

Policy name: Annual Programme Monitoring Policy

Approved: 25th November 2016

Revision 1 approved 10th March 2017

Revision 2 approved by Board of Studies 5th October 2018

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1. Context

- 1.1 All undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by the Royal Irish Academy of Music, hereinafter referred to as RIAM or the Academy, are delivered by RIAM and awarded by the Designated Awarding Body, Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, hereinafter referred to as Trinity. Such programmes must comply with the principal legislation underpinning quality assurance in Irish higher education and training, which is the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 and internal quality assurance processes in Trinity.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 RIAM has in place for each of its degree programmes an internal annual programme monitoring system. It is a process of quality control, which feeds into the periodic programme review of Trinity. It is a concise mechanism which builds on the previous year's standards of achievement, addresses points in external examiner reports and student feedback, and results in an action plan for the coming academic year. This policy forms part of a suite of policies which regulate the development, monitoring and suspension/ cessation of programmes.

3. Benefits

- 3.1 Programmes will be informed and led by the Academy's mission statement, to meet its strategic objectives and underpin the assurance and continuous improvement of RIAM's academic quality standards.
- 3.2 Programmes will maintain and improve the valuable and professional educational experience offered to its students.
- 3.3 Programmes will be of a standard appropriate to the awards' level on the National Framework of Qualifications to which they lead and will meet or exceed those of similar programmes offered internationally.
- 3.4 Programmes will meet Trinity's academic and quality assurance standards as the awarding body.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all programmes accredited by RIAM and awarded by Trinity.
- 4.2 Out of scope of this policy are programmes delivered by RIAM and certified by RIAM.

5. Principles

- 5.1 RIAM is responsible for the internal quality assurance of the programmes it offers.

- 5.2 RIAM ensures that its programmes meet national and international standards to ensure courses satisfy the needs of prospective students globally.
- 5.3 RIAM ensures that its programmes meet the academic and quality assurance standards set by Trinity and the requirements under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

6. Definitions

- 6.1 The **Associated Colleges Degrees Committee (ACDC)**, set up in partnership between Trinity and RIAM, oversees all RIAM programmes validated by Trinity College Dublin in terms of academic quality. In addition, standing items such as updates on collaborations between Trinity and RIAM are brought to this body.
- 6.2 The RIAM **Board of Governors** is the supreme authority of RIAM, as designated by the Education Endowments Act (1889).
- 6.3 The RIAM **Board of Studies** is the committee responsible for overseeing all academic programmes of RIAM. The Board of Studies reports to the Board of Governors.
- 6.4 **Trinity University Council** is the highest academic committee in Trinity, and is chaired by the Provost.

7. Procedures

- 7.1 Structure of the Annual Programme Monitoring System – Programme Monitoring Report
 - 7.1.1 The annual programme monitoring system is managed by the Chair of the relevant Programme Committee compiling the report and is submitted to the RIAM Board of Studies.
 - 7.1.2 The annual programme monitoring report is compiled by the Chair usually during the summer or autumn, in consultation with and, drawing upon, contributions from Heads of Faculty, students, teaching staff and administration.
 - 7.1.3 The usual evidence base for the report is outlined in section 8.1 below.
 - 7.1.4 The procedure for structuring the report is outlined in section 8.2 below.
 - 7.1.5 The procedure for ratifying the report is outlined in section 8.3 below.
 - 7.1.6 The Chair of the RIAM Board of Studies will report annually to the RIAM Board of Governors
 - 7.1.7 Annual monitoring ensures that proposed changes maintain and, where possible, improve the high standard of the education offered through the programme concerned. The relevant Programme Committee has authority to propose modifications to programmes and revisions to its regulations, as referred to below, which must be considered for approval by the RIAM ACDC in Trinity.
- 7.2 Modifications as part of the Annual Programme Review
 - 7.2.1 From time to time, programmes will need to be updated or modified and this is one part of the annual programme review process.

7.2.2 Modifications will fall into one or three categories: a minor modification, a major modification or a change to the programme regulations.

