

Quality Enhancement Framework for Icelandic Higher Education

# INSTITUTION-WIDE REVIEW

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The Iceland Academy of the Arts

January 2015



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## PREFACE

This is a report of an institution-wide review undertaken by the Icelandic Quality Board for Higher Education under the authority of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The review was carried out by a team of independent senior international higher education experts together with a student representative from the higher education sector in Iceland.

Institution-wide Review is one component of the Icelandic Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) established by the Icelandic Government in 2011. The main elements of the QEF are:

- Quality Board-led reviews at the institutional level;
- Comprehensive program of subject level reviews led by the higher education institutes themselves;
- Programme of annual meetings between members of the Quality Board and individual institutions to discuss institutional developments in quality assurance and enhancement.
- Series of quality enhancement workshops and conferences to share national and international developments in enhancing the quality of the student experience.

Further information on the QEF is available at the RANNIS web site.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See: [http://www.rannis.is/media/gaedarad-haskola/Handbook\\_complete\\_1558767620.pdf](http://www.rannis.is/media/gaedarad-haskola/Handbook_complete_1558767620.pdf)

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 The review process

Institutional Review is one of the main elements of the *Quality Enhancement Framework for Icelandic Higher Education* (QEF) as described in full in the *Quality Enhancement Handbook for Icelandic Higher Education* (2011). All seven Higher Education Institutions in Iceland are being reviewed between 2012 and 2015. This is the report of the fifth review, that of the Iceland Academy of the Arts (IAA).

The review was conducted by the Quality Board with support from RANNÍS, in accordance with the procedures described in the 2011 Quality Enhancement Handbook. The Review Team (hereafter the Team) comprised: Professor Tove Bull (chair) and Professor Rita McAllister (vice-chair), both members of the Quality Board, together with Henrik Oxvig, Head of Research at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation, Copenhagen (independent expert), Hannu Apajalahti, Deputy Head of the Department of Composition and Music Theory, University of Arts, Helsinki, and former vice-rector of the Sibelius Academy (independent expert), and Helga Margrét Friðriksdóttir (student representative). Dr. Þorsteinn Gunnarsson and Eva Dögg Diego Þorkeldsdóttir from RANNÍS provided managerial and administrative support.

In preparation for the main visit by the Team, the vice-chair and the chair commented on several drafts of the institution's Reflective Analysis (RA). The final version of the RA, together with annexes, was sent to the Team at the beginning of July 2014. After receipt of this material, the chair of the Team set up a visit schedule in consultation with IAA staff. The preparation of the RA and the arrangements for the visit were overseen by the Rector, Fríða Björk Ingvarsdóttir and the Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Rebekka Silvia Ragnarsdóttir. The review visit took place between 6 and 8 October 2014, with the Team based in IAA's Laugarnes premises. Following a tour of the three sites of the IAA (at Sölvhólsgrata, Þverholt and Laugarnes), and various presentations by the Academy, a large number of meetings

were held with staff, students, alumni and stakeholders (for details of the schedule, see Annex 1).

The Quality Board is very grateful to the IAA for its excellent cooperation in organising the proceedings, and to RANNÍS for ensuring the smooth running of the visit.

## **1.2 The Iceland Academy of the Arts**

The Iceland Academy of the Arts is a self-governing Higher Education Institution offering specialist education in the visual and performing arts. It is the only institution of its kind in Iceland. It was founded on the basis of an amalgamation of separate arts colleges with the aim of creating a single institution for all the arts. Its official charter dates from 1998. The Academy is made up of five departments: the Department of Design and Architecture, the Department of Fine Art, the Department of Arts Education, the Department of Performing Arts and the Department of Music. These departments vary in size; the largest, the Department of Design and Architecture, enrolls about 38 % of the student population, while the smallest, the Department of Arts Education, caters for 11 % of the students. In all, the Academy offers 18 programmes of study, 5 at Masters level and 13 at Bachelors level. It does not award doctoral degrees.

The IAA is a small institution with a total of 472 students (2013–2014), most of them full-time students, and 96 staff, accounting for 83 fulltime positions – 50 academic and 33 support staff positions. In addition, 339 part-time lecturers were engaged during the same period (2013–2014); this equates to 16 full-time equivalents. For the Academy as a whole the student : teacher ratio is 10 : 1 (8 : 1 if part-time teachers are included); the student : support services ratio is 14 : 1. According to the institution's contract with the Ministry (running until the end of 2016), the upper limit on the number of students who can be accepted for study is 600.

To date, 1505 students have graduated from the IAA, of whom 105 have been at postgraduate level.

### 1.3 Mission, role, values and strategic objectives

Being the only higher education institution of its kind in Iceland, the IAA has a unique role in Icelandic society. The arts education provided by the IAA and the range of artistic activities in the Academy are of fundamental significance for the culture of Iceland. Situated in central Reykjavík, the institution recruits students from the whole country and abroad. The importance of the past and present arts life and arts scene, not only in Reykjavík, but also in the rest of the country, constitute a *conditio sine qua non* for higher arts education and research in Iceland.

In its Strategic Plan 2013–2017 the institution defines its core values as *creation*, *communication* and *education*. These values are claimed to be underpinned by *curiosity*, *understanding* and *courage*. This Strategic Plan formulates a policy on teaching and learning, on research and innovation in the arts, on relations to society, on international collaboration and on human resources. The mission statement contains twelve bullets-points, which are said to reflect the institution's general approach to students and staff. The four most indicative of these statements include the following ones:

- The IAA is a progressive institution
- The IAA connects with contemporary movements
- The IAA explores new ways in expression and interpretation
- The IAA promotes original artistic practice and explores unknown territories

The Strategic Plan is given operational detail in a very long and ambitious Action Plan, agreed in 2013. Whether all the targets can be reached within the time limit (2017) is an open question. The Action Plan lists a very large number of issues and targets, but without prioritising them. Whether the Plan is realistic or not is therefore difficult to judge. Though a timetable for implementing the individual actions has been agreed upon and the person(s) responsible for initiating and following up the designated actions are identified, the consequent workload on individuals (particularly the newly appointed Director of Education and the Rector) would be enormous. To balance the workload of key staff, the IAA might consider clarifying the rather vague prioritisation of the Action Plan, and deciding on a stricter and more limited list of

priorities. Core areas that need to be closely followed up in this connection are human resource development, with the inclusion of part-time staff, and also student counselling, which has suffered in the absence of a dedicated student counsellor. Given that there is now in place a qualified and designated person to counsel students, this might no longer be a burning issue.

#### **1.4 Organisation and management**

As a self-governing institution the Iceland Academy of the Arts operates under the Higher Education Institution Act 63/2006. The institution is governed by an Academy Board of five members, established in 1999. The Ministry appoints two of the members of the Board, and the Society for the Iceland Academy of the Arts three. The Board itself elects a chair and a deputy chair from amongst its members. According to the institutional rules, the Board consists of only external full members. The Rector attends the meetings of the Board, as does the Managing Director when relevant. Developing institutional strategy is a key task for the Board. In addition, it oversees all issues pertaining to general operations; it is responsible for finances and estates, approves rules and regulations, and determines tuition fees. The Board appoints the Rector; so it follows that the Rector reports to the Board. A more detailed account of the remit of the board is to be found in 2.1 below.

Having a Board with exclusively external members is demanding. Though the Rector (and also the Managing Director) serves as a link between the institution and the Board it is nonetheless important to safeguard open communication lines between the Board and internal managing and consultative bodies. Transparent decision-making is of course fundamental. During the site visit the Team met the chair and two other representatives of the Board and learned that they have a very constructive and fruitful collaborative relationship with the Rector and Managing Director. This seems to have had a good effect on the overall governance of the Academy. The IAA is to be commended for this.

The Rector is appointed for 5 years, with the possibility of re-appointment. She is responsible for the overall management of the Academy and leads institutional policy-

making and strategic planning. She is additionally responsible for overseeing academic standards and quality management in teaching and learning, research and innovation. The Rector is also responsible for appointing staff, in consultation with the Managing Director and Board. In reality, appointments are done in close cooperation with the whole Management Council and various senior members of staff.

The day-to-day management of the IAA is the responsibility of the Management Council, which has seven members: the Rector (chair), the Managing Director and the Deans. It serves as the Rector's support and consultative forum.

The Managing Director is responsible for financial control, budgets, accounting, salaries, procurement, assets and internal funds. He is also responsible for managing the main office, and oversees the employment of support staff.

An Academic Council was established in 2009 and is now under revision. So far, it has been a purely consultative and information-sharing forum for academic issues relating to teaching and research. It is currently chaired by the Rector and has 17 other members: the Deans, five faculty representatives, five student representatives and two representatives of the part-time staff. The revision plans were not finalised at the time of the Review visit.

A new Learning and Teaching Committee is to be appointed, and a Research Committee will be instigated in the near future. These committees will operate under the mandate of the Academic Council. The Learning and Teaching Committee will formalise the academic rules on teaching, common work flows, the supervision of course catalogues, support for teachers and the review of assessment systems. The Research Committee will be responsible for the annual peer review of research outcomes and the Quality Framework for Research for the IAA. It is hoped that a comprehensive proposal for the revision of the Academic Council will be ready this year (2014). These plans are promising and the Team is very supportive of the changes that are about to take place, especially the creation of an important academic decision-making body. (See also 2.1).



The Departments are managed by the Deans and Departmental Councils. The Departmental Councils, chaired by the Deans, have decision-making powers at departmental level; in other matters, the Departmental Councils function as consultative and information sharing bodies. In contrast to the Academy Board, there is no externality in these Councils at departmental level. The Academy may wish to consider whether the inclusion of one or two external representatives might lead to the enrichment and improvement of the workings of the departments.

In addition to these decision-making and consultative bodies there is an Academic Forum, which is open to faculty, part-time lecturers, students and support staff. It is an annual open venue for discussing broad cross-institutional issues. A different form of annual meeting is open to the public and advertised in the media.

As well as these bodies, there are several administrative committees and working groups, such as the Curriculum Committee, the Equal Rights Committee, the Grievance Committee on Students' Rights, Admissions Committees, and a Committee on Environmental Sustainability. Particular mention should be made of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, established in 2012 to develop institutional procedures and awareness of Quality Enhancement.

## **1.5 Finances**

Needless to say, the financial crisis in Iceland in 2008 and the following years has had a hampering effect on the institution and has compelled it to modify its ambitions, given that it was faced with a budgetary cut of 20% of its government funding. One very serious effect of the crisis was the postponement of the search for better premises for the Academy, so that all departments could operate in one building. Against this background, the Team was pleased to hear that the institution did not, even during the most critical years, run into significant financial deficits.

All Higher Education Institutions in Iceland have service contracts on operations and finances with the Ministry. The IAA's contract expires by the end of 2016. Approximately 80% of the revenues of the institution come from the Ministry, the rest

coming from tuition fees and grants. Given the difficult financial situation in general in Icelandic higher education, this distribution shows that the IAA as a self-governing institution is too heavily dependent upon the Ministry. It is therefore recommended that consideration should be given as to whether other financial sources might be activated, e.g. whether research and innovation could generate income for the Academy.

