



Newpark Music Centre

Institutional Review 2011

Self-Evaluation Report



## **Acknowledgements**

Newpark Music Centre would like to acknowledge the engagement and input of the *Self Evaluation Committee*, staff, learners, graduates and external stakeholders in the compilation of this report.

Newpark Music Centre, September 2011  
[www.newparkmusic.com](http://www.newparkmusic.com)



<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Objective 1 – Public Confidence</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 Introduction	9
1.2 Profile of Programmes and Activities	9
1.3 Staff Profile	13
1.4 Award Recognition	14
1.5 International Affiliations	15
1.6 Major Reviews	17
1.7 Provision of Information to the Public	18
<b>Objective 2 – Strategic Planning and Governance</b>	<b>19</b>
2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 Development of the Strategic Plan	20
2.3 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats	23
2.4 Governance and Management of the Music Centre	25
2.5 Implementation of Planning	28
2.6 Change of Director – Challenges and Opportunities	29
2.7 Committees and Management Structures	31
<b>Objective 3 – Quality Assurance</b>	<b>32</b>
Introduction	32
<b>Element 1 – Policies and Procedures for Quality Assurance</b>	<b>33</b>
E1.1 Quality Control Documents Manual	33
E1.2 Monitoring of Quality Assurance	33
E1.3 Changes to Quality Assurance Procedures	34
E1.4 Input Into Quality Assurance Procedures	35
<b>Element 2 – Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes</b>	<b>35</b>
E2.1 Programme Design and Approval	35
E2.2 Programme Monitoring	35
E2.3 Periodic Programme Review	37
<b>Element 3 – Assessment of Learners</b>	<b>38</b>
E3.1 Introduction	38
E3.2 Published Assessment Criteria, Assessment and Standards	38
E3.3 Development and Monitoring of Assessment Methods	39
E3.4 Examiners	39
E3.5 Examination Boards	40

E3.6	Administrative Procedures	40
E3.7	Provision for Appeal	40
<b>Element 4 – Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff</b>		<b>41</b>
E4.1	Staff Recruitment	41
E4.2	Appraisal of Teaching Staff	41
E4.3	Other Staff Related Procedures	41
E4.4	Professional Development	42
<b>Element 5 – Learning Resources and Learner Support</b>		<b>43</b>
E5.1	Physical Infrastructure	43
E5.2	Library Resources	43
E5.3	Learner Support	43
<b>Element 6 – Information Systems</b>		<b>45</b>
E6.1	Management Information Systems	45
E6.2	Data Gathering and Analysis	45
E6.3	Reports and Records	46
<b>Element 7 – Public Information</b>		<b>47</b>
E7.1	The Newpark Music Centre Website	47
<b>Objective 4 – National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), Access, Transfer and Progression</b>		<b>48</b>
4.1	Introduction – Newpark and the NFQ	48
4.2	Access	48
4.3	Learner Support	49
4.4	Recognition of Prior Learning and Transfer Mechanisms	49
4.5	International Transfer Agreements	51
4.6	Progression Opportunities	51
4.7	The Berklee Track – Special Consideration	52
<b>Objective 5 – Conclusions and Recommendations for Enhancement</b>		<b>53</b>
5.1	Public Confidence	53
5.2	Strategic Planning and Governance	54
5.3	Quality Assurance	55
5.4	NFQ, Access, Transfer and Progression	59

## **Introduction**

This is the Self Evaluation Report for the Institutional Review of Newpark Music Centre, 2011.

The SER is the culmination of the self-evaluation process conducted by the Music Centre, in accordance with HETAC guidelines. The SER was developed using input from the Self Evaluation Committee, staff, learners, graduates and external stakeholders.

The report is structured under the objectives of Institutional Review as detailed in the HETAC publication *Handbook for Institutional Review of Providers of Higher Education and Training*.

1. Public Confidence
2. Strategic Planning and Governance
3. Quality Assurance
4. National Qualifications Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression
5. Conclusions and Recommendations for Enhancement.

### **Newpark Music Centre – Background**

Newpark Music Centre was established in 1979 to provide music education facilities to the local community, originally consisting of classical instrumental and instrumental support lessons for school-going children and mature learners. In 1986 Newpark Music Centre became the first institution in Ireland to offer jazz tuition on a formalised basis with the establishment of the Jazz and Contemporary Music Department. Individual instrumental lessons to school children and mature learners and the Jazz Improvisation programme were the staples of the Jazz Department, and have continued to be an integral part of the Music Centre's activities to the present day.

Recognising the absence of non-classical music education at post-Leaving Certificate level, the college sought to address this with the introduction of the Professional Musician Training course in 1994. This was a one-year, non-accredited programme providing tuition in a variety of genres and styles. Over 200 learners completed the Professional Musician Training Course over its ten-year operation. The programme was discontinued in 2005, with the inception of the HETAC validated Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Jazz Performance (BAJP), a level 8 programme on the National Framework of Qualifications.

The first accredited programme offered by Newpark Music Centre was the Licentiate of the Guildhall School of Music (LGSM). A two-year diploma preparation programme, this was the first and only full-time programme in jazz performance in Ireland and was awarded by the London Guildhall School of Music and Drama. The LGSM ran from 1997 to 2005, when it was discontinued upon the inception of the BAJP.

Newpark Music Centre currently provides two full-time programmes, the BAJP and the Berklee Track. The BAJP was accredited by HETAC in 2005 and has grown from a target of 60 students across the four years of the programme to 79 enrolments for September 2011.

The Berklee Track is a two-year music performance programme, unique in Ireland in that it has a credit transfer to Berklee College of Music, Boston. There were 14 learners enrolled on the first year of the Berklee Track as of spring 2011.

Newpark Music Centre continues to provide a significant number of part-time instrumental and instrumental support lessons for children and mature learners. These include individual instrumental tuition, school curriculum music, theory and musicianship, group singing classes and jazz improvisation ensemble classes.

Newpark Music Centre became a limited company in 1996 and is a not for profit organization with charitable status (CHY 11925). The Music Centre is not in receipt of any public funding.

#### **Newpark Music Centre Mission Statement**

Our mission is to provide quality music education for children and adults, to strive for excellence while focusing on enjoyment, to train both recreational and professional musicians and to foster a love of music in both.



## **1. Objective 1**

**To enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by the institution and the standards of the awards made.**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The *Self Evaluation Committee (SEC)* identified a number of key areas in the Music Centre's activities, in conjunction with the *Key Issues for Institutions* identified in the HETAC institutional review documentation, that relate to the enhancement of public confidence. These came under the following categories:

- The key core activities of the Music Centre, both in part-time and full-time music education provision.
- The staff employed by the Music Centre and the selection processes.
- Award recognition by HETAC.
- The international affiliations of the Music Centre.
- The major review processes undergone by the Music Centre (programmatic and institutional review).
- The Music Centre's provision of information to the public.

There follows an analysis of the Music Centre's activities under each of the above headings. Conclusions and recommendations are made in the final chapter of this report.

### **1.2 Newpark Music Centre – A Profile of Programmes and Activities**

#### **1.2.1 Pioneers of Full-Time Jazz Education**

Central to the issue of public confidence is the status of Newpark Music Centre as the pioneering institution of non-classical (specifically jazz) full-time music education in Ireland.

Its *Professional Musician Training Course (PMTTC)* was originally established in 1994 in response to the dearth of post-Leaving Certificate non-classical music education.

Following this in 1997 with the development of the *LGSM (Licentiate of the Guildhall School of Music)* diploma in jazz performance, Newpark Music Centre became the first institution in Ireland to offer a full-time jazz education programme leading to a recognized award.

