

IUQB Seminar - 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2009-Westbury Hotel, Dublin.

*Striving to enhance the student experience: Implementing a student centred approach to learning*

<b><i>Title of case study/poster</i></b> NCAD Core Studies: Portfolio Application Brief	
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<b><i>Relevant element of ESG</i></b>  <b>Assessment of students</b>	
<b><i>Outline of case study/poster</i></b>  <b>Background/Introduction</b>  NCAD Core Studies is the first year programme for students commencing all degree programmes at NCAD*. For 2009 applicants, NCAD introduced a new application procedure. All applicants are now obliged to prepare their portfolio application in response to the portfolio brief issued by NCAD.  (*The degree in Industrial Design is a partial exception)  <b>Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clarify and make more transparent the application process.</li><li>• Provide greater fairness and equality of opportunity for applicants.</li><li>• Enhance the student-centred nature of the application process</li><li>• Further the debate about alignment of second and third level art &amp; design studies.</li><li>• Reflect the processes and skills which are valued and promoted within the Core Studies programme</li></ul>	

**Methods/Actions**

The student-centred focus of the portfolio brief means that candidates are not expected to excel in each task – it allows assessors to evaluate the applicants' strengths. Each portfolio is examined by a panel of at least two lecturers. Panel personnel are reorganised daily, to level the process. The assessment criteria are published in the portfolio brief. Where appropriate, written feedback is provided to unsuccessful applicants

**Results/Achievements**

An advisory panel of secondary school and PLC art teachers provides feedback on the portfolio brief. Also, during portfolio assessment a report was compiled to collate staff responses to the new structure. Subsequent portfolio briefs will be improved based on these feedback mechanisms.

**Challenges/Experiences**

One challenge is practical. The new brief supplants a procedure which remained unchanged for many years. This requires flexibility from NCAD staff and art teachers. Another challenge is cultural. Third level art & design education has developed significantly to reflect changes in society, industry and creative technologies. NCAD seeks to remain central to these concerns.

**Conclusions**

This new process has received favourable initial responses. We must now maintain and improve it as much as possible.