## **1.6 Housing**

The housing issue has been a central concern for the Academy more or less from the outset. The issue has added to the workload of central management and administration for almost two decades. Poor housing conditions combined with scattered locations have created a serious hindrance to institutional development. Against the background of this difficult situation the Academy decided to concentrate on the housing conditions in its Case Study. (For further details, see chapter 5).

During the site visit, however, the Team was told that the housing situation would slightly improve in the near future. This was not known when the RA was being written. From December 2014, new venues for the Department of Performing Arts of about 400 sqm close to Sölvhólgata, will be ready for the IAA, thanks to help from the City Authorities of Reykjavík. This will certainly begin to redress the most urgent needs. It should be mentioned that the Reykjavík City Authorities have no direct responsibilities for the Academy. Nevertheless, they obviously appreciate the presence of an Art Academy in the city centre.

## **1.7 Response to previous reviews/accreditation exercises**

### *1.7.1 Institutional accreditation*

The IAA was accredited by the Ministry in 2007. According to the RA, the accreditation report by the external expert committee offered useful suggestions for improvements that were taken into consideration by the Management Council. A follow-up review was conducted in 2010, resulting in a number of new recommendations by the external experts. The RA presents a selection of these

recommendations and an outline of responses and outcomes. The responses to these previous reviews are mostly convincing, though sometimes a bit vague on the outcomes.

### 1.7.2 *Subject-level self-evaluations*

Within the five-year cycle of the Quality Enhancement Framework established in 2011, three Subject-Level Reviews have been conducted so far by the IAA, one of Music (2012), one of Fine Art (2013), and one of Design and Architecture, dated September 2014. The Department of Performing Arts is undergoing its Subject-Level Review this semester (autumn 2014), and the Department of Arts Education will do theirs during the spring semester of 2015. All the evaluations that had been carried out at the time of the Review visit have had a direct impact on the development of the Strategic Plan for 2013–2017. The RA presents the recommendations from the external experts and evaluation teams and describes actions and outcomes in the same way as it describes the accreditation report and follow-up.

Not surprisingly, the IAA's less-than-satisfactory housing situation is highlighted in these reports. Amongst other important challenges raised are: the situation of part-time lecturers; decision-making processes and the fact that lines of communication are not always clear; excessive administrative work load at departmental level; assessment criteria and processes that need revising; and, as a very important point, the fact that adequate student counselling and teaching support have been lacking until recently. Again, the responses from the IAA to the issues raised are generally good, though the outcomes described are rather imprecise.

## **1.8 Production of the Reflective Analysis**

The production of the RA was a substantial task for IAA, as of course it is for all Icelandic Higher Education Institutions, especially when it is done for the first time. It was the collaborative task of a Steering Group, assigned to the process by the Management Council, consisting of six faculty and staff members. It was chaired by the Rector, Frida Björk Ingvarsdóttir, and coordinated by the Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Rebekka Silvia Ragnarsdóttir, who also co-edited the

RA. An on-going consultation process took place during the production of the report, and a large, internal Consultation Group was set up by the Management Council. Although there were no student representatives on the Steering Group, the Student Council wrote a separate report, partly based on an online survey conducted by the Council amongst the student body. In addition, two discussion forums were held, one with faculty and part-time lecturers, and the other with the support staff.

All in all, the RA was prepared and produced in a very thorough way with the involvement of the whole community of the IAA. The meticulous preparation has indeed been worthwhile, as the work has resulted in a reflective and reasoned self-evaluation with a good balance between description and analysis. The RA demonstrates that the IAA has taken on board a great deal of what was discussed in previous reviews, annual meetings and in preparatory discussions. This is impressive. Furthermore, the RA succeeds in balancing the expression of strengths with the admission of deficiencies, along with the plans to address the latter.

The RA will certainly prove to be a very useful internal document. For the external reader the RA also provides a helpful, detailed and substantial insight into the workings of the institution. The structure of the RA follows quite closely that suggested in the *Quality Enhancement Handbook*. It was accompanied by comprehensive reference material, both as annexes and as documents on a memory stick.

Parallel to the production of the RA, some major organisational transformations have taken place, such as a substantial reorganisation of teaching and learning, rewriting of learning outcomes, a review of the Academic Council, a revision of the framework for appointment, employment and development of staff, and also a revision of the housing policy. Quality Enhancement processes have been further developed. All these parallel processes have, of course, placed a heavy workload on the institution. Even so, the Team believes that in the long run the Academy will gain from all of these tasks and will soon be able to reap the benefits of its hard work.

## 1.9 Recent stepping-stones and current status

During the 15 years of its existence, the IAA has been able effectively to offer higher education in the main fields of the arts. The numbers of students, staff and study programmes have expanded. The Academy has recently undergone a period of fundamentally reviewing its infrastructure, e.g. through a stronger formalisation of administration and management, a revision of curricula and study programmes, and a de-centralisation of administration. These processes are still in progress.

The most urgent and pressing challenge for the IAA has until now been its housing needs. The long-standing vision of creating an umbrella institution for all the arts in one location still needs to be resolved. As is said very poignantly in the RA: ‘The current situation inflicts obstacles on the development and maintenance of academic standards, as well as creating a burden of complicated management in three different locations.’ However, with support from the City of Reykjavík options other than ‘one – and only one – location’ might be more feasible and more realistic. The Team had the impression that the Management Team of the IAA is now about to reconsider its housing plans and incorporate a multi-campus solution into its vision for the next 5-7 years as a short term solution.

## 1.10 Evaluation

IAA has a clear mission and a distinctive role to play in higher education in contemporary Iceland. In many different ways it is a unique national institution. It is unique as a learning, teaching and research institution, and it is unique in its community and societal relations and responsibilities. With regard to these latter roles, IAA should consider strengthening its societal involvement and responsibilities, and should project this area more clearly in the image and positioning of the institution. It may be that there would also be budgetary benefits in this.

As with other Higher Education Institutions in Iceland the IAA has for several years lived, and still lives, with constant budgetary constraints. Against this background, the

institution's capacity to stabilize its financial situation during years of cut-back is indeed commendable.

Throughout the RA and also permeating the Team's site meetings a convincing capacity for open self-reflection and self-criticism emerged. This represents considerable strengths. The inclusive nature of the RA and the processes which support this have further strengthened a clear sense of ownership and commitment amongst students and staff.

The Team formed the opinion that the management of the academy is in the hands of a team of competent and committed individuals who have a strong sense of the specificities of the institution. Together, the Rector and Managing Director form a forward-looking and proactive leadership.

## **2. SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS**

### **2.1 Organisational Structure for the Management of Standards**

As a self-governing institution the Iceland Academy of the Arts has, as its highest decision-making authority, an Academy Board of five external members (see also 1.4). The Board's main agenda is finance and institutional strategy, but their recent discussions have also included the Academy's housing (a perennial issue) and staff salary levels, as well as research, the Masters programmes and inter-disciplinarity. So while their core remit is governance, their interests also cover general academic issues and external relationships: they currently feel the need to formalise relationships between the Board and professional Icelandic artists. The Team was impressed by the level of expertise, commitment and concern shown by those members of the Board it encountered. The Team recommends, however, that the professional scope and, if possible, the numbers of Board members might be enlarged – to include more representation from key Icelandic industries, for example – in order to strengthen the Board's capacity to lobby on the Academy's behalf and to enhance its future standing.

Since the arrival of the new Rector in August 2013, and with the recent appointments of the Managing Director and the Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, processes of formalising institutional practices and clarifying institutional structures have accelerated. Many of the issues identified by this report as in need of further development are acknowledged as such by the senior management, and most of them – management and committee structures, staffing responsibilities, and external relationships, for example – are already in the process of review. Additionally, a number of key groups variously dealing with institutional standards, such as the Curriculum Committee, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and the Research Group, are of recent establishment. As a result, IAA's management of academic standards, as well as its oversight of quality enhancement, are set to progress and develop significantly.

Currently, as stated in the RA and as specified in the IAA's regulations, the Rector is responsible for safeguarding standards on an institutional level; Deans oversee standards within each department; Programme Directors manage academic standards for each study programme. Of course in a small, exceedingly student-centred institution like this, there is continual dialogue and shared information across the various departments and staff levels: there is much informal calibration of processes.

In formal, operational terms the Rector is supported in the monitoring of standards by the Management Council and the Academic Council, and the Deans by the five Departmental Councils. Chaired by the Rector, the Management Council – in effect the senior management team of the IAA – is the primary decision-making forum for all administrative and academic issues. The Management Council meets the Board once a year. The Departmental Councils involve all faculty members and each has two student representatives: these are consultative and information-sharing forums, with decision-making powers at departmental level. Between these, the Academic Council is a large, somewhat unwieldy body, which the Rector chairs and which includes Deans, faculty, part-time staff and several students (along with other staff as appropriate), with neither decision-making authority nor formal reporting obligations; it acts as a general consultative committee for the institution, discusses academic objectives and quality matters, and 'supports the Rector and the Board' in making academic decisions. It meets once a semester.

In both the IAA's Accreditation Report of 2007 and the follow-up review of 2010 the expert panels recommended that the institution clarify its academic management structure, and identify an Academic Council, responsible for developing academic policy, for the standard of awards and for student progress, as a necessary key academic decision-making body. Significant progress has since been made on developing effective institutional structures; and the current Academic Council has now been tasked by the Rector comprehensively to review its membership, role and mandate.

As mentioned in 1.4, this process was not complete at the time of the Institutional Review visit. It seems likely, however, that the new Academic Council will be leaner, will have defined decision-making powers and will have a specific remit for academic standards; it will also encompass assessment, research development, inter-disciplinarity and protocols for institutional collaborations and exchanges; it will be chaired by a member of faculty and have cross-departmental representation, with the Rector in attendance; it will receive reports from newly-defined Curriculum, Learning and Teaching, and Research Committees; and it will report formally to the Management Committee. These amendments will require a change to the IAA's regulations, but the aim is for the new Committee to be in place by the end of 2014. (See also 1.4).

The Team strongly supports this development, with the consequential formalisation of the institution's monitoring of academic standards. The activities of the new Council supported the recent production of the Handbook for Quality Assurance and Enhancement, which helps clarify and standardise practices across the distinctively different departments of the IAA, and the new Guidelines for Curriculum Writing, which sets out details on Learning Outcomes, course descriptions and course assessments.



## 2.2 Programmes and their introduction, monitoring and review

Over its five departments the Academy offers 18 study programmes, 5 of them at graduate level, comprising around 500 individual courses, with up to 30 of these being electives. This is a large and wide-ranging study menu. The nature and focus of the studies in each department, being entirely subject-specific, is very varied, and so the organisation of learning and teaching in this small institution is unusually complex. An added complication is the involvement, and important specialist roles, of the 350 or so part-time staff employed annually. The responsibility for organising this complex and diverse curriculum is in the hands of the Deans and Programme Directors.

The process the institution goes through when introducing a new programme is quite clear and convincing. A working group is appointed, usually with external experts, and this undertakes extensive consultation with stakeholders in the wider cultural, educational and business communities; their proposal is then discussed at Academic Council, Management Council and Academy Board before detailed curricular development at departmental level. Documentation, referring to Learning Outcomes and the National Qualifications Framework, is then sent to the Ministry for approval. In this context, a fully-documented proposal (which required a more comprehensive institutional process) for the establishment of a new Department of Film has been awaiting Ministerial approval for some time.