## The Bachelor of Arts in Jazz Performance (BAJP)

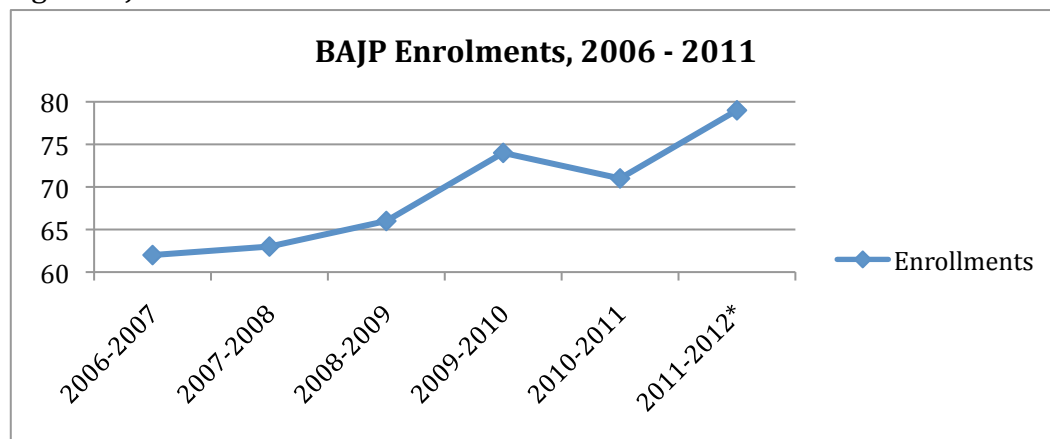
Following the college's successful submission to HETAC for the accreditation of a Level 8 honours degree programme, the Bachelor of Arts in Jazz Performance (BAJP) was launched in 2005.

The establishment of the programme further consolidated the Music Centre as the primary centre for jazz education in Ireland.

A key indicator of the strength of the programme can be seen in the growth experienced since its inception. The initial target set by the Music Centre was for 60 learners across the four stages of the programme; this has consistently been exceeded.

Learner enrolments are outlined in the diagram below. (Please note that in 1995 only the Award stage of the programme was operated, to learners who had previously secured the LGSM diploma and had completed a programme of bridging studies. 1995 is not, therefore included in the diagram.)

Fig.1 BAJP Enrolments 2006 - 2011



Newpark Music Centre is very proud of its international reputation as a provider of quality higher music education. This reputation is reflected by both the growth and level of international enrolment in the BAJP. For a provider the size of Newpark Music Centre, the college's international profile is significant both in terms of general public confidence, and long-term sustainability.

Fig.2 BAJP International Enrolments

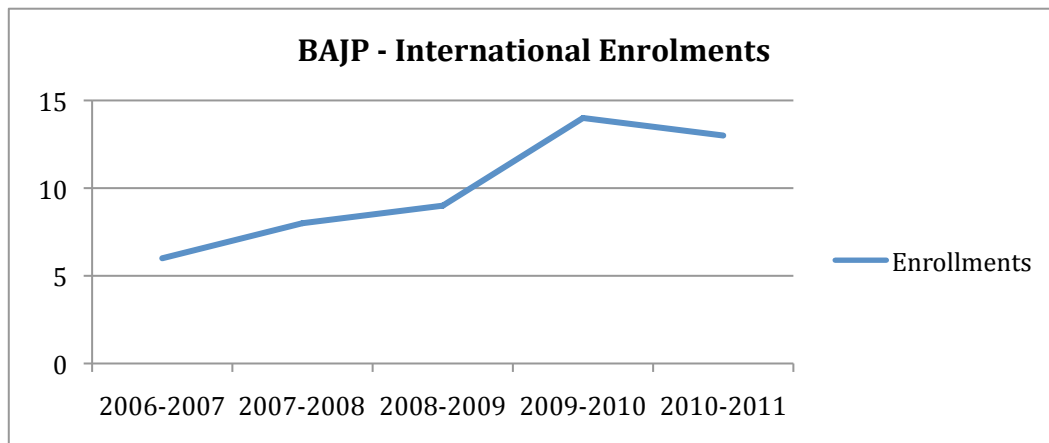
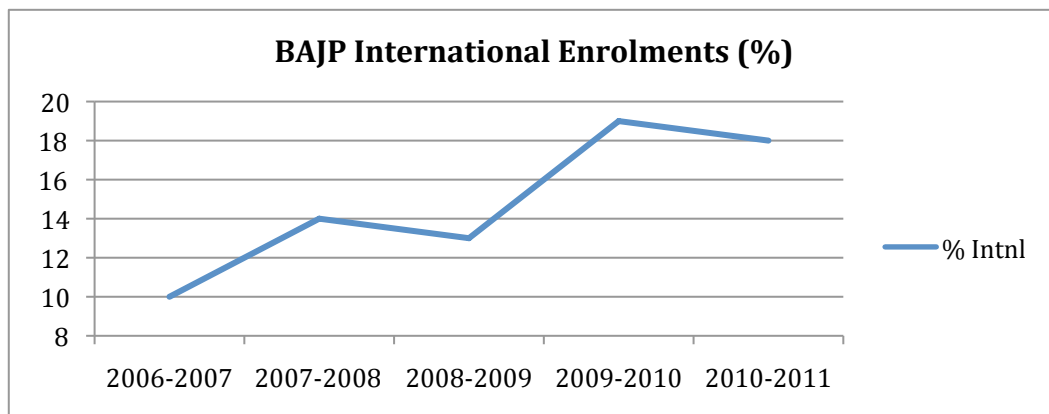


Fig.3 BAJP International Enrolments (%)



The Bachelor of Arts in Jazz Performance is, and will continue to be, the flagship programme of Newpark Music Centre. It remains the only programme of its kind in Ireland and fulfills its remit to provide an alternative to the conventional music degree.

The BAJP emerged well from the *Programmatic Review* process in 2010 (see below), securing re-accreditation until 2015, and is fundamental to the general public confidence in the institution.

### **The Berklee Track**

The Berklee Track is the second full-time programme offered by Newpark Music Centre, and is the culmination of the Music Centre's long-standing development with Berklee College of Music, Boston, and its membership of the *Berklee International Network (BIN)* (see below).

Unique in Ireland, the Berklee Track provides for the transfer of credits to Berklee College of Music's degree and diploma programmes. The Music Centre

intends to seek accreditation at Level 6 for the Berklee Track to commence September 2012 (see below). The Berklee Track currently provides the ATCL (Associate of Trinity College London) diploma to the Berklee Track graduates.

Berklee College of Music is the largest non-classical music college in the world and is widely recognised as the standard bearer for modern music education worldwide. Newpark Music Centre's association with Boston College is of the utmost importance in terms of public confidence in the organization and the college's reputation both domestically and internationally.

### **1.2.2 Part-Time Music Education – Rooted in the Community**

Newpark Music Centre has been an integral part of the community of south county Dublin for over 30 years. The Music Centre was originally established to provide “much needed” music education services in the local community, reflecting the dearth of such services at the time.

Learners attending the part-time programmes at the Music Centre are almost exclusively from the local catchment area of the school, in south county Dublin. The Music Centre also operates a cooperative programme with Newpark School: *School Links*.

The provision of part-time music instrumental and instrumental support classes has remained a core activity of the Music Centre over the last 30 years and the continuing strength of the Centre's activities in this area reflects the standing of the institution in the public mind

#### **Instrumental Tuition**

This is the core activity in the part-time programmes. As of spring 2011, 790 instrumental classes were given on a weekly basis.

#### **Pre-Instrumental Tuition – Gateway To Music**

*Gateway To Music* is a pre-instrumental music programme for 4-7 year olds. This has been one of the Music Centre's most successful programmes. It has a maximum capacity of 112 children, and is typically filled to this level.

#### **Theory and Musicianship**

Theory and Musicianship group classes provide valuable supports to instrumental tuition. (46 learners as of spring 2011)

#### **Junior and Leaving Certificate Preparation**

Preparation classes for learners taking Music for Junior and Leaving Certificate have been an area of growth for the Music Centre over the last number of years (60 learners)

## **Let's All Sing / Youth Choir**

Group singing is an activity that the Music Centre promotes as an entertaining and accessible way into music education. (42 learners)

## **Jazz Improvisation**

The Jazz Improvisation programme was initiated in 1986. It serves a preparation point for many learners accessing the full-time programmes. (27 Learners)

## **Additional Activities**

These include orchestras and ensembles (string, wind, recorder), regular student concerts and workshops and master-classes by internal and visiting experts. The Newpark Music Festival, a major classical music competition held annually, is open to entrants from all over Ireland, and does much to enhance the reputation of the institution outside of the jazz world.

### **1.3 Newpark Music Centre – Staff Profile**

Fundamental to both the general operational success of Newpark Music Centre, and public confidence in the is its team of highly qualified, skilled and dedicated teachers.

The Music Centre currently employs 72 part-time teaching staff. Of these, 27 are involved with teaching on the BAJP. The remainder are involved in teaching on the part-time, non-accredited programmes. There is some overlap, with teachers on the BAJP also teaching on the part-time programmes.

Both on the BAJP and on the part-time programmes, a strong value is placed both on the collegiate atmosphere of the Music Centre, and the accessibility of staff to the learners. This is commented on by both staff and learners in the context of inter-faculty, and learner-faculty relations.