7.3 Minor modifications

7.3.1 Minor modifications most commonly result from the introduction of new or enhanced modules. Material changes to existing modules (as opposed simply to a clearer expression of) is limited to a maximum of cumulative changes of no more than 50% of the validated programme during its period of approval and may include one or more of the following amendments:

- (i) module aims, objectives or learning outcome;
- (ii) assessment methods or assessment weightings between methods;
- (iii) less than 50% of the indicative module content;
- (iv) new modules, which are not core to the programme.

7.3.2 The procedure for making minor modifications is set out in 8.4.

7.3.3 Either the Undergraduate Programmes Committee or the Graduate Programmes Committee, as appropriate, monitors the cumulative effect of minor modifications to any one programme, via the annual programme monitoring system.

7.4 Major Modifications

7.4.1 Major modifications are significant changes to the structure or content of a programme and must be submitted for the initial approval of the Board of Studies. Final approval must be sought by the RIAM ACDC, and subsequently by the Trinity University Council via the RIAM ACDC minutes.

7.4.2 All major modifications are subject to the new programme approval process outlined in the RIAM Academic Programme Development and Review Policy.

7.4.3 Changes to Trinity's Undergraduate or Postgraduate programme Calendar must be approved by its Graduate Studies Committee.

7.4.4 The following proposed changes constitute major modifications:

- (i) changes to the programme title or awards, or to its minimum and maximum duration;
- (ii) restructuring the whole programme or any year of the programme;
- (iii) any significant change to the aims and objectives or learning outcomes of the programme;
- (iv) the introduction of new core (i.e. compulsory) modules or pathways;
- (v) material changes to more than 50% of the indicative content.

7.5 Changes to the Programme Regulations

- 7.5.1 Changes to the programme regulations must be submitted to the Programmes Committee for approval and to the final meeting of the RIAM ACDC in any academic year in time for the following academic year.
- 7.5.2 Changes to regulations of any significance must be notified to all students affected.
- 7.6 Programme Suspension or Cessation
 - 7.6.1 Proposals for the suspension or cessation of a programme following annual review must be approved by the RIAM Board of Studies.
 - 7.6.2 Notification of the suspension or cessation of a programme of study must be formally submitted to the next available RIAM ACDC to be subsequently noted and approved by the Trinity Council. (See also *RIAM Programme Suspension or Cessation Policy*.)

8. Procedures

- 8.1 Evidence Base for Annual Programme Monitoring System
 - 8.1.1 Overall external examiners assist RIAM in ensuring that the academic standard for each award is set and maintained at the appropriate level and that student performance is properly judged. Reports from the overall external examiners for the all degrees should be reviewed as part of the annual monitoring process.
 - 8.1.2 A number of specialist external examiners are contracted each year to assess RIAM's practical examinations in each instrument or instrument family. A summary of all practical examination reports from over 100 should be reviewed as part of the annual monitoring process. The Heads of Faculty should review all specialist examiner reports for their faculties.
 - 8.1.3 Data and analysis of student achievement and progression.
 - 8.1.4 Response to Student engagement (feedback obtained by questionnaire, module evaluation or consultation methods).
 - 8.1.5 The minutes of the Programme Committee from the preceding year, including matters relating to learning resources and teaching equipment needs (to be referred to the Learning Resources Committee).
 - 8.1.6 Proposals for modifications to each syllabus in the case of principal study to be made by the relevant Head of Faculty.
- 8.2 Procedure for Structure of Annual Programme Monitoring Report
 - 8.2.1 A brief report on implementation of the preceding year's action plan, noting minor and major modifications made.
 - 8.2.2 A commentary on key issues that have arisen during the year, explicitly addressing issues raised in external examiner reports and providing a response to issues raised through student engagement and analysis of supporting data.
 - 8.2.3 A proposed programme action plan for the coming year.
 - 8.2.4 Learning resource issues that have arisen during the preceding year (to be referred to the Learning Resources Committee).