The approval process, as set out in the RA, is a description of what has been happening rather than an official validation procedure; but this, together with procedures for revising programme content, will become formalised in the new edition of the QA Handbook. The Team supports this move to document programme approval, monitoring and review processes more formally, thereby assisting the calibration of academic standards across the Academy. The main pillars of a more structured approach are already in place. Key statistics on student progress and achievement are gathered and published. Course reviews happen in every department each spring, in preparation for issuing curricular information for the coming academic

year. In formalising these processes the institution should be mindful of extending the use of appropriate external reference points across all departments.

### **2.3 Development of the curriculum**

The curriculum for each programme offered by the IAA is documented in detail. Each department is responsible for issuing and reviewing its own curriculum, written by faculty, under the direction of Programme Directors, and overseen by the Deans. The curricular content is regularly revised; it was re-formatted when the Guidelines for Curriculum Writing were issued in 2013. Learning Outcomes were developed for the completion of studies at all levels, down to single courses, in accordance with the National Qualification Framework but adapted to reflect the Academy's distinctive creative and artistic mission.

It is probably because of the speed of recent change and development that the curriculum has now become somewhat over-crowded, with the inclusion of too many small, specialist courses. The institution itself is aware of the need for a fairly major review of the way its programmes are structured and delivered. Recent Subject-level Reviews in Music, Fine Art and Architecture have reinforced this view, so that one of the many tasks for the new Director of Academic Affairs is to oversee a process of simplification of the curriculum, which will include skills-mapping and the identification of cross-departmental electives. This the institution sees as one of its key areas for enhancement in the short term.

The Academy faces the most common curricular challenge for institutions of its kind – balancing the need to deliver specialist training with the promotion of breadth of knowledge and experience. On the whole, students seen by the Team seemed happy with the balance. They praised the open, pioneering spirit in which the curriculum has been created, seeing as its strengths the promotion of independent thought, self-reliance and a 'can do' attitude. Some of them felt, however, that the framework of curriculum delivery is too tight and that, as people learn at different speeds and some would like to sample experiences in different departments, there is a need for much greater flexibility in the delivery of programmes, allowing for blended learning

approaches as well as a mix of part and full-time study. This is something the institution might discuss in the context of its curriculum review.

The concept of inter-disciplinarity – and again balancing specialism and breadth – might also be re-visited in the process of this review. This concept lies at the very heart of the Academy's stated mission, yet the operational definition of it seemed not entirely clear or consistent to those interviewed by the Team. Cross-artform collaboration currently seems to work most effectively at Masters level, and also within the Arts Education Department. Promoting it formally through the curriculum at undergraduate level has some consequences for academic standards, as well as practical problems for scheduling.

## **2.4 Staff and staff development**

From both full- and part-time staff encountered by the Team in the course of the Institutional Review, it was clear that the IAA has a dedicated, professional workforce, very obviously supportive of institutional enhancement, committed to achieving the best of standards, and with an obvious capacity to analyse and evaluate both their own capacities and the Academy's needs. In delivering the curriculum, student : staff ratios are low, as is both customary and necessary in arts academies: included in the overall 8:1 ratio are many courses operating at 1:1 and small group : 1, with students benefitting from individual staff support, supervision and coaching. The great majority of teaching staff, especially the large numbers of part-time tutors, are actively involved in their artistic professions and clearly have great satisfaction in sharing their creative expertise.

The IAA's rules for the appointment of its faculty are transparent, with posts externally advertised, interviews conducted by expert panels, final decision protocols and channels for appeals. Criteria for evaluating appropriate knowledge and expertise are in place, since doctoral qualifications are not a tradition in many artistic fields. Specialist part-time staff are recruited by Programme Directors and approved by the Deans. The whole process of appointing, promoting and for the duration of

employment of academic staff is, however, to be re-discussed during 2014-15 as part of the Academy's planned overall staffing review.

More extensive procedures for the induction and briefing of new faculty were recently developed and are being implemented in the current academic session. The processes are less formal for part-time staff; the idea of mentoring has been considered but not yet developed. Staff training workshops have been held, but only annually, on such topics as teaching and the management of learning; curriculum writing, learning outcomes and assessment; and the Bologna process. Professional development initiatives, such as overseas exchanges and external study courses, are encouraged, on a voluntary basis. Staff appraisal interviews happen, but somewhat irregularly. The institution is aware that further review and formalisation of all of these processes, for all staff, together with the instigation of research training for academic staff, is a priority. It is especially important for the IAA to find appropriate, systematic means of fostering, integrating and adequately rewarding that large body of part-time staff upon whom so much specialist learning and teaching depends. In this respect it would be beneficial for the institution to revisit the need for a formal Human Resources function, in support of the developing demands on its large and disparate staff.

## **2.5 Learning and teaching**

The Academy regards the enhancement of learning and teaching as one of its highest priorities. It is indicative that, in recent times of budgetary cuts, the development of appropriate learning strategies – communication, clarity and trust; turning the focus in pedagogical thinking from teacher to student – these have continued to take precedence in institutional thinking and spending. Much of student learning is self-motivated, with a large measure of choice: guided by the curriculum, students are encouraged to follow their own artistic paths. This pedagogical philosophy is appropriate in an arts academy, of course, but some students told the Team that, while the delivery framework of the curriculum might be too tight, the artistic boundaries are sometimes too loose, and they would appreciate clearer direction. This is, again, a question of balance.

In meetings, students expressed general satisfaction with the teaching they were receiving. They feel no inhibition about expressing views on their learning experiences directly to faculty, Programme Directors or Deans, and they feel listened to. Evaluative surveys with students graduating and with alumni are in place, and the results are fed back to faculty, other staff and graduating students– not to the alumni however, though a special survey took place in preparation for the Institutional Review and the results of this were widely relayed.

The institution is aware that the monitoring of student views needs to be systematic and staff, too, have asked for more systematic feedback on their teaching. A formal Learning and Teaching Committee will address such issues, reporting to the new Academic Council, under the auspices of the new Director of Academic Affairs: this Committee's remit will include the oversight of teaching support and of teaching evaluation; the supervision of course catalogues; enhancement of inter-disciplinary initiatives; and the accreditation of prior learning. An additional task for the new Director, based on the experience of the Team, might be the oversight of the placement and integration of foreign exchange students: those whom the Team encountered felt just a little marginalised.

Together with the establishment of an Academic Council more focussed upon standards the Academy will also upgrade its current Research Group to a formal Committee, reporting to this Council. Building upon the current practice of recording, along with the research outputs of faculty, the impact of those researches upon their teaching, this will create a direct channel between research and the curriculum, which will undoubtedly benefit academic standards at undergraduate as well as graduate level.

## **2.6 Assessment**

The assessment of student work in the Academy is entirely dependent upon the nature of each subject of study. Work in different artistic disciplines needs to be evaluated in distinctively different ways, so that assessment modes and techniques are extremely diverse. Assessment is done in the first instance by the course teacher – this is deemed

a facet of academic freedom – but Programme Directors, after discussion, can moderate grades. There are common assessment criteria for all departments, and – as mentioned above – Learning Outcomes for each course; the next step will be to relate assessment grades to these Learning Outcomes, and this should involve a process of cross-departmental calibration. For most assignments students get verbal feedback as well as grades, and this was much valued by the students met by the Team. Some assessment feedback can be almost instant, for a created object or a performance, for example, and this is deemed especially effective. The recent Subject-level Review in Architecture suggested a simplification of assessment practices which may, like the curriculum and probably for the same reasons, have become a little complicated as programmes have evolved.

External Examiners are always involved in the assessment of graduation projects, with an expert panel assembled for the evaluation of artistic practice. In some cases External Examiners are invited for one year only, in others they are appointed for several sessions. The Team suggests that the IAA might consider formalising its processes for appointing these Examiners and for their reporting procedures. It seemed to the Panel that repeat feedback over a period of time from the same External Examiner would be invaluable information for the maintenance and enhancement of standards.

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated in matters of discipline can make formal complaint to the Grievance Committee, consisting of three members: a Dean, a teacher and a student representative. The Team had some reservations both about the membership of this committee and about the ladder of appeal outlined in the IAA Charter. There was serious doubt about one current student being party to confidential information on another, and disagreement that the Grievance Committee should be able to overturn the final decision of the Rector. It is suggested that this procedure might be reconsidered.

## 2.7 Standards and benchmarks

It is clear from the extensive documentation, and from interviews with both full-time faculty and part-time staff, that the IAA has a convincing and internally shared concept of appropriate academic standards for its range of Bachelors degrees. Students apply for programmes on a competitive basis; interviews and/or auditions are held and, on average, 25–30% of applicants are accepted. Such demand for places makes an agreed standard at selection possible. Comparability of standards across diverse artistic disciplines cannot ever be exact, but the Academy attempts correlation, and also tries to benchmark its degree standards, in a number of ways: through common processes and practices, common assessment criteria, joint courses across departments, (joint) external collaborations, student exchanges, reports from visiting artists and so on.

Graduates from the BA programmes do well in Masters degrees overseas: students say that they feel well-prepared for further study. External professionals met by the Team said they were happy with graduating standards; but they also felt that graduates were not always industry-aware – it seemed to them that there remains a gap between academia and the outside world.

IAA's Masters programmes – in Composition, New Audiences and Innovative Practice (a joint programme with several overseas institutions), Arts Education, Fine Art and Design – were introduced relatively recently, and the Team found some evidence that a common, cross-departmental view of postgraduate standards might not yet be shared by all (particularly part-time) staff and students. This is by no means uncommon in a young institution still developing an aspirational portfolio of programmes where, until 2008, the BA was the flagship degree. The Masters students whom the Team met were quite unsure about what might be 'graduate' about their studies, and a part-time tutor of one of the new-ish Masters programme seemed equally uncertain. The undergraduate/postgraduate divide might in reality take some time to evolve; for clarity and shared understanding, however, an attempt should be made to define the attributes of graduate study.

Since the IAA is unique in the country it cannot benchmark its standards effectively against other HEIs in Iceland. Collaboration with Icelandic universities has, in fact, had a low priority to date. There has been some joint teaching with both Reykjavik University and the University of Iceland, and more is planned – but meaningful benchmarking has to be with arts academies abroad. From the RA it seems that, through individual faculty connections and by way of umbrella associations such as ELIA and AEC, an extensive network of European contacts have been established; as a result of Erasmus+ and NordPlus initiatives, the Academy has developed partnership relations with more than 150 HEIs throughout Europe. In the IAA's isolated position, opportunities for student exchanges are very important. However, for exchanges to work with the curriculum there have to be effective protocols for monitoring student progress and for credit transfer, and these would be impossible to organise on such a scale. So the Academy will have to be selective in its external partnerships, with formal agreements in place, if such relationships are to both enhance its curriculum and provide benchmarks for its academic standards.

In the context of benchmarking standards, the Team had some concerns about the balance of specialisms in the Department of Music. With 37 student composers and only 20 performers, it is difficult to see how the IAA can provide either group – but the performers in particular – with the range of experience necessary to compete with standards abroad. The new Dean of Music is aware of this and, as a first step, intends developing closer relations with the Reykjavik Music School and with upper secondary schools, in the hope of retaining some of the best performers in Iceland, at least for a first degree.