The Music Centre has always believed it to be of the greatest importance that teachers, particularly on the BAJP, are active and expert performers in their own right. Only by using staff drawn from the professional music world can the goal of training professional performers be achieved. The value of this strategy has been borne out, both in feedback received from learners, and in the performance interactions between staff and learners.

In the recruitment of teaching faculty for the BAJP it is acknowledged that the previous absence of any formal and accredited jazz education in Ireland mitigates against the qualifications standards that would be typical in the classical music and international environment. Professional experience and

lifelong learning therefore play a critical role in the selection procedures for teaching staff on the BAJP.

### **1.3.1 Staff Selection and Child Protection**

#### **Child Protection**

Newpark Music Centre is committed to a child-centered approach to our work with children and young people. The Music Centre adheres to the policy: *Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, and has written and operates its own Child Protection Policy. This policy can be viewed on the college's website, and is included in the supplementary documentation with this report.

#### **Staff Selection and Garda Vetting**

Since 2009, all new employees have been required to complete a declaration form stating that there is no reason why they should not be involved in work with children, and are required to consent to the seeking of Garda clearance. From September 2011, the college is to seek Garda clearance for all staff working at the Music Centre, through our affiliation with the arts organization *Create*.

### **1.4 Award Recognition**

The recognition of the Bachelor of Arts in Jazz Performance as a HETAC accredited level 8 programme has been the most important milestone in the development of the Music Centre.

In terms of public confidence in the institution, no other event or affiliation has been so significant. While the Music Centre has always been confident in the quality of training that it has provided on its non-accredited programmes, the recognition of a major award enables the Music Centre to present itself on a level playing field with other institutions, both domestically and internationally.

Of particular significance is the recognition of an award in jazz, itself often seen as a niche area of music. In the decision making process of the learner embarking on a higher-level music education, confidence in an award is paramount. In providing a level 8 programme, the Music Centre not only trains the next generation of jazz performers, but also offers the same liberal arts education leading to the same progression possibilities as any other institution.

## **1.5 International Affiliations**

### **1.5.1 Berklee College of Music and The Berklee International Network**

#### **Background and Context**

As outlined above, Berklee College of Music, Boston, is the world's largest music school, one of its most famous, and one that has always been at the cutting edge of contemporary music education.

Newpark's association with Berklee dates back to 1996, when Berklee began and has since continued regular annual visits to the Music Centre to hold auditions and educational events, culminating in the formal incorporation of the Music Centre into the *Berklee International Network (BIN)* at the networks summit meeting in Kobe, Japan in 2004.

Newpark's membership of the *BIN* immediately increased the international profile of the institution. Not only was the Music Centre now affiliated to the largest music school in the world, but also to all of its 13 worldwide network members. ([www.berklee.edu/international/berkleeintlnetwork.html](http://www.berklee.edu/international/berkleeintlnetwork.html))

#### **Articulation and the Berklee Track**

Further to a process of curriculum alignment, the Music Centre signed an articulation agreement with Berklee College of Music in 2009. This allows for the credit transfer of Berklee core curriculum subjects from Newpark to Berklee, paving the way for the Berklee Track programme to be launched in September 2010, and facilitates a student transferring from Newpark to Berklee to complete a performance major degree programme in a further two years.

The Music Centre's affiliation to Berklee and the Berklee International Network is central to public confidence in the Music Centre on an international basis. The redirection of learners by Berklee to their partner schools (Berklee being greatly over-subscribed) not only provides a valuable recruitment tool, but also greatly enhances the reputation of the Music Centre on a worldwide basis.

### **1.5.2 The International Association of Schools of Jazz (IASJ)**

Newpark is a founder member of the International Association Of Schools of Jazz (IASJ).

The IASJ annual conferences have been invaluable for the school in that they have allowed our teachers to stay abreast of the latest developments in jazz education, and have provided the opportunity for our learners to measure themselves against international colleagues and also given them an opportunity to perform abroad. Future IASJ conferences are due to take place in Graz (2012),

Copenhagen (2013) and Cape Town (2014).

Membership of the IASJ has also given the Music Centre access to visiting teachers and lecturers of the highest international calibre, contributing greatly to the reputation of the institution as one of international significance.

### **1.5.3 International Rhythmic Studies Association (IRSA)**

Newpark is also a founder member of the International Rhythmic Studies Association (IRSA). IRSA is an organization dedicated to the sharing and dissemination of information and knowledge regarding the study of rhythm, particularly in regard to jazz, improvised, and other creative music.

Newpark Music Centre is recognized as a world leader in its teaching of rhythm and its involvement in IRSA is crucial to the maintenance of its position in the world of jazz education as an innovator in this area. In 2010, the IRSA annual conference was held in Newpark Music Centre.

### **1.5.4 European Modern Music Education Network (EMMEN)**

In 2010 Newpark Music Centre was invited to join the European Modern Music Education Network (EMMEN), a European network bringing together private institutions, schools and federations dedicated to education and training in the field of popular music.

Since April 2010, EMMEN, through the EPMQ (European Professional Music Qualification), provides musicians with a unique new means of validating their individual paths and measuring their adaptation to the current socio-professional environment. This Diploma will eventually become available to both students and graduates of Newpark. The next meeting of EMMEN in 2012 will take place in Newpark Music Centre.

### **1.5.5 International Exchange programmes**

Newpark Music Centre has exchange programmes with several schools around the world, including Fridhems Folkhogskola in Sweden.

The Music Centre also has credit transfer arrangements with fellow Berklee International Network schools in Brazil, Germany and Japan. How these work is more fully explained in the section on Access, Transfer and Progression of this document.



## **1.6 Major Reviews**

Of key significance to the objective of the enhancement of public confidence are the major review processes undergone by the Music Centre.

### **1.6.1 Programmatic Review of the Bachelor of Arts in Jazz Performance**

In 2010, the BAJP underwent a full programmatic review under the Quality Assurance mechanisms of the Music Centre and the criteria and guidelines of HETAC. The outcome of the programmatic review was successful, with re-accreditation secured for the programme until 2015. Greater detail on the general effectiveness of the review is discussed in this document under Objective 5, Quality Assurance.

The Self Evaluation Report for the programmatic review is published on the Music Centre's website, and the Music Centre was commended by HETAC for its management of the programmatic review process as a whole.

Given that the BAJP is the only HETAC accredited programme currently offered by the Music Centre, a successful outcome to the programmatic review was essential in terms of public confidence in the institution.

### **1.6.2 Institutional Review**

Clearly of great significance to the issue of public confidence will be the Institutional Review of Newpark Music Centre, currently underway.

Further to the successful outcome of the programmatic review of the BAJP, the Music Centre adopted a similar approach to the self-evaluation period of the institutional review process. This included the convening of a *Self Evaluation Committee* to examine the activities of the Music Centre under the objectives established by HETAC for institutional review. Consultation with stakeholders (learners, teaching and administrative staff, graduates, governing bodies, external stakeholders etc) formed a key element of the process, as did the programmatic review itself of the BAJP, given that many institutional issues were addressed by that process.

The *SEC* will also play a key role both in the preparations for the site visit in November 2011, the preparation of the response and implementation plan following the site visit, and in the implementation of recommendations themselves.

The Music Centre is committed to fully engaging with the institutional review process with the aim of constantly improving the level of service offered.

## **1.7 Provision of Information to the Public**

The Music Centre is committed to constantly improving the level of information provided to the public. The college recognises that the key portal to the institution is its website, and this is increasingly being used as the principal method of dissemination of information to the public.

### **Prospectus**

Print copies of prospectuses for both part-time and full-time programmes are available to the public on request. There has been a dramatic decrease in the numbers of hard copy prospectuses requested over the last five years, and the contents of all prospectuses are therefore mirrored on the website.

### **Newpark Music Centre Website**

The following documentation is published on the Newpark Music Centre website [www.newparkmusic.com](http://www.newparkmusic.com)

- Quality Control Documents Manual (QCD)
- Self Evaluation Report from programmatic review of the BAJP.
- Child Protection Policy

In addition, detailed information on all programmes, both full-time and part-time, offered by the Music Centre is given on the website.

A full breakdown of the BAJP is included on the website. This includes:

- General information
- Procedures for access, transfer and progression
- Information on the BAJP and the National Framework of Qualifications
- Year-by-year programme breakdown including programme schedule and assessment methodology.
- International student information
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for prospective applicants

Also included on the website are areas for the Music Centre's calendar of events, latest news, enrolment offers and other points of interest.

