with New Media:*

Modules MMED8024 *Bus Comm & Online Writing* / MMED 9009 *Media Writing*

The Panel noted that the Workload description for both of these modules needs clarification regarding the Tutorial, which is in fact a group session.

7. OTHER FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 **Recommendation** – *Master of Arts in Journalism with New Media:*

A student who gave feedback as part of this review process said current access to course lecturers and tutors was excellent, and of benefit to him and his student colleagues in providing guidance on projects etc. We have some concern the loss of face-to-face time onsite may compromise this positive aspect of the current course.

However, we acknowledge this has been factored in with the extra hour's student-lecturer time in the online course.

We recommend student feedback is sought on an ongoing basis as to whether the online course continues to provide them with the support they require from lecturers.

7.2 **Recommendation** – *Certificate in Digital Media Design and Development:*

We recommend new marketing approaches be considered for the Certificate in Digital Media Design and Development, to target working professionals who may benefit from this course in enriching their skills - teachers for example, or those already working in media and who are for example involved in commissioning work from graphic designers.

Marketing could be targeted at these groups across Facebook at low cost, or at these groups' industry events.

7.3 **Recommendation** – *Certificate in Media Production / Certificate in Radio Broadcast Media:*

That funding options be identified to support the operation of these courses, and specific project work within them. The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) is one example of a potential source of funds.

8. DEROGATIONS SOUGHT

No derogations sought.

C. PROGRAMME FINALISATION

*[This section will be completed by the **CIT Registrar's Office**.*

It records the implementation of any panel requirements and the completion of the internal module moderation process. Confirmation of completion by the CIT Registrar's Office is required for both before the programmes can be submitted to the CIT Academic Council for revalidation.]

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF PANEL REQUIREMENTS

2. MODULE AND PROGRAMME MODERATION

D. APPENDIX – TIMETABLE OF PHASE 2 MEETINGS