The development of inter-disciplinarity – one of the Academy's key aspirations – is undoubtedly being hampered by the current inadequate housing situation. Appropriate, spacious, custom-built premises on a single site would indeed be a wonderful encouragement for artistic collaboration. For the enhancement of standards, however, professional-level facilities and equipment are perhaps even more important.

The accommodation and equipment for Fine Art, Design and Architecture seemed to the Team to be adequate for students to achieve of their best. For the Performing Arts,



however, there is not simply inadequate and inappropriate space, but there are few of the specialist spaces and technical facilities that would allow performers to train to international professional standards: a range of performance spaces with recording and broadcast possibilities; professional sound studios; customised dance premises; professional prop- and set-making facilities, and so on. This situation inevitably places limits on what students can create and on the standard of their achievements. As one student commented to the Team, the ethos is ‘to make do and be fearless’. The senior management are actively looking for imaginative solutions to these problems. Ideally, they should be helped by the Ministry to find solutions.

## 2.8 Evaluation

The Academy’s procedures for safeguarding its academic standards are still being reviewed, clarified and formalised. The institution has moved a substantial distance from the informal, often subjective, processes of QA in operation at the time of its 2007 accreditation, but without losing the feel of a close-knit creative community, in which the individual student knows, and can count on the support of, any member of staff.

The resolution of a few, important structural issues will help confirm the IAA’s own confidence in the standard of its awards. The re-structuring of the Academic Council is a key priority in this respect: a leaner Council with more focused authority will be able to monitor standards, chart student progress and oversee programme evaluation, providing vital *evidence* of enhancement. As the institution’s postgraduate programme portfolio matures, it will no longer be essential for its range of graduate attributes to be clearly articulated; in the short run, however, this would be a desirable undertaking and one which might also come under the auspices of the Academic Council. In the changes to other levels of management structure which will follow from the review of the Council, the IAA is advised to reinforce a ‘one Academy’ concept through cross-departmental representation wherever possible.

The review of the staffing structure currently being undertaken by senior management should also, in the view of the Team, encompass the need for both systematic staff

development and staff support, and should actively seek to foster and integrate the important body of part-time specialist tutors upon which the maintenance and enhancement of the institution's academic standards will depend.

## 3 THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

### 3.1 Overview

This section of the Report provides an analysis of the student journey from recruitment to graduation, commenting on the recruitment process, the learning and teaching environment, facilities and student services, and the student's relationship to society. It draws on discussions held with students, staff, alumni and stakeholders during the Team's visit, as well as on submitted documentation. As has been mentioned in 2.2 above, the nature and focus of the studies in each department is varied and, although the institution is small, the organisation of learning and teaching is unusually complex.

### 3.2 Recruitment

The profile of an arts academy is always related to the overall numbers of its students, the numbers within each department, and to departmental student: staff ratios. As well as this, each study programme has a profile of its own. The issue of recruitment relates differently to each of these aspects.

According to available statistical information, the IAA presents an attractive prospect to potential applicants. Overall, the average admissions ratio has been around 25–30%. However, the ratio varies significantly between different programmes and also between the main subject areas within departments. In 2013, for the Department of Performing Arts, the admissions ratio was 21%, whereas for Arts Education it was 92%; for the Church Music programme the admissions ratio was 0% – simply because there were no applicants. Of course, successful recruitment is not just a question of what range of education the IAA offers, and whether it is attractive or not; it also depends upon how many qualified applicants there might be in Iceland and whether the curriculum offers something particular, which might appeal to overseas applicants.

The IAA puts considerable effort into recruiting Icelandic students. For example, representatives from the Academy regularly visit upper secondary schools to present the study opportunities in the various arts disciplines. In this respect, the institution seems active enough in recruiting home students – although it is difficult for it to compete, in fields such as Music and the Performing Arts, with high-profile specialist academies abroad.

The total numbers of students for 2012–13 were as follows:

### BA

Fine Art (84)

Architecture (49)

Fashion Design (30)

Visual Communication (59)

Product Design (31)

Acting (21)

Contemporary Dance (23)

Theatre and Performance Making (21)

Church Music (0)

Composition (37)

Creative Music Communication (10)

Instrumental/Vocal Performance (21)

Vocal and Instrumental Pedagogy (started 2013)

### MA

Arts Education (48)

Fine Art (8)

Design (8)

Composition (2)

New Audiences and Innovative Practice (10)

There was a total of 84 students in the Music Department in 2012–13, 12 of them in MA programmes. As has been discussed in Chapter 2, the Team had some concerns

about the balance of specialisms here. In the course of the interviews, however, it became clear that the profile of the Academy is not only the outcome of its own decisions. There are not always enough (if any) qualified applicants for every programme. This is especially so in respect of all of the instruments which might be taught in the Instrumental/Vocal Performance programme within the Department of Music. Of course the situation is similar for very many institutions abroad, but for an Academy which is the only one of its kind in the country, there is a risk that it may become a serious problem as time goes by. The BA programme in Church Music, for example, had no students for some years (it now has 2). It is difficult to arrange group music-making with so few, or such disparate, instrumentalists.

According to the management team, the IAA does not necessarily want to be much bigger in terms of student numbers. Rather, it aims to be stronger in its profile, to be able to fulfil its mission, and to aspire to its vision. In the view of the Team, this may mean that the Academy should substantially extend its recruitment targets, or review its current student/programme profile, or strengthen its efforts in international recruitment: it might, indeed, consider all of these plans of action. Iceland is in many ways unique as a cultural environment, and is attractive as such. Overseas students mentioned this unique selling point several times in interview. While it might in some respects be considered a challenging ground for a foreigner with no knowledge of Icelandic to navigate, the Academy has many natural strengths which could support more focussed promotional activities; and these strengths, such as its special goal of inter-disciplinarity, it should develop as well as promote further, in order to heighten its profile internationally.

### **3.3 Learning and Teaching Environment**

According to the RA, *MySchool* is one of the IAA's most important tools in managing the learning process, presenting information on course descriptions, learning outcomes, syllabus and other study materials, as well as providing information on grades and course assessments. The system gives students extensive access to information about their studies.

On the whole, both students and teachers seemed satisfied with *MySchool*. However, as a consequence of a rather fragmented curriculum in certain study fields (especially

Music) and perhaps because of a lack of technical confidence, there are many part-time teachers and visiting lecturers who, according to interviews with students, are not aware of all of the institution's practices and activities. The problem seems to be well known to faculty and staff members, and it is partly the result of operating on three sites. This is a challenge for internal communication, and it should be routinely addressed when Deans and faculty are arranging and developing teaching materials and organising activities in the Academy. With the recent appointment of a Director of Academic Affairs to oversee study issues, it should be a little easier to solve problems like this.

Each student in the IAA is deemed to be responsible for his or her own study progress. Deans and Programme Directors oversee student progress throughout their programmes, assisted by departmental coordinators. In discussions with the Team, students seemed to be mostly satisfied with the range of possibilities for communication on a personal as well as professional basis with faculty and staff members. They said they were aware of how to act if there were any problems with their studies. There was some criticism about the lack of flexibility in length of study – that all programmes have mandatory full-time attendance (as mentioned above in Chapter 2); but in general students appreciate the institution's many positive qualities in delivering its learning programmes; open-mindedness, ease of communication; focus on the individual; and promotion of creativity and independent thought. Students feel that they are heard and are encouraged to take part in discussions about study processes.

Both the documentary evidence and the interviews conducted convinced the Team that the Academy's academic staff have an excellent capacity for self-evaluation and analysis, and that this broadly supports the students' learning experience. Added to this, the report of the Student Council suggests that the majority of students are satisfied with their experience at the Academy. According to the RA, the evidence from surveys monitoring student experience and expectations also supports this. The institution's prioritisation of learning and teaching activities and their development throughout recent times of budgetary cuts was acknowledged and is appreciated by the students as well as by staff members. Despite the difficult housing situation and

continuing economic problems, the general atmosphere encountered by the Team was positive, confident and forward-looking.

The inter-disciplinary mission of the institution is much highlighted in all of the IAA's documentation. When this was discussed with the members of the Academic Council, with teaching staff, and with different groups of students and alumni, it was clear that inter-disciplinary studies were generally considered important for the artistic community and for the identity of the IAA – though some students found the concept rather disconnected to the reality of their core studies. Inter-disciplinarity and the notion of the Academy as an 'artistic melting pot' was regarded by some merely as an artificial model, a top-down view, designed rather than organically grown from the nature of the studies. The Team's view is that inter-disciplinarity is indeed a desirable but as yet only partly achieved goal for the IAA; that it is most likely to develop effectively within graduate studies in the first instance; and that it will eventually be a natural outcome of the kind of artistic and research activities being pursued by the institution. Undoubtedly, more focussed discussions within the Academic Council, for example, on the nature and definition of inter-disciplinarity and its consequences for the institution, would assist future curriculum planning.

### **3.4 Assessment: the student view**

Since the time of its accreditation the IAA has continuously developed its assessment procedures and practices as well as its Assessment Criteria. The processes are well documented and accessible to students. The relationship between Learning Outcomes and course assessments has been under discussion for some time and, according to the interviews, the awareness of this relationship has increased amongst students as well as staff; but this relationship has yet to be formalised. The Team, however, is well aware of the fact that, in an institution with hundreds of part-time teachers, the implementation of Learning Outcomes linked to Assessment Criteria is a demanding task.

According to the RA, some students mistrust their grades, and some fail to take their grades seriously. The ambiguous relationship between Learning Outcomes and course assessment seems to be part of this problem, together with the fact that not all tutors

consistently apply the Learning Outcomes in their gradings. When this was discussed with students, it became clear that they found written feedback and detailed comments in feedback interviews much more helpful and constructive than assessment grades for which neither tutor nor student was fully confident of the grading criteria. Most of all, students valued direct and open communication with their teachers, rather than formal gradings or the outcome of surveys about teaching evaluation. They argued very strongly that they learn more from written and oral feedback than from grades.

### **3.5 Facilities and support for learning**

The economic challenges for the Academy have been severe and its urgent housing needs are obvious. The lack of professional facilities, especially in the departments of Music and Performing Arts, are even more worrying than the lack of a single building. However, the energy and openness of the institution in looking at imaginative solutions to its problems, especially as regards housing, were obvious and in this it is greatly supported by its community as a whole.

According to the RA, and confirmed in interviews, the students are very involved not only with issues of housing (though in their section of the report they were much concerned with the inadequacies of the buildings) but also with the broader development of the Academy's services and facilities. On the whole, they seem to be very aware of their needs and rights. Most of the students met by the Team said that they know what to do in most problematical situations.

However, there are certain issues that the management team might consider further. They should ensure that all students, teachers, and other staff members, and not just the majority of them, are aware of the institution's policies on a safe and comfortable working environment, and also on equal rights. During discussions it became clear that, despite the openness and healthy atmosphere of the institution, not all students are aware of what to do in (doubtless rare) cases of bullying and harassment. There were some doubts, too, about the issue of real confidentiality: it is always difficult in a small institution to ensure this when it is appropriate and necessary. In these regards, the Team recommends that the IAA should formulate and publish clear policies on dealing with bullying and harassment; should create channels for confidential

discussions in problematical situations; and ensure that such policies are well known to all staff and students.