## **2. Objective 2**

### **Strategic Planning and Governance**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In the context of higher music education, Newpark Music Centre sees itself as an institution that will, in time, offer a suite of courses that cover many aspects of contemporary music making as they relate to the modern professional musician.

The Music Centre will be in a position to offer a range of programmes, from a foundation course in professional musicianship, to a master's degree in the specialised study of rhythm. The school prides itself on the fact that its courses are based on international best practice, and these standards are maintained through our international connections.

With the addition of new programmes, the Music Centre is determined that the standards already set in the BA and the Berklee Track will be maintained across the full range of its provision, that the institution will not only maintain its reputation as the principal centre for the training of professional musicians in the contemporary music world in Ireland, but will build on that and attract not only Irish students, but continue to grow as a destination for international students as well.

This section of the report outlines the strategic planning of the Music Centre, and examines this in the context of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats experienced in the current environment.

The governance and management of the Music Centre is then outlined, and the strategic planning information flow is demonstrated.

Under the special consideration identified in the Terms of Reference for the Music Centre's institutional review, the challenges and opportunities presented by the recent change of Director are examined, as are some of the committee structures in place at the institution.

## **2.2 Development of the Strategic Plan**

### **2.2.1 Phase 1 – Towards Level 8 Provision (1994-2005)**

The initial phase of the Music Centre's development of higher music education provision began with the launch of the Professional Musician Training Course (PMTC) in 1994, and culminated with the securing of accreditation and launch of the Bachelor of Arts in Jazz Performance (BAJP) in 2005.

Ever since the founding of the Jazz and Contemporary Music Department at the Music Centre in 1986, the goal of providing full-time jazz and jazz-related education was a central part of the Music Centre's plan, though at that time it was unclear as to how this might come about within the educational structures of the time.

The PMTC exploited a clear gap in the market; that of post-Leaving Certificate non-classical music training, though the provision of an unaccredited programme was not ideal for obvious reasons.

The development of the relationship with the London Guildhall School of Music and the subsequent provision of the LGSM diploma preparation programme was a major step forward in terms of jazz education in Ireland in that it provided the only full-time programme leading to a major award. It also provided a progression route to learners completing the PMTC and wishing to continue their studies towards a recognised qualification.

Notwithstanding the success of the PMTC and LGSM programmes, the long-term goal of the Music Centre had always been the provision of a degree programme in jazz performance. Subsequent to initial contacts and exploratory meetings with HETAC in 2003, it became clear to the college that seeking accreditation through that body for a Level 8 BA in Jazz Performance was the preferred avenue towards the achievement of this objective.

### **2.2.2 Phase 2 – The BAJP and the Berklee Track (2009-2013)**

Running parallel to the development of the BAJP was the ongoing relationship with Berklee College of Music, the Music Centre's joining of the Berklee International Network, the development of the articulation agreement with the Boston college, and the subsequent development and launch of the Berklee Track.

It was during the development stages of the Berklee Track that the planning of the next phase of the Music Centre's activities took shape, resulting in the strategic goal of a three-programme suite by 2013. This was presented to the Board of Directors at the 2010 AGM and adopted as the next phase of the Music Centre's higher education provision.

The programme structure is envisaged as follows:

1. The Berklee Track (Level 6)
2. The BA in Jazz Performance (Level 8)
3. Masters in Rhythm Studies (Level 9)

### **Berklee Track**

The Music Centre aims to secure accreditation for the Berklee Track at level 6 during the 2011-2012 academic year. This will consolidate the programme in both the Irish and international market, provide improved transfer and progression opportunities for the learners enrolled on the programme, and provide improved access to the BAJP.

It is anticipated that after securing accreditation for the Berklee Track, there will be enrolments of 30-40 students across the two years of the programme.

### **BAJP**

The BAJP will continue to be the flagship programme of the Music Centre with anticipated enrolment of 75-85 students across the 4 years of the programme. The Berklee Track will provide improved access to the programme, as will the ongoing and developing international relationships forged by the Music Centre.

The development of the Masters in Rhythm Studies (see below) will provide a quality and logical progression route to graduates of the BAJP in a domestic market limited in choice with regard to provision in related disciplines.

### **MA in Rhythm Studies**

Planned as a one-year taught, plus one-year research programme, the MA in Rhythm Studies will provide a logical extension to the innovative Rhythm Studies module that forms an integral part of the BAJP. Indeed the area of the study of Rhythm is one for which the Music Centre has become renowned internationally, and one which led directly to the foundation of the International Rhythmic Studies Association (IRSA).

There is no programme of this type available in any school, conservatory or university in any country, so we anticipate that the demand for such a programme will be high, from both national and international students.

Enrolment is predicted at 18-25 students across the two years of the programme.

## **Resources**

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the issue of space is central to the development plans of the Music Centre.

During the planning stages of the Berklee Track, the acquisition of additional space was identified as fundamental to the development of the Music Centre's higher education strategy. As a result, available space was sourced and rented on the premises of the Harold School, Glasthule, Co. Dublin.

In summer 2011, further space in the form of 3 large teaching rooms, with support facilities became available on the same premises, and this has now been secured by the Music Centre.

The next available space in the Harold School represents the most significant opportunity for the Music Centre in that there are a further 6 teaching rooms, as well as sufficient space for a coffee shop / recreational area, instrument storage, administrative support etc.

It is anticipated that in acquiring this space by September 2013, it will then be possible to relocate the entire Jazz and Contemporary Music Department to the location in the Harold School.

### **2.2.3 Phase 3 – Expansion of Provision (2013-2018)**

With the necessary space acquired, and administrative support structures in place, the Music Centre anticipates the expansion of programme provision into a variety of areas.

#### **Hybrid Performance Degree**

The Music Centre is very interested in developing a new type of hybrid performance degree, one that will combine elements of both classical and jazz disciplines. The idea of this is that musicians from both disciplinary backgrounds will have access to training they would not normally receive in their own disciplines.

#### **Film Score and Commercial Writing Programme**

The BAJP at Newpark has a very strong compositional and arranging element as part of its main structure and proposes an undergraduate programme in this area. Many learners become very interested in this area but have little opportunity to develop their skills in a structured way after they graduate from the programme. There are many film scoring and commercial writing courses available in the United States, but none in this country.

## 2.3 Newpark Music Centre – SWOT Analysis

In developing the strategic plan for the Music Centre, it is helpful to examine the Music Centre’s core Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in the context of the current environment.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme quality</li> <li>• Committed, enthusiastic and accessible teaching and administrative staff</li> <li>• Only provider of jazz education countrywide</li> <li>• International connections</li> <li>• Pioneering approach to jazz education</li> <li>• Established school with 30 years of experience</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical infrastructure and resources</li> <li>• Reliance on part-time teaching staff</li> <li>• Over reliance on a small number of core personnel</li> <li>• Overstretched administrative system</li> <li>• Entirely fee generated income limits growth</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth potential of Berklee Track as Level 6 programme</li> <li>• Development of MA in Rhythm studies</li> <li>• Expansion into new facility – further development of programmes</li> <li>• Development of international relationships providing greater opportunities for access, transfer and progression.</li> <li>• Collaboration with other Irish institutions (Hybrid Performance Degree).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevailing economic situation</li> <li>• Increased competition</li> </ul>

### Strengths

The core strengths of the Music Centre have essentially been discussed in section 1 of this report under the issue of public confidence.

### Weaknesses

The physical infrastructure and resources at the disposal of the Music Centre present the single largest challenge to its development, coupled with the financial limitations imposed by entirely fee-generated income.

The issue of space and facilities is being addressed through the acquisition of the additional space in the Harold School, with the previously stated goal of the relocation of all full-time programmes to that facility.

The exclusive use of part-time teaching staff is currently a financial necessity, but can lead to fragmentation of the teaching timetable. However, it should be noted that the teaching staff are frequently commended both anecdotally, and in structured fashion such as student evaluation reports and focus groups. Additionally, teaching staff consistently report Newpark Music Centre as an enjoyable and rewarding work environment, with a positive collegiate atmosphere and supportive environment.

Though recently improved, and with further improvements in place for 2011-2012, the Music Centre has in the past relied on a very small core of key management and administrative personnel. This has led to significant strains at an operational level as the activities of the organisation have increased without the administrative structures keeping pace. The additional administrative structures are further discussed below.