- 8.2.5 The effectiveness of the programme in promoting equal opportunities in terms of gender, race and disability etc.
 - 8.2.6 The effectiveness of the programme in supporting national and international students to achieve their goals.
 - 8.2.7 Proposals for modifications (minor or major) to modules, as outlined in 7.3, 7.4 of this document.
 - 8.2.8 Proposals for staff support and development.
 - 8.2.9 Appendices comprising the external examiner reports, selected external specialist examiner reports, data on student achievement (comparing current achievement with two previous years), an analysis of student feedback.
- 8.3 *Procedure for Ratifying/Approving Annual Programme Monitoring Report*
- 8.3.1 The draft monitoring report will be considered and approved either by the Undergraduate Programmes Committee or the Graduate Programmes Committee, as appropriate, subject to any proposed amendments delegated to the respective Chair for Chair's Action and report to a subsequent meeting of the Committee.
 - 8.3.2 The relevant Chair of the Programme Committee will then provide the approved report to the external examiners, to his/her committee members and to other professors and administrators involved in the running of the programme, and to the Chair of the Board of Studies.
 - 8.3.3 The report will be forwarded to the RIAM ACDC for report.
- 8.4 *Procedure for Minor Adjustments to Annual Programmes*
- 8.4.1 Minor modifications are considered for approval by the relevant Programmes Committee and must be submitted to the RIAM ACDC for approval in time for implementation in the following academic year.
 - 8.4.2 The module lecturer, if not already a committee member, will be invited to attend the relevant Programmes Committee meeting for discussion of the module.
 - 8.4.3 Where the Committee recommends minor changes to the proposal, the Chair will normally have delegated responsibility to take action to approve the revised module description.
 - 8.4.4 Where significant revisions are proposed or where the consideration of the module raises issues of principle requiring more detailed discussion, a working group comprising interested Committee members and the module lecturer may have delegated responsibility to revise and approve the module, subject to the approval of the Chair of the Programme Committee.
- 8.5 *Procedure for Timing of Modifications and Updating the Programme Handbook*
- 8.5.1 Modifications will normally take effect from the next academic year and will be incorporated into the annual update of the programme handbook or syllabus.
 - 8.5.2 The handbook is finalised in the summer of each academic year, prior to the beginning of the following academic year.

- 8.5.3 Major modifications are subject to the Academic Programme Development procedure and are considered for approval by the relevant Programmes Committee and must be submitted to the RIAM ACDC for approval in time for implementation in the following academic year.
- 8.5.4 Exceptionally and usually only where students will be advantaged or may otherwise be seriously disadvantaged, modifications may occur mid-way through an academic year and have an immediate effect. When this occurs, such modifications must be approved by the RIAM ACDC and will be notified in full to students, staff and administration.

9. Responsibility

- 9.1 The Chair of the Board of Studies is responsible for overseeing this policy and its review every three years. The Head of the Administrative Office (Registry) is responsible for the operating procedures in relation to all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

10. Legislation and Regulation

- 10.1 Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.
- 10.2 Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2005).
- 10.3 Code of Practice for Provision of Education and Training to International Learners (2015).
- 10.4 [National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\)](#)

11. Related Documents in Trinity

- 11.1 New Programme Design and Approval Policy.
- 11.2 Academic Awards Policy.
http://www.Trinity.ie/teaching-learning/assets/pdf/Acad_Awards_Policy.pdf
- 11.3 External Examiners Policy.
<http://www.Trinity.ie/teaching-learning/assets/pdf/ExtExaminersPolicyJune2015-Final.pdf>
- 11.4 Assessment and Academic Progression Policy.
http://www.Trinity.ie/teaching-learning/assets/pdf/Ass_Acad_Prog_Policy.pdf
- 11.5 Undergraduate Course Proposal Approval Process map.
<http://www.Trinity.ie/undergraduate-studies/course-documentation/new-course-proposals.php>
- 11.6 Template A for New Undergraduate Course Structure and Modules Table
Template B for Module Descriptor and
Template C for Module Outcome – Programme Outcomes Mapping Tool.
<http://www.Trinity.ie/undergraduate-studies/course-documentation/new-course-proposals.php>

12. Related Documents in RIAM

- 12.1 Academic Programme Development and Review Policy.
- 12.2 Programme Suspension and Cessation Policy.

13. Document Control

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