While, on the whole, students expressed satisfaction with the support services of the Academy, including Library and technical resources, there were some reservations about the overall quality of IT support and training. In addition, the lack of a dedicated student counsellor has been one of the most pressing issues in regard to support services. This situation has recently been much improved with the employment of a full-time Director of Student Affairs, and this was greatly appreciated by the students interviewed.

According to the RA, considerable emphasis is put on supplying students with professional skills and insights into the professional environment of the arts. According to a recent alumni survey, the vast majority of alumni (about 90%), felt that their studies were useful for further projects or their longer career. According to the opinions offered by alumni in interviews, the preparation provided by the programmes for further studies abroad is good. However, some students met by the Team considered that the career preparation within their curriculum is poor, and they complained that, for example, few internships with professional artists or companies are available to them. According to some of the external stakeholders interviewed, there is no real culture of internship at the Academy. All sides show goodwill, but there is still a lack of communication, and – according to some opinions – sometimes even lack of respect between academia and the professional arts businesses. In short, the Team got a rather ambivalent picture of the interaction between the professional working environment and arts studies at the IAA. This is in the process of being addressed by the Rector and the management team.

The willingness of the IAA to collaborate with society and with other institutions became clear during the interviews, but there was a lack of clarity on the appropriate scale and nature of external collaboration. From the point of view of some external stakeholders, the Academy's policy for outreach seems to be rather *ad hoc*. Needless to say, there are different opinions on what to do to build bridges between the IAA (and its students) and the community. Undoubtedly, more productive discussions between the institution and the cultural and business world outside, as well as



discussions with other sectors of arts education would be fruitful and would help the Academy formulate an outreach/community policy of benefit to the country at large.

### **3.6 Evaluation**

The Team concluded that, in general, the IAA is an attractive arts institution which puts considerable effort into recruiting the best students it can. In order to heighten its profile in Iceland and abroad the Academy may now wish to consider the balance both between and within some fields of study. It should also give serious consideration to promoting and marketing the institution more effectively both within Iceland and abroad.

The IAA undoubtedly has an excellent capacity for self-evaluation and analysis. The commitment of the institution to support and develop the student voice was appreciated by the Team. The institution's open-mindedness and its promotion of creativity and independent thought are notable. Its prioritisation of learning and teaching in recent times of budgetary cuts is impressive, and is greatly appreciated by its students and teachers.

According to the interviews conducted by the Team, the majority of students are, on the whole, satisfied with their learning experience. The same indications can be found in the results of recent surveys evaluating student expectations and experience. The preparation provided by the programmes for further study and/or professional work in the different fields of the arts is considered good by both current students and alumni.

## **4 RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**

### **4.1 Research in the IAA – status and plans**

The IAA is a young institution, in the process of establishing itself as a research academy at a time when expectations in similar – more established and older – arts academies abroad are changing. The Academy now has ambitions to base its teaching more directly upon research, and also to evolve procedures for developing and evaluating artistic (i.e. practice-based) research, as it is now conducted at peer

institutions. The Team was impressed that the IAA has had a proactive stance on the challenges related to artistic research and innovation, despite recent budgetary constraints.

In 2007, at a time when the IAA offered only one postgraduate programme, in Arts Education, a Research Service Centre was established with the main goal of promoting artistic research. This Centre – supported by the Rector and the Deans – has sought to develop a common research culture amongst faculty and staff, by organising platforms for discussions on research and innovation in the arts, and by developing courses on research training, academic writing and research methodologies.

Then in 2009 five faculty members (one from each department) were appointed by the Academic Council to form a ‘Research Group’, with the remit of developing an institutional policy on research and innovation, a formal definition of artistic research, and evaluation criteria for artistic research output. The Director of the Research Service convenes the meetings and takes minutes for this group. So far, the first IAA policy document on research has been prepared (in 2010, later replaced by the new policy on ‘Research and Innovation in the Arts 2013–2017’) and a ‘Quality Framework for Research & Innovation in the Arts’ has been published (in March 2014). This Quality Framework presents a comprehensive evaluation system for research and innovation in the arts. The appointment of a Research Committee, to take this forward, depends on the outcome of the review of the Academic Council, due by the end of 2014.

The implementation of the Quality Framework for Research Evaluation, of March 2014, is one of the goals of the 2013–17 policy. A further goal is to publish a five-year Strategy Plan for Research and Innovation later in 2014. These different frameworks and plans seem well coordinated and will certainly be of mutual support. They will help the IAA tackle its special challenges with regard to research. The acknowledged demand for, and status of, research in the arts must be made comprehensible both internally to the academic staff and externally to the Icelandic artistic community, other Higher Education Institutions with different concepts of research and – it is hoped – to the Ministry, in order for the Academy to procure research funding.

The IAA remains the only Higher Education Institution in Iceland without a contract with the Ministry for research funding, and this limits the institution's possibility of long-term planning in the field of research and innovation. It is highlighted in the RA that 'the lack of access to public competitive research funds is an urgent concern, as expert panels do not include the arts in review of application.'

In 2010, a new database was set up whereby all faculty members with a research and innovation component as part of their institutional responsibilities can document their artistic and scholarly activities. This database is a tool for gathering information on research currently conducted at the IAA. With the new criteria formulated in the report of March 2014 in place, artistic research, registered in the database, can be seen to be comparable with similar research elsewhere.

## 4.2 Challenges

It is worth stressing again that the IAA has special challenges regarding research. On the one hand, artistic research is related to artistic practice but, as research, is evaluated not as art but according to its capacity to generate new knowledge or understanding; this might demand additional, written critical reflection. On the other hand, artistic research differs from common definitions and evaluations of research by being, as art, dependent upon creative, practical processes. This is why artistic research needs to develop a special – and specific – evaluation system.

The Academy's Quality Framework for Research and Innovation in the Arts explicitly addresses these challenges; it states that the creative process – which is an inherent part of artistic research – does not necessarily account for research in the general academic sense of the word. For an artist to be acknowledged as a researcher certain criteria must be fulfilled, i.e. criteria that are compatible with those in the academic community regarding definitions of research objects, research contexts, research methods, and the communication of research outputs. So the Framework suggests that artistic research from the IAA should be evaluated on the basis of four interconnected parameters, providing a multi-layered and comprehensive picture of each piece of work: a) venue, b) context, c) relations, and d) impact.

### 4.3 Evaluation

Teaching at the IAA is increasingly influenced by research, although this varies between departments and fields of study. As stated in the Subject-level Review reports, the introduction of graduate (MA) studies since 2008 has created opportunities for cross-fertilisation between theory and practice. It is evident that this cross-fertilisation has mostly developed in departments with MA programmes. The Department of Music – with a MA programme from 2008 – reports in its submission that ‘faculty’s research output are fed into their own teaching’, and that they need a ‘closer dialogue between research and the undergraduate curriculum to ensure mechanisms for feeding research back into the curriculum’. The Department of Design And Architecture has as one of its future goals that the MA programme in architecture (to be launched in 2016) ‘will offer opportunities to stimulate a research culture and provide an opportunity to develop a distinctive and innovative international architectural programme in a unique environmental context’. In the submission from the Fine Arts department – with a MA programme since 2012 – it is said that the implementation of the MA programme ‘will increase the research aspect of the Department’s curriculum’.

It is the impression of the Team that, in future, when the MA programmes are fully developed, and staff have 13–30 % of their contracted hours dedicated to research and innovation, they will find a better and more fruitful balance between teaching and research than can be the case now. In this connection, a recently developed framework for sabbaticals – which will be implemented during the next academic year – will give the management a tool by which to create incentives for faculty to develop their research.

There is now an opportunity to take the IAA’s special research challenge as a point of departure for further developing inter-disciplinarity and mutual cooperation between departments; this will be easier when all departments offer a graduate level programme. Including so many different arts subjects in its portfolio makes the IAA a special arts academy internationally. So theirs is a special potential not only for developing a research agenda but also, and at the same time, for strengthening cross-

disciplinary dialogues among the many different arts programmes. In its efforts to become *the* national institution for artistic research in Iceland the IAA has responded proactively to the many, and on-going, challenges regarding research, ready to fulfil its special role and – on the basis of quality – to cooperate in research projects with both the other Icelandic Higher Education Institutions and with arts schools abroad.

## 5 THE CASE STUDY: HOUSING AND FACILITIES

### 5.1 Background

‘Building architecture is building behaviour’; and so it was no surprise to the Team that an Academy hosting an architectural education dealing with physical planning should choose ‘Housing and Facilities’ as its Case Study. However, the Case Study is motivated not only by convergence with what the Iceland Academy of the Arts teaches and researches in its Department of Design and Architecture. The choice was also, and primarily, influenced by the far from ideal conditions for teaching, learning and research in other IAA departments. Arts education needs, as all education does, a proper physical environment; but the needs of arts education are very specific, and if facilities and space are inadequate this influences the work processes and creativity of students in a negative way and limits their learning outcomes.

As well as this, it is of crucial importance to find better physical support for ambitions relating to IAA’s distinctive character among art academies: that ‘under one roof’ the institution houses so many different art forms. This Academy has the ambition to develop its specific profile by an active philosophy of cross-disciplinarity. In many ways, both academic and administrative, it is a real problem that IAA’s activities are so scattered geographically, and in housing that has not been custom-built. The RA states: ‘The scattered locations have created a serious drawback on this vision [of cross-disciplinarity], not to mention fragmented identities among faculty, staff, and students.’ It is worth adding – as does the Case Study – that it is costly to run a geographically-scattered institution: ‘The extra costs of cleaning, securing, running three libraries and three cafeterias, in addition to extra reception staff, caretakers, and other essential functions, are estimated to add up to 40 million ISK annually.’

The Case Study presents a time-line running from the founding and evolution of the IAA to its housing situation today. The time-line starts before the founding of the IAA in 1998, and shows that departments evolving from former schools – but now part of IAA and its ambition to teach artistic disciplines at university level – are still housed in the accommodation they occupied before becoming part of the IAA. For example, the former Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts' fine arts education was from 1994, located in the ground floor of the former meat-processing factory in Laugarnes, where the IAA's Department of Fine Arts now is. Other parts of this large building are now part of the Academy, however, and this gives Fine Arts students satisfactory square-meterage for their studies. In fact, this building has the potential for further development, as it is 'spacious and conveniently raw in structure.'

The Academy's building in down-town Reykjavik, in Sölvhólgata, used to house the Iceland School of Drama. Together with temporary transportable housing behind the building, it now provides very crowded accommodation for not only the Department of Performing Arts but also the Department of Music. Although the Academy stresses in the Case Study that 'the co-residency of these two departments has proven to be a positive example of cross-fertilisation between distinct subjects of study', the enforced cramped situation also results in undue interference between human voices and performing instruments.