### **Opportunities**

The opportunities for the Music Centre have largely been discussed in the outlining of the strategic plan above.

### **Threats**

Without doubt, the greatest threat to the sustainability of the Music Centre's activities is the prevailing economic situation. However, it should be noted that to date, demand has remained strong, and full-time programme enrolments for September 2011 have risen significantly, with an anticipated enrolment of 99 learners across all years of both programmes.

However, given the dual nature of the Music Centre's activities, covering both part-time non-accredited, and full-time higher education, the potential exists for a downturn in either area negatively affecting the other.

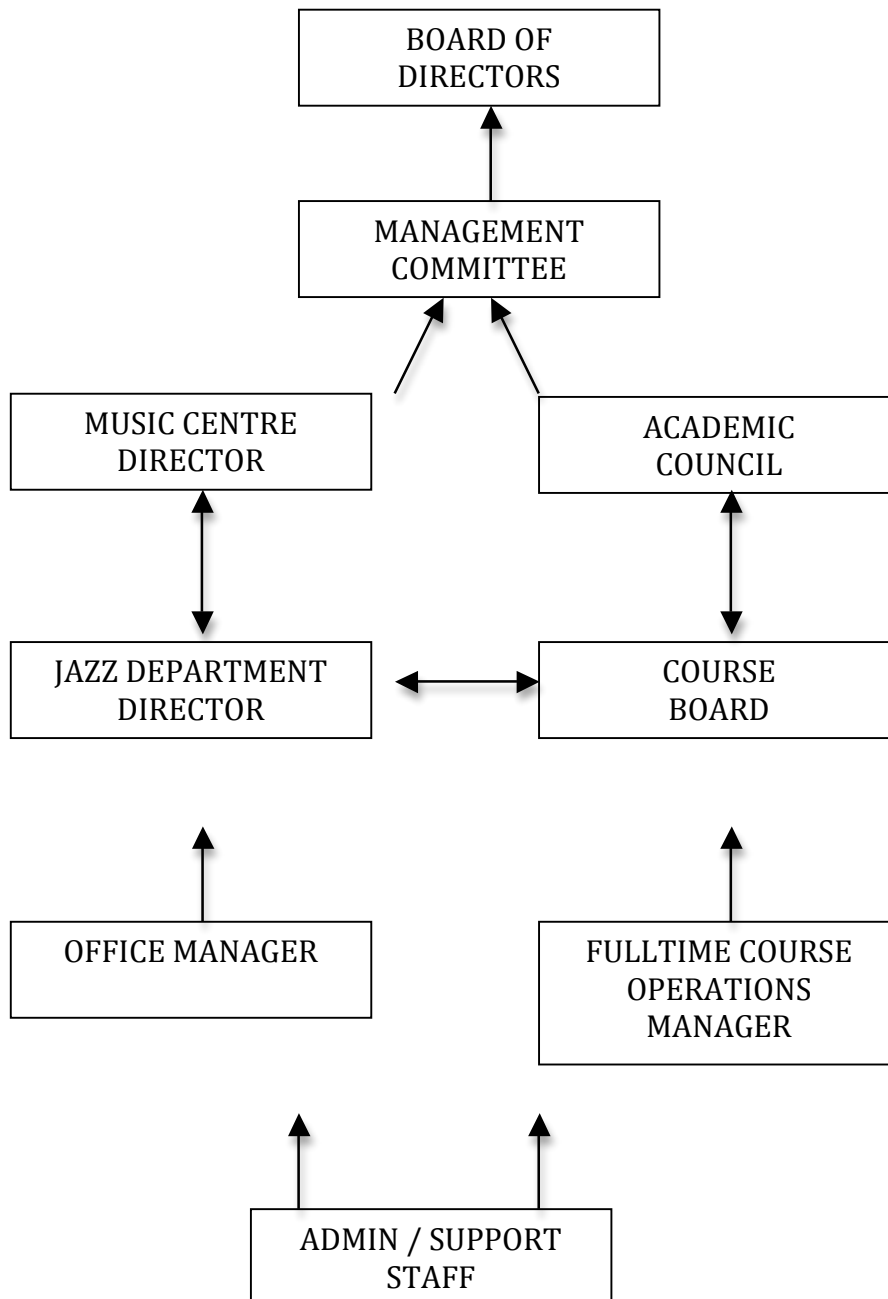
The recent entry into the Irish market of a large UK based music education provider is a cause for concern, though as of yet it is difficult to assess the impact that this may have on the operations of the Newpark Music Centre.



## 2.4 Governance and Management of the Music Centre

Newpark Music Centre is a company limited by guarantee and is a not for profit organisation with charitable status (CHY 11925).

The diagram below illustrates the current governance and management structures currently in place at Newpark Music Centre.



### **2.4.1 The Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors oversees Newpark Music Centre as a whole and as required by legislation and the articles of association of the company. The Board of Directors is currently comprised of six members and meets annually for the AGM of the Music Centre. The Board of Directors may meet more frequently when required, for example during the process leading to the recent change of Director.

The principal duties carried out by the Board of Directors with regard to the day-to-day running of the school are:

- Conduct of AGM
- Passing of annual accounts
- Setting administrative salaries
- Ratifying major expenditure
- Major policy decisions
- Overseeing strategic plan of the Music Centre

### **2.4.2 The Management Committee**

The Management Committee is a body delegated by the Board of Directors to oversee the day-to-day running of the Music Centre.

The following positions are held on the Management Committee:

1. The Company Secretary (Board of Directors)
2. The Music Centre Director
3. The Jazz and Contemporary Music Department Director
4. Representative from the Board of Directors
5. Two staff representatives from Newpark Music Centre
6. Head of the Newpark Comprehensive School Music Department

The duties of the Management Committee include:

- Strategic planning and policy development
- Approval of teachers' rates of pay
- Approval of expenditure
- Employee issues
- Customer issues
- Ongoing monitoring of activities

### **2.4.3 The Academic Council**

The Academic Council is appointed by the Management Committee to oversee the general academic development and direction of the Music Centre. Current permanent members of the Academic Council are:

1. Music Centre Director
2. Jazz and Contemporary Music Department Director
3. External representative
4. Senior staff representative

Other individuals may take temporary seats on the Academic Council where additional expertise on particular issues is deemed necessary.

The duties of the Academic Council include:

- Overseeing of academic policy of the Music Centre
- Development of new courses and academic initiatives
- Maintenance of the central academic ethos of the Music Centre
- Monitoring and revision of existing courses
- Approving updates to Quality Assurance procedures
- Staff development initiatives
- Student development initiatives

### **2.4.4 The Course Board**

The Course Board is comprised of the Music Centre Director, Jazz Department Director, and the Instrumental, Ensemble, Jazz Skills and Berklee Track coordinators. The three non-executive coordinators are drawn from the teaching staff.

The Course Board is responsible for the general overseeing of the full-time programmes offered by the Music Centre, and most of their day-to-day management. The duties of the Course Board include the following:

- Monitoring of programmes through regular scheduled Course Board meetings and review meetings with the Music Centre Director
- Monitoring and maintenance of academic standards
- Monitoring of course resources and equipment
- Implementation of the institutions QA procedures
- Regular programme evaluation in accordance with the QA procedures of the institution
- Maintenance of course records
- Quality Control System Audits
- Learner concerns
- Staff concerns

## **2.4.5 Administrative Personnel**

The following administrative personnel are currently employed by the Music Centre.

1. Director (F/T)
2. Jazz and Contemporary Music Department Director (P/T)
3. Office Manager (F/T)
4. BAJP / Berklee Track Operations Manager (F/T)
5. Receptionist / Administrator (F/T)
6. Evening / Weekend Admin / Caretaking (P/T) x 2

From August 2011, a further part-time position has been established in response to the recent change of Director, as noted in the terms of reference for this institutional review. Further details of this position are outlined below.

## **2.5 Implementation of Planning**

The general information flow concerning the implementation of planning is outlined below.

### **2.5.1 The Jazz and Contemporary Department Director**

The primary driving force behind the vision of Newpark Music Centre as a provider of higher education, from the foundation of the Jazz and Contemporary Music Department, through the development of the first full-time programmes to the accreditation of the BAJP has been the Director of the Jazz and Contemporary Music Department, Ronan Guilfoyle.

