

**QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
NUI MAYNOOTH**

THIS PLAN WAS APPROVED FOLLOWING A MEETING OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
ON 10 NOVEMBER 2010

1. Recommendations which the Department could implement unaided

- **Recommendation 1.1: 'As a matter of priority, review the balance between teaching, research and administrative activities'**

Response of Department: Through its ongoing evaluation, definition and refinement of: roles; structures; curriculum delivery and assessment; balancing of individual loads; sharing of modules; and maximization of timetabling to seek one clear day per week in semester for research the Department will continue to optimise its operation in these three key areas for the benefit of all colleagues. The importance of ring-fencing one research day per week in semester is core to the Department's strategic development. **[Implementation ongoing]**

- **Recommendation 1.2: 'Review the scope and nature of formative assessments, especially in the case of modules of a more technical nature'**

Response of Department: The Department will continue its work to optimise the scope and nature of formative assessments as suggested. This will be a focus within Undergraduate and Postgraduate Teaching and Learning Committees during 2010-2011. **[Implemented]**

- **Recommendation 1.3: 'Consider the possibilities of coordination of some research activities with other institutions based in the Dublin area'**

Response of Department: The Department is actively engaged in the Humanities Research Institute *An Foras Feasa* and also considers opportunities to share visiting speakers with institutions in the surrounding area. Many colleagues participate in the Society for Musicology Ireland through which there is much useful collaborative work. The groundbreaking *Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland* originated in the Department (one of its joint general editors is a member of staff, Prof. Barra Boydell); the majority of staff in the Department has contributed to its content. The Department remains, however, keenly aware of the importance of retaining a distinctive niche in its research output; of the importance of internationalization of research; and of the competitive marketplace for research students in the locality. **[Implemented as appropriate]**

- **Recommendation 1.4: 'Continue to review and develop structured PhD programmes'**

Response of Department: The Department has laid the ground carefully for the introduction of Structured PhD programmes. These commence, in line with institutional policy, in Autumn 2010. It will continue to review and develop these programmes. **[Implemented]**

2. Recommendations which the Department could implement only with assistance from other bodies within the University and without cost implications

- **Recommendation 2.1: 'Explore the setting up of a more formal mentoring scheme, including the allowance that senior members of staff may approach members of other departments for 'appraisal interviews''**

Response of Department: This is a matter for Faculty or University-wide consideration. The current practice is that Heads of Department conduct the very labour-intensive PMDS process and also find time within a highly-pressurised workload to talk with colleagues about career issues and to mentor them. It is important that any change, such as that proposed here, be formalised within a University-wide policy on appraisal and mentoring. **[Not yet implemented]**

- **Recommendation 2.2: 'Upgrade the quality of the facilities provided for postgraduate research students, notably the space provided for individual study'**

Response of Department: The Department has acquired (November 2010) an additional, suitable, secure and local space for postgraduate students. It has also gained student spaces in the Iontas building on the North Campus. **[Implemented]**

3. Recommendations which the Department could implement only if additional resources are provided by the University

- **Recommendation 3.1: 'Urgently consider the basis of the provision of sabbatical leave, especially for early career staff'**

Response of Department: The Department understands that the University plans to ameliorate the provision for sabbatical leave. The Department regards this plan as crucial to the progress of staff at all stages of their careers. This is an urgent need for the Music Department which, due to its student numbers, additional practical issues, programme range, staffing levels, and corporate entertainment contributions,

cannot facilitate lighter loads for staff internally. . [Timeframe: ASAP; Level of Funding: complete costs of replacement of staff members on regular rotating basis]

- **Recommendation 3.2: 'Review the provision of library resources, paying particular attention to the needs of postgraduate research students'**

Response of Department: The Department has a limited annual budget designated for library acquisitions. A subcommittee within the Department strategises the allocation of this budget which is fully-absorbed in filling gaps, purchasing adequate multiple copies and developing DVD resources. Although the needs of postgraduate research students are accommodated to some extent within this process, the Department requests that the University inject additional funding into this area as part of its strategic goal to attract and retain high-quality research students. [Timeline: to be considered by the Bursar and prioritized as appropriate within budgetary decision making; level of additional funding p.a.: c. 2.5k]

- **Recommendation 3.3: 'Ensure that the quality of the IT resources is maintained, and where possible further enhanced'**

Response of Department: Since 2007 the Department has received two tranches of money for investment in equipment and facilities which have substantially improved the quality of resources for staff and students. The Department proposes that a regularised allocation system be put in place by the Bursar for the renewal, maintenance and upgrade of instruments, related equipment, venue specifications (including humidity considerations) and music technology equipment . [Timeline for establishment of capital investment fund for Department: tbc]

- **Recommendation 3.4: 'Secure the ongoing provision of technical and administrative support, where possible on a non-fixed term basis'**

Response of Department: The Department is keenly aware of the current constraints with regard to staffing. The provision of the 0.5 Executive Assistant for a 3-year term (July 2010-July 2013) and the Technician Post for a 3-year term (September 2011-September 2014) is a welcome temporary measure. For the Department's future stability and quality these posts must be made permanent. Indeed, the Department remains administratively stretched and requires the provision of at least an additional 0.5 Executive Assistant post in order to operate its busy office and events' calendar successfully. [Proposed Timeline: Prioritization of these posts for permanency (2013/2014); additional 0.5 EA: to be considered once flexibility is possible within the Employment Control Framework.]

- **Recommendation 3.5: 'As a matter of priority, consider the replacement of the retiring member of staff who currently holds responsibility for leading and overseeing the department's research activities, both at student and at staff levels'**

Response of Department: The Department has been awarded a 3-year Lectureship in lieu of the Professorial position vacated by the retiring member of staff.

Professor Tom Collins
President

Professor Fiona Palmer
Head of Department