It was therefore a relief for the Team to learn that the first step of the IAA's strategy to 'desist from adding further transportable temporary housing to the Sölvhólgata location but rather look to rent accommodation in the city centre' already seems to be bearing fruit: as of 1 December 2014, in collaboration with the City Authorities, the Department of Performing Arts will acquire new premises. The new venue, of around 400 square meters and close to Sölvhólgata, will have a rehearsal/performance space for Dance and performance, dressing rooms for both sexes, a work space for teachers, and other necessary facilities. This seems a crucial, long over-due improvement, and it will enhance the level of professionalism of the Academy's performance training.

It is worth emphasising here – as in the Case Study chapter of the RA – that elevators, and access for the disabled to upper floors, are lacking in both the Sölvhólgata and Laugarnes locations. This problem needs somehow to be solved as soon as possible.

It comes as no surprise, then, that ‘the only customised housing for the Academy in the current situation’ is their building in Þverholt. In the spring semester of 2012 the Department of Design and Architecture, previously housed in run-down facilities in Skipholt, moved into Þverholt. The move was ‘prompted in part by the protest of students with a sit-in at the Ministry as conditions at Skipholt had gradually deteriorated and were dilapidated, deemed unsatisfactory by environmental health standards in addition to neither meeting legal requirements for disabled access nor professional criteria for teaching.’ Architecture and Design students, together with the management of the department and the general administration of the IAA, have now created a situation where the new spatial environment has influenced study models positively, and has generated significant ‘increased interaction between study programmes.’ The Team, as well as the management of the IAA, hope for future cross-fertilization between the Department of Design and Architecture and the other arts departments, with the creation of new physical frames for these departments also.

## 5.2 Evaluation

The question the Team asks itself and the management team of the IAA is whether the goal of the Academy should still be to host all of its departments under one roof, in one (preferably custom-designed) building? Much has changed since the IAA was founded, but this one aim remains a high priority in the Academy’s long-term strategy. The ambition came close to being realized in 2008, shortly before the financial crisis in Iceland. At that point, an architectural project, which would have facilitated both internal inter-disciplinarity and inclusive dialogue with the surrounding community and the city, was close to fruition; a decision on the outcome of the architectural competition for a new building was made. The new building would have housed all departments close together, creating a cultural hub in central Reykjavik with spaces for exhibitions, performances and a public restaurant. The project had to be abandoned, shipwrecked by the bank crash.

Formally, the Academy's 'one building' ambition remains, even though the management team is aware that they have to have other strategies to improve conditions in the shorter term. The Team might have expected more of a visionary statement about this, to conclude the Case Study. However, it seems promising – perhaps also for the development of another, more realistic and maybe in some respects more rewarding, long-term strategy – that IAA now has working agreements with existing museums and concert halls in order to extend their housing facilities. These agreements will considerably improve student resources, in terms of quality of space and professional environment, for training as well as for presenting their work in public. This, perhaps, is the beginnings of a new way of developing dialogue between IAA and the surrounding community; and it may be that this dialogue will influence not only the future physical planning of the IAA but also the evolution of its own cross-disciplinary thinking – between the different departments and art forms in the Academy as well as between the Academy and the professional art-world of Iceland.

## 6 ENHANCEMENT

### 6.1 Overview

As has been shown throughout this report, the IAA has many assets and strengths; in several areas the institution has commendable foundations and initiatives upon which to build. The information in the RA and other documents, as well as their experiences on the site visit, has led the Team to form the view that recent developments at the IAA, i.e. the changes and reforms of the last few years, are strongly enhancement-driven. This is true of developments in teaching and learning, research and human resource management, as well as in administration. The sharing of good practice is, however, still an area that could be developed further. It is therefore recommended that the IAA considers how good practice – internally and externally – can be shared across the institution.

The Rector and the Management Council are ultimately responsible for enhancing quality throughout the Academy. In reality, of course, they are supported by different



management bodies at all levels in the organisation, as described in previous chapters of this report. It is the Team's opinion that the IAA has now reached a stage of maturity where institutional enhancement approaches are well on the way to being formalised and developed into a comprehensive quality framework. On the basis of the Academy's long-term planning, and as reflected in the institutional Action Plan, this framework will be fully implemented in the coming years.

The RA describes the institution's overall approach to enhancement and then separately considers learning and teaching, research and innovation, human resources and institutional administration. This section of the report follows the same structure.

## **6.2 Enhancement of learning and teaching**

The enhancement of learning and teaching is one of the Academy's highest priorities. Formally, this responsibility rests with the Management Council and the Learning and Teaching Services. As these Services are currently under revision, as is the Academic Council, the review of learning and teaching will remain a top priority for the near future. The Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, established in 2012, have a central role to play in monitoring and following up all planned enhancement processes. The recently issued Handbook for Quality Assurance and Enhancement will certainly be an important instrument in this context.

Internal and external benchmarking, together with regular evaluations and surveys, play a key role in the quality assurance and enhancement of teaching and learning.

Key elements in this enhancement framework are:

- teaching evaluation processes

The RA states that there is a need to further formalise follow-up procedures and coordinate the implementation of results across the institution. The Team strongly supports this.

- various processes which monitor the student learning experience
- curriculum revision and cross-institutional coordination

A great deal has already been done in this area. However, the

correlation between Learning Outcomes and course assessment still remains to be carried through, as mentioned in the RA.

- admission criteria and the monitoring of students' progress

Students are admitted to the Academy on a competitive basis, and admission criteria are regularly revised. This makes agreed standards at admission possible and this, of course, guarantees certain scholarly and artistic levels from the start of a student's journey.

The systematic documentation and analysis of student progress, including withdrawals from studies and dropout rates, are now under way. This is an important area of enhancement and the enactment of this framework should be given high priority.

- approval and review of new study programmes and departments

Recently formulated procedures for the design and formal approval of new departments and new study programmes are still to be implemented. The possible involvement of an external advisory board in this connection is under discussion. It might be a good idea to explore this further.

Students expressed general satisfaction with the institution's enhancement framework in learning and teaching. For example, during the site visit some of them cited examples of when the IAA or one of the departments had taken action in response to concerns raised, and they mentioned several instances of good practice. It is not clear to the Team as to whether there is any systematic approach to disseminating good practice, e.g. across departments. If there is no such approach, consideration should be given as to how else good practice can be systematically disseminated.

## **6.2 Enhancement of research and innovation**

The responsibility for ensuring quality in research and innovation lies with the Management Council, in close collaboration with the Research Group and the Research Services. The apparent effort spent by the Research Group in developing a Quality Framework for Research and Innovation in the arts is indeed laudable, not least given the fact that there is neither a contract with the Ministry for research

activities nor any specific funding for artistic research. The pioneering work within the Research Group has resulted in a strengthened concept and a more precise definition of artistic research.

Areas for the management of enhancement in research and innovation are as follows:

- registration and documentation  
Annual registry in an online database for faculty research and innovation output has been established. This database, while it needs further development, has proved to be an effective tool.
- evaluation criteria for research and innovation output  
With the implementation of the Framework in the near future, it is hoped that the IAA will gain access to the competitive funding, which it clearly needs.
- a framework for sabbaticals  
Such a framework is to be implemented during the coming academic year
- funding for research and innovation  
The institution is working towards negotiating a contract with the Ministry.

The research policy of the IAA is not yet fully developed. However, the institution and the Research Group in particular, should be commended for the enhancement-driven initiative they have shown in the area of research and innovation. It is hoped that, as research activity grows, policies, which will address the responsible conduct of research, intellectual property, the allocation of research funds and the evaluation of research will be developed. It is also hoped that the further infiltration of staff research into teaching at both BA and MA levels will be achieved.

### **6.3 Enhancement of human resource management**

According to the institutional Strategic Plan, enhancement of human resource management encompasses faculty, part-time lecturers, support staff and students as a community which constitutes the Academy as a whole. Needless to say, in the context of the strategic management of enhancement, staff support and development is

fundamental. The varied backgrounds of staff are indeed an asset for the IAA. They have degree qualifications and professional achievements from all parts of the western world, and they come to the institution with very diverse backgrounds and credentials. This helps generate a lively, vivid and creative artistic and academic environment. However, this very positive background picture is in some degree clouded by the heavy workload that was mentioned by both academic and support staff. Integrating its numerous part-time staff into the institutional community is also a great challenge for the IAA.

The main areas of the management of enhancement are as follows:

- faculty appointment and progression, and their continuing education  
Though the rules on selection and appointment of faculty were last updated in 2013 they are now undergoing thorough revision. This reconsideration also includes appraisal and review. An important issue in this context is that of promotion. A report from a working group on these issues is due later this year. The mandate of the working group also encompasses professional development and continuing education for support staff and involvement of part-time academic staff.
- surveys of employees' attitudes  
Such surveys have taken place regularly during recent years. Generally, they have revealed increasingly positive attitudes amongst employees towards the institution, in spite of heavy workloads, a difficult housing situation and relatively low salaries.
- student involvement in institutional management  
This involvement has increased recently, and further enhancement in terms of formalising the relationship between the Student Council and the administration, is planned. In order to provide more comprehensive and effective support for students, the institution needs to integrate their views and feedback more systematically into the overall institutional administration and the organisation of studies. Enhancing students' rights is a central issue in this respect.

The Team is of the view that strengthening the institution's strategic and operational management of staff support and development, including for part-time staff, will allow the IAA to build upon the strong foundation already in place. The staff of the Academy are, of course, its major asset. The quality of the student learning experience depends to a large extent on the skills and knowledge of the staff. Supporting staff systematically through development opportunities is of critical importance, particularly in a time of rapid technological and pedagogical change. Consequently, the Team recommends that the Academy should consider further strengthening its strategic and operational management of staff support and development.

#### **6.4 Enhancement of institutional administration**

Since its accreditation in 2007, the IAA has worked systematically to formalise processes of institutional administration and decision-making. The results of this are more transparent lines of communication and the formal clarification of responsibilities and authority within the institution. The main areas for further consideration are:

- strategic planning

The current Strategic Plan for 2013–2017 has been supplemented by an Action Plan as a new tool for the implementation of detailed strategic planning and management. The production of the Action Plan has been helpful for the institution, but it needs further discussion and clarification. As it stands it seems overloaded, without focused prioritisation, and a little unrealistic. A further issue for the institution to consider is keeping its strategic planning dynamic through regular updates and revisions, in line with developments in study programmes, curricula and general institutional operations.

- collecting data, monitoring, follow-ups

The Management Council and the Learning and Teaching Services are responsible for following up surveys, evaluations and feedback. Further coordination and systematic monitoring as part of an

inclusive and comprehensive system would help to enhance this important administrative work. Key statistics are, of course, critically important in monitoring institutional development, and these are necessary tools for analysing tendencies and patterns that change over time.

- communication and information management

The Management Council, in collaboration with the Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and the Director of Communication and Marketing, are responsible for developing a comprehensive approach to the management of internal and external communication. The technological tools they have at their disposal are the IAA website and *MySchool*. Given the scattered locations of the IAA, internal communication across campuses is a challenge, and the RA admits that there is a need for a strengthened internal structure for cross-departmental meetings. External information to, and communication with, the media and the public are just as important. The IAA may now wish to reflect further on its visibility in Icelandic society, and might consider how the institution can both be more visible and play a more prominent societal role. This in turn, might create new opportunities for external funding and collaboration.