### **2.5.2 The Newpark Music Centre Director**

At each stage of the development of the full-time programmes, the essential feasibility of proposals is discussed between the Jazz Department Director and the Music Centre Director. At this stage the Director prepares draft budgets based on projected enrolments, general logistics and resources are examined, and the incorporation of the proposed developments into the overall plan for the Music Centre is assessed.

### **2.5.3 The Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is responsible, among other things, for the general overseeing of the strategic plan for the Music Centre. Approval for the general plan, and for major specific developments in the plan is sought from the Board of Directors by the Director of the Music Centre.

### **2.5.4 The Management Committee**

The Management Committee, as delegated by the Board of Directors, monitor the ongoing activities of the Music Centre in general.

In terms of the implementation of strategic planning, the Management Committee adopts an overseeing role, approving and monitoring developments in planning, and ratifying general middle grade expenditure relating to ongoing developments.

### **2.5.5 The Academic Council and The Course Board**

The Academic Council and Course Board have important roles in terms of the development and ongoing monitoring of programmes, though these bodies tend to be involved in the implementation of approved plans rather than in the planning stages themselves.

Further details on the activities of the Academic Council and the Course Board are outlined in the conclusions and recommendations at the end of this report.

## **2.6 The Change of Director – Challenges and Opportunities**

### **2.6.1 Background**

In February 2011, the Director of the Music Centre, Nigel Flegg, gave notice to the Board of Directors of his intention to stand down from his position at the end of July 2011, having been in the position for a decade.

### **2.6.2 Challenges**

A number of discussion meetings were held between the outgoing director and the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, culminating in a meeting of the Board of Directors on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March.

In addition to the necessary recruitment procedures for the new Director, the following issues were raised:

1. The Music Centre has grown significantly during the tenure of the outgoing Director. The position has grown with the organisation, but the degree to which the position has been developed “on the job”, and relies on experiential knowledge, presents serious challenges to an incoming Director.
2. The incoming Director will be entering an organisation at an important stage of development in terms of strategic planning. The necessity to progress the Music Centre at this time denies the possibility of much of a “bedding in” period.
3. The Music Centre is currently undergoing the process of Institutional Review. However, it is noted that the outgoing Director has committed to the preparation of the Self Evaluation Report and will be available, at minimum, for the site visit of the review panel.
4. The rapid growth of the organisation has already put strain on its administrative and management structures, with certain areas in need of greater attention than currently being afforded.

The outgoing Director recommended that the Board of Directors consider an additional part-time position to both ease the transition period with the incoming Director, and to address certain important areas within the organisation.

The outgoing Director offered his services in the above capacity should the Board of Directors wish to consider him for it.

### **2.6.3 Opportunities**

At a subsequent meeting with members of the Board of Directors on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June it was agreed that the outgoing Director be offered a part-time position on a one-year contract to commence September 2011.

This position will have specific areas of responsibility primarily relating to procedural matters including:

- Management of Institutional Review
- Monitoring and updating of Quality Assurance procedures
- Seeking accreditation for the Berklee Track at Level 6
- Providing ongoing support to the new Director

This new position presents a significant opportunity for the Music Centre in that it not only will ease the period of transition for the new Director, but will also address ongoing issue of significant importance to the organisation.

## **2.7 Committees and Management Structures**

As mentioned in the special consideration attached to the Strategic Planning objective of this review, Newpark Music Centre is currently engaged in a review of the committee structures in place since the inception of the college as a limited company.

The Music Centre became a limited company in 1996, and the original system of a Board of Directors delegating authority to a Management Committee has been in place since then.

The Board representation on the Management Committee provides for the necessary checks and balances to be carried out with regard to the ongoing monitoring of the Music Centre's activities.

The Board of Directors is examining whether the current system of a single AGM is sufficient to capture an accurate picture of a rapidly changing environment. However, it should be noted that the Board of Directors do hold additional meetings as required, for example during planning stages prior to the recent change of Director.

### 3. Objective 3

#### Quality Assurance

##### Introduction

This section of the Self Evaluation Report assesses the effectiveness of the quality assurance arrangements operated by Newpark Music Centre.

The quality assurance (QA) procedures in place at the Music Centre were initially agreed with HETAC in 2004, and are detailed in the centre's Quality Control Documents manual (QCD).

The QCD was developed following consultation with HETAC and other external advisors, and benchmarked against examples of best practice in institutions of similar size. The manual reflects Newpark Music Centre's commitment to excellence in the field of quality assurance, and is as such, considered a draft document, in that it may be updated where required, and as dictated by developments in the industry or as a result of internal and / or external review.

The Music Centre has also developed a Teachers' Handbook, which though predominantly aimed towards work practices in the part-time, non-accredited programmes, also overlaps with procedures and practices outlined in the QCD.

Additionally, the college has developed a Child Protection Policy, in line with industry best practice and the guidelines detailed in the document *Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*.

This section is organised under the seven elements of the *European Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance within Higher Education Institutions*.

The procedures relating to each of the seven elements are outlined, and their effectiveness is assessed. Conclusions and recommendations for future improvements are outlined in the final section of this report.



## **Element 1 – Policy and Procedures for Quality Assurance**

### **E1.1 Quality Control Documents Manual (QCD)**

The Music Centre's Quality Control Documents Manual (QCD), published on the Music Centre's website, was developed as the result of a collaborative process between the Music Centre Director, Jazz Department Director, Course Board, HETAC and other external advisors.

The content of the QCD can broadly be broken down into five principal areas:

1. Monitoring and management of QA procedures
2. Programme development, monitoring and review
3. Learner related procedures (including assessment)
4. Staff related procedures
5. Administrative procedures

### **E1.2 Monitoring of Quality Assurance**

#### **E1.2.1 The Role of the Course Board**

The Course Board has a fundamental role in the monitoring of the effectiveness of the QA procedures operated by the college. The Course Board is the body with the closest contact with the programme as a whole and is uniquely positioned to interface with learners (given that all but one member of the Course Board are teachers on the full-time programmes), other staff members and the administrative support team.

#### **Informal Contact**

The Music Centre maintains a high level of informal contact between the teaching staff and the learners. This allows the organisation to respond quickly to issues arising on a day-to-day basis.

#### **Regular Meetings**

QA monitoring is formally addressed on an ongoing basis at the regular meetings of the Course Board. It is these meetings that have generally provided the best platform for quality, programme and general systems review.

Input from learners, teaching staff and administrative personnel provides critical information to the Course Board meetings.

### **E1.2.2 Internal QA Audit**

The Course Board conducts the annual audit of the Music Centre's quality assurance procedures, incorporating information arising out of the regular Course Board meetings, input from teaching and administrative staff, learners (both informal, through the use of focus groups, and through the student course evaluation reports), external examiners and other relevant stakeholders.

### **E1.2.3. The Academic Council**

The Academic Council oversees the Music Centre's QA procedures. Where the Course Board identifies and recommends updates to the QCD, these are presented to the Academic Council for ratification. The Academic Council then decides whether a particular amendment merits consultation with HETAC, or whether it may be implemented directly.

### **E1.3 Changes to QA procedures**

A number of changes have been made to the QA procedures as the result of internal monitoring and audits.

#### **Changes Following HETAC Consultation**

After the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the operation of all four years of the BAJP in 2007 certain amendments were considered necessary. Clarification was sought from HETAC concerning:

1. The correct procedures to make amendments to the QCD.
2. Procedures for the provision of alternate assessment to learners missing an element of continuous assessment in an ensemble based class.

#### **Other Changes to QCD**

1. Updating of recruitment procedures to incorporate Child Protection policy etc.
2. Alteration to composition of audition panels.
3. Provision for late applications.
4. Clarification of BAJP entry requirements.
5. Amalgamation and clarification of QA monitoring procedures to avoid confusion.
6. Inclusion of procedure for the election of learner representatives.
7. Provision for twice-yearly equipment inventory audit.
8. Update of staff development to include new pedagogy workshops.
9. Inclusion of clause noting adherence to *Assessment and Standards*.
10. Inclusion of procedure for external examiners based on *Effective Practice for External Examining (HETAC 2010)*

11. Update of procedure for Attendance Monitoring to define role of Course Board.
12. Inclusion of certain procedures already in the Music Centre's *Teachers' Handbook* i.e.:
  - a. Grievance Procedures
  - b. Disciplinary Procedures
  - c. Harassment and Bullying Policy
  - d. Stress Management Policy
13. Inclusion of procedure for the monitoring and review of office and administrative systems.

#### **E1.4 Input Into QA Procedures**

Examples of the various stakeholders of the Music Centre providing input into the above developments of QA procedures are:

**Learners** – Items 6 and 7

**Staff** – Items 8 and 13

**Industry** – Item 12

### **Element 2 – Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes**

#### **E2.1 Programme Design and Approval**

The procedure for the design and approval of new programmes is detailed in the Music Centre's QA procedures (QCD 3). This procedure was followed throughout the development of the BAJP, culminating in submission to HETAC and subsequent approval of the programme.

A similar procedure was followed with regard to the development of the Berklee Track, though principal consultation was with Berklee College itself, given the nature of the programme.

#### **E2.2 Programme Monitoring**

Primary responsibility for the ongoing monitoring of the BAJP and other full-time programmes lies with the Course Board.

The Course Board uses input from a wide variety of sources, including:

- Feedback, both formal and informal, from learners, teaching and administrative staff.
- Information from the Course Boards own meetings.
- Feedback from external examiners.
- Feedback from other stakeholders.
- International networks and affiliations.
- HETAC

## **Implementing Minor Change**

Where the Course Board identifies an area for improvement in existing programmes, it may initiate minor change directly.

There follows a summary of changes made during the initial years of the BAJP, principally in the area of programme support services. Further detail on these changes is outlined in the Self Evaluation Report for the programmatic review of the BAJP (Section 6.1.2)

1. *Sunday Rehearsal*
2. *Preparatory Concerts for Award Stage Learners*
3. *Learner Exchange Programme*
4. *Library Agreement with RIAM*
5. *Approved Style Ensemble Feedback*
6. *Large Ensemble Initiative (Afro-Cuban Big Band, Konnekol Choir)*
7. *Monitoring of Ensembles By Instrumental Teachers*

## **Implementing Programme Change Outside Scheduled Review**

Where a requirement to the modification of a programme itself is identified and considered to be of an urgent nature, the Course Board may recommend that the issue is dealt with without waiting for the next programmatic review.

For example, in 2007 consultation took place with HETAC, and a rationale for modifications to the BAJP proposed by the Course Board was submitted, having been considered sufficiently urgent to be implemented immediately. The details of these changes are detailed in the document *Proposed Amendments to Bachelor of Arts in Jazz Performance Programme Schedule (2007)*. In summary, these modifications were:

1. The introduction of *Approved Style Ensemble* into stages 1-3 (it already existed in stage 4).
2. Alterations to the division of marks in the *Ensemble* and *Approved Style Ensemble* modules.
3. The introduction of *Composition* into stage 2 (it existed as a subject in stages 1,3 & 4).

The proposed modifications to the programme were approved by HETAC and were in place for the 2008-2009 academic year. The programme saw a significant improvement in terms of structure and continuity as a direct result of these modifications.

### **E2.3 Periodic Programme Review**

The format for the periodic review of programmes is detailed in QCD 6 of the Music Centre's quality assurance manual. This procedure, in consultation with HETAC, formed the framework for the recent programmatic review of the BAJP in 2010. The documentation relating to the programmatic review is included in the supplementary documentation to this report.

The programmatic review involved both internal and external evaluation and consisted of the following phases:

#### **Self-Evaluation and Production of Self Evaluation Report (SER).**

- Establishment of terms of reference for review
- Setting of objectives
- Stakeholder consultation
- Production of SER

#### **Site Visit by the Peer Review Group (PRG)**

- Examination of SER
- Consultation with management, staff, learners and graduates
- Delivery of report and recommendations

#### **Response and Implementation Plan**

- Music Centre prepared response and implementation plan.
- Addressed recommendations from the PRG as detailed in its report
- Established timelines for the implementation of recommendations, and the rationale where a recommendation was not adopted.
- Detailed the integration of the accepted programme changes into the programme schedule and the operations of the Music Centre in general.

#### **Submission to HETAC**

- Submitted to HETAC for approval.
- Accreditation for the BAJP renewed until 2015.
- The Music Centre was commended by HETAC for its conduct of the review.

#### **Progress Monitoring**

- Progress of the response and implementation plan is monitored by the Course Board on a regular basis.

Conclusions and recommendations arising from the programmatic review are outlined in the final section of this report.

## **Element 3 – Assessment of Learners**

### **E3.1 Introduction**

The assessment of learners on a music performance programme presents certain challenges. The Music Centre has always been very clear that the organisation's focus in terms of higher education is to produce professional, competent and employable music performers. The assessment methods utilised at the Music Centre are designed and implemented with this commitment to performance in mind.

Three principal modes of assessment are employed:

1. Practical / Performance Exams
2. Written Exams / Essays
3. Continuous Assessment

### **E3.2 Published Assessment Criteria – Assessment and Standards**

The Music Centre's QA procedures provide the framework for the implementation, regulations and conduct of assessment and examinations:

- Methods of assessment employed by the Music Centre
- Procedures for assessment and conduct of examinations
- Provision for alternate assessment in the case of illness / bereavement etc.
- Procedure for appeals, recheck and review.
- Assessment preparation and storage.
- Assessment timetabling.
- External Examiners

### **Programme Content and Methodology of Assessment**

The Music Centre has adopted the guidelines and procedures detailed in the document *Assessment and Standards (HETAC – 2009)*.

The programme content, assessment methodology, learning objectives and outcomes of the BAJP is published in the document *Programme Content and Methodology of Assessment* (included in the supplementary documentation to this report).

This document is included in the information given to all learners at the commencement of each stage of the programme. It is also published on the Music Centre website, and available in hard copy from the office.

### **E3.3 Development and Monitoring of Assessment Methods**

#### **Development**

The development of the assessment methods used in the full-time programmes at the Music Centre formed an integral part of the original programme design. Consultation took place with the programme development advisory group and international best practice was examined to ensure that the assessment methods equalled or surpassed those used internationally.

#### **Ongoing Monitoring**

The monitoring of assessment methods and procedures is ongoing, and incorporates input from staff, learners and external examiners:

1. *Course Board* – The Course Board monitors the assessment methods and procedures “on the ground”. These are also reviewed as part of the annual programme review process.
2. *External Examiners* – External examiners provide an important role in the monitoring of standards, and in the benchmarking of assessment both domestically and internationally.
3. *Programmatic Review* – The assessment methods and procedures at the Music Centre were examined under the programmatic review of the BAJP.

### **E3.4 Examiners**

#### **Internal Examiners**

Internal examiners are drawn from the teaching staff at the Music Centre and are experts in the fields in which they are assessing.

All assessments involving performance are recorded in audio format and archived on to a hard-drive at the Music Centre. This drive is also backed up externally. All ensemble-based exams involve at least two examiners.

#### **External Examiners**

External examiners are integral to assessment on the full-time programmes at the Music Centre. The college has been fortunate in procuring external examiners of the highest calibre.

External examiners have provided valuable feedback on both the assessment methods used, and on the programme as a whole. For example, in 2009, feedback led directly to the implementation of two new initiatives for the following academic year: the preparatory *Ensemble* performances and “mock” examinations for *Instrumental Skills and Approved Styles*. Both have subsequently received positive feedback from learners, teachers and the external examiner himself.

The Music Centre is delighted that our external examiners consistently give positive feedback on the assessment methods used.

*“The actual attainment of learners at this institution is excellent. The standard of attainment is comparable to any programme that I have observed internationally. The assessment procedure is very rigorous and comprehensive, with amongst the largest amount of assessment that I have observed in Europe. This ensures that students who complete the programme have more than a degree award; they have the skills to pursue their chosen profession. I found the students on the whole to be perceptive, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic.” – Scott Stroman (External Examiner’s Report 2011)*

### **E3.5 Examination Boards**

Examination Board meetings are held in accordance with HETAC’s guidelines, and are attended by internal and external examiners, and previously by HETAC representatives.

The Course Board also holds informal meetings in advance of Exam Board meetings with internal and external examiners when and if required. The aim of these informal meetings prior to the Exam Board meeting is to allow the Exam Board to focus on the overall grades of the learners rather than to address individual assessment issues.

However, where a broader issue arises, this will be discussed at the Exam Board meeting and referred to the Course Board for further investigation.

### **E3.6 Administrative Procedures**

Administrative procedures are in place to ensure the secure storage of all material relating to assessment, the successful conduct of examinations, and the processing of results.

All examination material is securely stored in the Music Centre office prior and subsequent to the examinations taking place. This material is archived and stored securely for the required period. All soft copy of material relating to assessments is stored on a secure area of the Music Centre’s computer server. The input of results into the exam broadsheets is verified and cross-checked by two members of the administrative team prior to the generation of results sheets and submission to HETAC.