## 6.5 Evaluation

The Team found, overall, that the IAA has integrated its management of enhancement effectively within the general context of securing and assuring both quality and standards. This was evident from the RA and additional documentary material as well as from discussions during the site visit.

The Team also considers that the IAA has a clear understanding of how it can continue to enhance the institution in the future. Its ambitions to work in partnership with students to develop its strategies and plans into all core areas of a comprehensive Arts Academy are well founded and explicitly argued. The Team also endorses the

ways in which support services feed into learning and teaching. Even so, the IAA may find it helpful to create more direct channels and links between its support services and academic faculty.

In common with all other Higher Education Institutions in Iceland, whether public, self-governing or private, the IAA depends heavily on public funding from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. This causes several difficulties. Firstly, in times of financial recession budgets tend to decrease. In the Icelandic context, this has resulted in several years of cutbacks and economic instability. For strategic planning to be meaningful and worthwhile a certain level of financial predictability and reliability is necessary. An unstable, unpredictable economy is also detrimental when it comes to safeguarding standards in an institution like the IAA. It is therefore praiseworthy that the IAA has been able to secure the current level of quality in most of its operations, despite the financial difficulties it has experienced in recent years.

At the time of the visit, the team was informed that a clear policy on the housing prospects of the IAA was not yet available from the MESK, but that this matter was being vigorously pursued by both the Rector and Chair of the Board. In an attempt to alleviate the problem a housing committee has been at work, but no solutions or answers have as yet emerged. However, the Team was pleased to learn that, with the help of the City Authorities of Reykjavík, better facilities for the Department of Performing Arts will soon be available.

In the view of the Team, part of the problem might stem from the fact that the IAA is a self-governing institution, which currently relies almost entirely on the state for funding. The loosely knit union of artist, the Society for the IAA, which first of all promoted the establishment of such an arts academy in Iceland, has no financial capacity. While it plays a significant part in the governing and managing of the institution via its Board members, it now does not constitute a strong enough support network for the Academy. Although support from the MESK remains absolutely vital, the IAA should also consider ways and means of creating or influencing external networks in Iceland for support – support in the widest sense, not only financial.

## 7 CONCLUSION

Following its consideration of the Reflective Analysis and associated evidence submitted by the Iceland Academy of the Arts, and the site visit to Academy on 6 – 8 October 2014, the Institutional Review Team commissioned by the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education concluded that:

- confidence can be placed in the soundness of the Iceland Academy of Arts' present and likely future arrangements to secure the academic standards of its awards;
- confidence can be placed in the soundness of the Iceland Academy of the Arts' present and likely future arrangements to secure the quality of the student learning experience

Instances of good practice include:

- The range of artistic activities in the Academy, which are of fundamental importance to the culture of Iceland.
- The progressive leadership of the Rector and Managing Director.
- The openness of the institution in looking at imaginative solutions to problems, especially as regards their housing needs.
- The obvious dedication, good will and professionalism of all staff in support of institutional enhancement and the review process.
- The commitment of the institution to support and develop the student voice.
- An excellent capacity for self-evaluation and analysis.
- The institution's open-mindedness, ease of communication, and its promotion of focus, creativity and independent thought.
- The high importance placed by the institution on research development, and its proactive stance on this despite budgetary constraints.
- The institution's prioritisation of learning and teaching developments in times of budgetary cuts.
- The preparation provided by the programmes for further studies abroad.
- The willingness of the institution to collaborate with bodies that can strengthen its important and unique mission - with other educational institutions as well as with the authorities of the city of Reykjavík.



Areas for further development that the Academy is asked to consider will include:

- The need to promote and market the institution more effectively in order to heighten the Academy's profile in Iceland and abroad.
- The need to define more clearly the institution's interdisciplinary mission.
- The need to reconsider the membership of the Academy Board and to strengthen its capacity to support the institution's activities.
- The need to further clarify the management structure, together with the remits and decision-making powers of various key committees.
- Ensuring that there are departmental strategies, in line with overall institutional planning.
- The need for a realistic timetable and for the prioritisation of the target areas in the institutional Action Plan, in order to balance the workload of key staff.
- The need to develop a systematic outreach and community policy, involving the whole country.
- The need to develop a systematic staff development and training regime for all staff, including support staff.
- In the context of reviewing the staffing structure, the need to recognise the important role of the large number of part-time staff, and to ensure a framework for their integration, development and reward.
- Enhancing career and professional preparation for all students.
- The need to further review institutional policies on appeals and grievances, and to formulate policies on bullying and harassment.

## ANNEX 1: Schedule for the Review Team Site Visit

**MONDAY OCTOBER 6**

TIME	LOCATION	PROGRAMME	PARTICIPANTS	TOPICS
9:00 – 9:20	Sölvhólgata	Tour around the Department of Performing Arts and Department of Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Fríða Björk Ingvarsdóttir</b>, Rector</li> <li>▪ <b>Kristján Steingrímur Jónsson</b>, Dean, Dep. of Fine Art</li> <li>▪ <b>Kristín Valsdóttir</b>, Dean, Dep. of Arts Education</li> <li>▪ <b>Magnús Loftsson</b>, Managing Director</li> <li>▪ <b>Ólöf Gerður Sigfúsdóttir</b>, Director of Research Services</li> <li>▪ <b>Rebekka Silvía Ragnarsdóttir</b>, Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement</li> <li>▪ <b>Sara Stef. Hildardóttir</b>, Director of Library and Information Services.</li> <li>▪ <b>Sigrún Birgisdóttir</b>, Dean, Dep. of Design and Architecture</li> <li>▪ <b>Steinunn Knútsdóttir</b>, Dean Dep. of Performing Arts</li> <li>▪ <b>Tryggvi M. Baldvinsson</b>, Dean, Dep. of Music</li> </ul>	<p>IAA Presentation of facilities and current topics. Tour around IAA premises. Briefing on current topics;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Finance and Housing</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Learning- and Teaching Services</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Faculty appointment, progression and professional development</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Research &amp; Innovation framework.</b></li> </ul>
9:30 - 9:50	Þverholt	Tour around the Department of Design and Architecture. Brief introduction at the Library		
10:00-10:30	Þverholt	Rector presents Current Topics. Light breakfast served		
10:40-11:00	Laugarnes	Tour around the Department of Fine Art and Department of Arts Education.		
11:00-12:00	Laugarnes Room 053	<b>Meeting 1:</b> Management Council		
12:00-12:45	Halldór Hansen room	<b>Lunch</b> from the Laugarnes Cafeteria	Panel and Management Council	
12:45-13:00	Review Team room	<b>Short panel meeting</b>		Sum up impressions so far

<p>13:00-13:45</p>	<p>Room 053</p>	<p><b>Meeting 2:</b> Representatives of the self-evaluation teams (steering group, internal consultation group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Björg Jóna Birgisdóttir</b>, Director of Student Affairs</li> <li>▪ <b>Hulda Stefánsdóttir</b>, Professor, Dep. of Fine Art</li> <li>▪ <b>Magnús Loftsson</b>, Managing Director</li> <li>▪ <b>Ólöf Gerður Sigfúsdóttir</b>, Director of Research Services</li> <li>▪ <b>Rebekka Sívía Ragnarsdóttir</b>, Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement</li> <li>▪ <b>Sigrún Birgisdóttir</b>, Dean, Department of Design and Architecture</li> <li>▪ <b>Steinunn Guðný Ágústsdóttir</b>, graduated student from Department of Arts Education</li> <li>▪ <b>Vala Kristín Eiríksdóttir</b>, student, Dep. of Performing Arts</li> </ul>	<p>Understand self- evaluation process and extent of institutional involvement; how useful was self-evaluation for IAA (emerging issues, function in strategic planning processes)? Are self-evaluation data still up to date?</p>
<p>14:00-14:45</p>	<p>Room 053</p>	<p><b>Meeting 3:</b> Academic Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Aðalheiður L. Guðmundsdóttir</b>, Adjunct Lecturer, Dep. of Fine Art</li> <li>▪ <b>Ásthildur Björg Jónsdóttir</b>, Assistant Professor, Dep. Of Arts Education</li> <li>▪ <b>Hulda Stefánsdóttir</b>, Professor, Dep. of Fine Art</li> <li>▪ <b>Magnús Þór Þorbergsson</b>, Assistant Professor, Dep. of Performing Arts</li> <li>▪ <b>Páll Ragnar Pálsson</b>, Part-time Lecturer, Dep. of Music</li> <li>▪ <b>Steinunn Knútsdóttir</b>, Dean Dep. of Performing Arts</li> <li>▪ <b>Sigrún Alba Sigurðardóttir</b>, Assistant Professor, Department of Design and Architecture</li> <li>▪ <b>Tryggvi M. Baldvinsson</b>, Dean, Department of Music</li> </ul>	<p>Consultative and information sharing – how does this function? Governance and management, issues of organizational structure – relevance for academic issues? Strategy. Quality.</p>
<p>15:00-16:00</p>	<p>Room 053</p>	<p><b>Meeting 4:</b> Deans of Departments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Kristján Steingrímur Jónsson</b>, Dean, Dep. of Fine Art</li> <li>▪ <b>Kristín Valsdóttir</b>, Dean, Dep. of Arts Education</li> <li>▪ <b>Sigrún Birgisdóttir</b>, Dean, Dep. of Design and Architecture</li> <li>▪ <b>Steinunn Knútsdóttir</b>, Dean Dep. of Performing Arts</li> <li>▪ <b>Tryggvi M. Baldvinsson</b>, Dean, Dep. of Music</li> </ul>	<p>Relations between different levels in the organization; input in self-evaluation from the different levels, role of quality control activities at different levels. Quality management and strategic management. HR. Staff development.</p>

16:15-17:00	Room 053	<b>Meeting 5:</b> Support services, e.g. IT, library, counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Alma Ragnarsdóttir</b>, Head of International Office</li> <li>▪ <b>Ágúst Loftsson</b>, Director of Computer and Web Services</li> <li>▪ <b>Björg Jóna Birgisdóttir</b>, Director of Student Affairs and Acting Student Counsellor.</li> <li>▪ <b>Ingibjörg Þórisdóttir</b>, Director of Academic Affairs</li> <li>▪ <b>Marta Þórðardóttir</b>, Director of Communication</li> <li>▪ <b>Sara Stef. Hildardóttir</b>, Director of Library and Information Services</li> </ul>	Issues related to the different support services, e.g. student counselling.
17:00-17:45	Room 053	<b>Meeting 6:</b> Academy Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Kolbrún Halldórsdóttir</b>, Chairman</li> <li>▪ <b>Jóhannes Þórðarson</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Markús Þór Andrésson</b></li> </ul>	
17:45-18:15	Room 053	<b>Meeting 7:</b> Stock taking with Senior Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Fríða Björk Ingvarsdóttir</b>, Rector</li> <li>▪ <b>Magnús Loftsson</b>, Managing Director</li> <li>▪ <b>Rebekka Silvía Ragnarsdóttir</b>, Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement</li> </ul>	

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7**

TIME	LOCATION	PROGRAMME	PARTICIPANTS	TOPICS
09:00-10:00	Room 053	<b>Meeting 8:</b> Senior management on QA, accreditation and reviews, Members of Quality Assurance and Enhancement committee and Curriculum Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Ásthildur Björg Jónsdóttir</b>, Assistant Professor, Dep. of Arts Education</li> <li>▪ <b>Björg Jóna Birgisdóttir</b>, Director of Student Affairs, Student Councillor</li> <li>▪ <b>Ingibjörg Þórisdóttir</b>, Director of Academic Affairs</li> <li>▪ <b>Jóhann Kristófer Stefánsson</b>, Student, Dep. of Performing Arts</li> <li>▪ <b>Kristín Valsdóttir</b>, Dean, Department of Arts Education</li> <li>▪ <b>Ólafur Sveinn Gíslason</b>, Professor, Dep. of Fine Art</li> <li>▪ <b>Rebekka Silvía Ragnarsdóttir</b>, Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement</li> <li>▪ <b>Sara Stef. Hildardóttir</b>, Director of Library and Information Services</li> <li>▪ <b>Tryggvi M. Baldvinsson</b>, Dean, Dep. of Music</li> <li>▪ <b>Una Þorleifsdóttir</b>, Assistant Professor, Dep. of Performing Arts</li> </ul>	Safeguarding of standards? Learning outcomes, assessment, teaching processes? Curriculum issues
10:15-11:15	Room 053	<b>Meeting 9:</b> Director of Student Affairs, Director of Academic Affairs, Managing Director, the Director of Research Services, director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Björg Jóna Birgisdóttir</b>, Director of Student Affairs</li> <li>▪ <b>Hulda Stefánsdóttir</b>, Professor and Programme Director, MA Programme, Dep. Fine Art.</li> <li>▪ <b>Ingibjörg Þórisdóttir</b>, Director of Academic Affairs</li> <li>▪ <b>Magnús Loftsson</b>, Managing Director</li> <li>▪ <b>Ólöf Gerður Sigfúsdóttir</b>, Director of Research Services</li> </ul>	Teaching and learning, quality issues, safeguarding standards, interdisciplinarity, relation administration – teaching/learning
11:30-12:30	Room 053	<b>Meeting 10:</b> Undergraduate students, including exchange students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Axel Ingi Árnason</b>, Composition, Department of Music</li> <li>▪ <b>Brynjúlfur Þorsteinsson</b>, Department of Fine Art</li> <li>▪ <b>Daníel Perez Eðvarðsson</b>, Department of Fine Art</li> <li>▪ <b>Elizabeth Prentis</b>, Exchange Student from Chelsea College of Art and Design</li> <li>▪ <b>Max Gadov</b>, Exchange Student in Dep. of Performing Arts</li> <li>▪ <b>Sigrún</b>, Department of Design and Architecture</li> </ul>	Students' views on their learning experience, students' input in quality development and strategic decision making

12:30-13:30	Halldór Hansen Room or Panel room	<b>Panel discussion</b>  <b>Lunch</b> from the Laugarnes Cafeteria		Summing up, planning of afternoon sessions
13:30-14:30	Room 053	<b>Meeting 11:</b> Postgraduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Halldóra Rósa Björnsdóttir</b>, MA Programme in Art Education</li> <li>▪ <b>Kristín Cardew</b>, Student in NAIP Programme</li> </ul>	Students' views on their learning experience, students' input in quality development and strategic decision making + issues of research. Research based teaching? Research collaboration with academic staff, supervisors? How do the individual programmes function for the postgraduates?
14:45-15:30	Room 053	<b>Meeting 12:</b> External representatives, stakeholders Suggestions: Some from the Society for the IAA, a couple of key people from collaborating institutions, like RU + people from the professional artistic organisations in Iceland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Arna Kristín Einarsdóttir</b>, Iceland Symphony Orchestra, Managing Director</li> <li>▪ <b>Ástráður Eysteinnsson</b>, University of Iceland, Dean of the School of Humanities</li> <li>▪ <b>Bjarni Jónsson</b>, Lókal, international Theatre Festival, board member</li> <li>▪ <b>Börkur Arnarson</b>, i8 Gallery, owner</li> <li>▪ <b>Elísabet Indra Ragnarsdóttir</b>, The Icelandic National Broadcasting Service</li> <li>▪ <b>Halla Helgadóttir</b>, Society for IAA, board member and Icelandic Design Center, Managing Director</li> <li>▪ <b>Hanna Styrmissdóttir</b>, Reykjavík Art Festival, Artistic Director</li> <li>▪ <b>Práinn Hjálmarsson</b>, Dark Music Days, Project Manager</li> </ul>	Relations of IAA with external partners of private and public sectors. IAA's societal role?
15:30-16:00	Review team room	Panel meeting		Summing up + planning

16:00-17:00	Room 053	<p><b>Meeting 13:</b> Academic staff with long experience from IAA and also staff relatively recently appointed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Ásthildur Björg Jónsdóttir</b>, Assistant Professor, Department of Arts Education (2009)</li> <li>▪ <b>Birna Geirfinnsdóttir</b>, Adjunct Lecturer, Visual Communication, Dep. of Design and Architecture (2013)</li> <li>▪ <b>Gunnar Benediktsson</b>, Adjunct Lecturer, Programme Director, Creative Music Communication (2014)</li> <li>▪ <b>Hróðmar Ingi Sigurbjörnsson</b>, Assistant Professor, Programme Director, Composition, Dep. of Music (2006)</li> <li>▪ <b>Jóhannes Dagsson</b>, Adjunct Lecturer, Art Theory, Dep. Of Fine Art (2013)</li> <li>▪ <b>Magnús Þór Þorbergsson</b>, Assistant Professor, Theatre Studies, Dep. of Performing Arts (2001)</li> <li>▪ <b>Ólafur Sveinn Gíslason</b>, Professor, Dep. Of Fine Art (2007)</li> <li>▪ <b>Sigrún Alba Sigurðardóttir</b>, Assistant Professor, Design Theory, Dep. of Design and Architecture (2006)</li> <li>▪ <b>Sveinbjörg Þórhallsdóttir</b>, Assistant Professor, Contemporary Dance, Dep. of Performing Arts (2011)</li> </ul>	<p>Role of QA at departments. Interdisciplinarity. Staff development, promotion, motivation policies, recruitment of new staff. Academic autonomy. Research.</p>
17:00-17:30	Room 053	<p><b>Meeting 14:</b> Stock taking with senior management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Fríða Björk Ingvarsdóttir</b>, Rector</li> <li>▪ <b>Magnús Loftsson</b>, Managing Director</li> <li>▪ <b>Rebekka Silvía Ragnarsdóttir</b>, Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement</li> </ul>	
17:30-18:00	Review team room	<p><b>Panel meeting</b></p>		<p>Summary + planning</p>

**WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 8**

TIME	LOCATION	PROGRAMME	PARTICIPANTS	TOPICS
09:00-10:00	Room 053	<b>Meeting 15:</b> Part-time lecturers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir</b>, Dep. of Arts Education</li> <li>▪ <b>Berglind María Tómasdóttir</b>, Dep. of Music</li> <li>▪ <b>Kristján Örn Kjartansson</b>, Dep. of Design and Architecture</li> <li>▪ <b>Haraldur Jónsson</b>, Dep. of Fine Art</li> <li>▪ Part-time lecturer, Dep. of Performing Arts</li> </ul>	The role of part time lecturers. Hiring procedures? Any mentoring?
10:15-11:00	Room 053	<b>Meeting 16:</b> The Case Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Fríða Björk Ingvarsdóttir</b>, Rector</li> <li>▪ <b>Magnús Loftsson</b>, Managing Director</li> <li>▪ <b>Jóhannes Þórðarson</b>, Architect, Board member and former Dean of Department of Design and Architecture</li> </ul>	Why this case? What have they learned? Results? How will they bring the case forward in the future?
11:15-12:00	Room 053	<b>Meeting 17:</b> Elected student leaders and representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Dóra Haraldsdóttir</b>, Student, Chairman of Student Association in Dep. of Design and Architecture</li> <li>▪ <b>Andrea Elín Vilhjálmisdóttir</b>, Chairman of the Student Association in Department of Performing Arts</li> <li>▪ <b>Erla Steinþórsdóttir</b>, Chairman of the Student Association in the Dep. of Arts Education</li> <li>▪ <b>Katrín Helena Jónsdóttir</b>, Chairman of the Student Association in Department of Fine Art</li> <li>▪ <b>Ragnheiður Erla Björnsdóttir</b>, Chairman of the Student Association in the Dep. of Music</li> </ul>	Students' impact on strategies, QE-development. Institutional internal role, national role? Students' views on their learning experience, students' input in quality development and strategic decision making



12:00-12:45	Room 053	<b>Meeting 18:</b> Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Benedikt Hermann Hermannsson</b>, BA Composition (2007), MA Arts Education (2014)</li> <li>▪ <b>Brynhildur Pálsdóttir</b>, BA Product Design (2004)</li> <li>▪ <b>Hanna Ólafsdóttir</b>, MA Arts Education (2011) MA Arts Education (2011)</li> <li>▪ <b>Karl Ágúst Þorbergsson</b>, BA Performing (2012)</li> <li>▪ <b>Hrólfur Karl Cela</b>, BA Architecture (2005) MA Arts Education (2010)</li> <li>▪ <b>Katrín Inga Jónsdóttir Hirt</b>, BA Fine Art (2008)</li> <li>▪ <b>Þorgerður Ólafsdóttir</b>, BA Fine Art (2009)</li> </ul>	Relation to IAA after graduation? Relevant jobs? Relevant education for their jobs?
12:45-13:10	Cafeteria	<b>Lunch</b> from the Laugarnes Cafeteria	Panel	
13:10-13:30	Room 053	<b>Meeting 11b:</b> Postgraduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Carmel Janette Seymor</b>, 2. year student, Dep. of Fine Art</li> <li>▪ <b>Droplaug Benediktsdóttir</b>, 2. year student, Dep. of Design and Architecture</li> <li>▪ <b>Fiona Mary Cribben</b>, 2. year student, Dep. of Design and Architecture</li> <li>▪ <b>Jiao Jiaoni</b>, 2. Year Dep. of Design and Architecture</li> <li>▪ <b>Linn Hanna Helena Björklund</b>, 2. year student, Dep. of Fine Art</li> <li>▪ <b>María Dalberg</b>, 1. year student, Dep. of Fine Art</li> <li>▪ <b>Rita</b>, MA Design</li> <li>▪ <b>Sólveig</b>, MA Fine Arts</li> </ul>	Students' views on their learning experience, students' input in quality development and strategic decision making + issues of research. Research based teaching? Research collaboration with academic staff, supervisors? How do the individual programmes function for the postgraduates?
13:30-14:00	Room 053	<b>Meeting 19:</b> Open meeting – students		Topics raised by students
14:00-14:30	Room 053	<b>Meeting 20:</b> Open meeting – staff		Topics raised by staff

14:30	Room 053	<b>Meeting 21:</b> Management Council and Steering group for RA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Fríða Björk Ingvarsdóttir</b>, Rector</li><li>▪ <b>Magnús Loftsson</b>, Managing Director</li><li>▪ <b>Rebekka Silvía Ragnarsdóttir</b>, Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.</li><li>▪ <b>Steinunn Knútsdóttir</b>, Dean Dep. of Performing Arts</li></ul>	Closing Meeting
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