### **E3.7 Provision for Appeal**

The Music Centre has a procedure for the appeal, recheck and review of assessment results. This includes provision for an informal *post-mortem* of an examination or assessment. The majority of queries are addressed at this stage, and the development of a query into a full review of an examination is rare.



## **Element 4 – Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff**

Newpark Music Centre is committed to the recruitment and employment of teaching staff of the highest calibre across the full range of programmes.

The Music Centre recognises that the teachers are the most important resource for our students. Of particular importance to music education is the role of the individual instrumental teacher.

### **E4.1 Staff Recruitment**

The procedures for the recruitment of teaching staff are detailed in the QA procedures of the college (QCD 10).

Teachers are selected on the basis of qualifications, experience and general suitability. The Music Centre prides itself on the recruitment of active musicians on to the teaching staff, particularly on to the full-time programmes. Feedback from learners regularly cites the ongoing performance activities of the teaching staff as a highly positive element to the learner / teacher dynamic.

### **E4.2 Appraisal of Teaching Staff**

Methods for appraisal of teaching staff include:

- Learner and graduate feedback, either informal or through Course Evaluation Reports.
- Prompt following up on complaints.
- Examination results.
- Feedback from internal and external examiners.
- Output from Programmatic Review

Where a problem is notified or identified with the performance of a particular teacher, this is acted on quickly and discreetly.

It was decided as a result of the QA audit 2011 that external consultation should take place with regard to industry best practice in respect of teacher performance appraisal, and an amended system be developed.

### **E4.3 Other Staff Related Procedures**

The Music Centre also has the following procedures for staff related matters:

1. Disciplinary Procedure
2. Grievance Procedure
3. Harassment and Bullying Policy
4. Stress Management Policy

Through a policy of dealing with issues informally, quickly and with sensitivity, the Music Centre has to date avoided the formal implementation of any of the above procedures.

#### **E4.4 Professional Development**

##### **General Initiatives**

Recognising the importance of ongoing professional development for the Music Centre's teaching staff, all staff are encouraged to attend the many workshops and clinics that take place over the course of the academic year. Where a workshop replaces or substitutes for a scheduled class, the teacher of the normally scheduled class is required to attend the workshop.

From 2011, there will be a minimum of two workshops per year specifically aimed towards staff development. These will be for staff attendance only and will address a range of pedagogical and educational issues. These workshops will be scheduled in a manner to maximise the availability of staff to attend.

##### **Teacher Specific Initiatives**

Where a teacher identifies a specific area in which they require training or further development, they may apply to have this provided.

##### **Berklee International Network Faculty Development Initiative**

The Music Centre, as a BIN school, is in a position to avail of the BIN faculty development programme. This programme takes place every second year in Berklee, and provides the opportunity for delegates from the Music Centre's staff to network with other music teachers from around the world, and avail of the expertise of the Berklee educational system.

The BIN faculty development meeting was of particular benefit to the Music Centre during the design period for the Berklee Track, when the Berklee Track coordinator attended the event.

## **Element 5 – Learning Resources and Learner Support**

### **E5.1 Physical Infrastructure**

The Music Centre is currently expanding into the new premises in the Harold School, and it is anticipated that by 2013 this space will accommodate the full higher education element of the Music Centre, providing adequate resources for teaching, administrative support, social space and library facilities, as well as much needed rehearsal space.

For September 2010, recognising the urgent necessity for further space, a semi-permanent “pre-fab” room was purchased and installed to the rear of the Music Centre. This has proved not only a valuable teaching resource, but also has provided additional rehearsal and practice facilities.

To maximise existing space, the Music Centre now opens on Sundays for rehearsal and practice.

### **E5.2 Library Resources**

The Music Centre has a comprehensive library of recordings encompassing the many areas of jazz and jazz-related music. Learners may access these recordings on a sign-out basis for study either at home or in the college. Many standard pedagogical texts and other learner aids are also available.

The Music Centre has an agreement with the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) to access their library facilities. However, feedback on this arrangement has been mixed, and it is principally only of use for the academic modules of the award stage of the BAJP.

The programmatic review identified the library resources at the Music Centre as requiring improvement, and to this end an annual budget of €2000 has been allocated for the purchase of relevant texts. The first phase of these purchases has been made and will be incorporated into the new space in the Harold School.

### **E5.3 Learner Support**

The Music Centre is committed to providing the best possible support to our learners throughout their education.

#### **Personal Contact**

The level of personal contact between staff and learners, and general approachability of teaching and administrative staff is frequently cited by learners as one of the main advantages of studying at the Music Centre.

## **Newpark Student Club**

The Newpark Student Club was established in 2010 with the aim of increasing the opportunities for learners to mix socially, and perform together in an informal environment.

The Newpark Student Club has proved a successful initiative, and will continue in September 2011.

## **Year 4 BAJP Preparatory Concerts**

In response to feedback from learners and external examiners, the year 4 preparatory ensemble concert series was introduced in 2009. These concerts provide award stage learners with the opportunity to present material from their final performance as a work in progress, and receive instant feedback from an attending faculty member.

This initiative has been very well received by the learners, and has contributed to a more professional display in the final ensemble performances.

## **Year 4 *Instrumental Skills and Approved Styles* Mock Examination**

Mock examinations for the *Instrumental Skills and Approved Styles* module have been developed to assist learners in their preparations for the final examination in the award stage.

These mock examinations also provide instant feedback to the learner, eliminating many problems that have previously arisen during the final exam.

## **Workshops and Clinics**

The extensive international connections of the Music Centre make it possible to attract international clinicians and educators of the highest calibre. Every year, a range of workshops are conducted by leading world figures in jazz and contemporary music. The list of visiting artists is included in the supplementary documentation to this report.

## **Learner Representation**

As detailed above, the system of learner representation is to be revised from September 2011 and incorporated into the QA procedures of the Music Centre.

The election of a learner committee will provide a more functional and consistent means of learner representation, through the committee chair, to the relevant governing bodies (Course Board, Management Committee).

## **Element 6 – Information Systems**

### **E6.1 Management Information Systems**

#### **Database**

The primary information system employed by the Music Centre is the student database. This is a *Filemaker Pro* system that integrates student details with timetabling and teaching resources.

The database is primarily concerned with learner records, and does not in itself provide any analytical function other than the provision of basic learner data.

#### **Finance**

The Music Centre uses the *Mind Your Own Business (MYOB)* financial management and accounting software.

The MYOB system integrates with the student database to handle all aspects of the Music Centre's invoicing, payments, sales, purchases and other financial elements.

#### **Music Centre Server**

The Music Centre has a server that is increasingly used to store all of the information of the organisation. This includes the software programmes outlined above, and also all soft copies of other documentation.

### **E6.2 Data Gathering and Analysis**

Data relating to the various activities of the Music Centre is gathered in a number of ways. These include:

- Focus groups
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Feedback forms
- Examination results
- Financial budgets

#### **Data and Information Analysis**

Data and information is analysed in the manner most effective in representing the result. For example, data relating to exam performance is extracted from the HETAC exam broadsheets, transferred into Excel spreadsheets and charts are produced that provide a visual representation of results and trends.

Information from learner feedback reports is processed in a similar manner, though information from the general comments sections is included in a brief report accompanying the charted data.

### **E6.3 Reports and Records**

Reports and records from the various activities of the Music Centre are kept in either hard or soft copy and are used in the ongoing monitoring of the programmes and the formal review processed.

## **Element 7 – Public Information**

The Music Centre is committed to the provision of information on the programmes offered. Increasingly it is the Music Centre’s website that is the portal for this information, though information will still be available in hard copy.

### **E7.1 The Newpark Music Centre Website**

The Newpark Music Centre website provides a wide range of information on the various activities of organisation. The website is increasingly being used as the primary method of communication of information to the public.

Much of the information on the website is clearly for publicity and promotional purposes, but the Music Centre also recognises the importance of the website as a means of providing impartial information on the “behind the scenes” activities and procedures in place.

#### **Programme Information**

The website provides a full and detailed explanation of the programmes provided by the Music Centre, and is regularly updated.

With regard to the BAJP, a full explanation of the programme structure is provided, including information on the qualification awarded, the learning outcomes and the assessment procedures used.

#### **Policy and Procedural Information**

The website also hosts the QCD manual of the Music Centre, the Child Protection Policy and other relevant procedural documents.

#### **Reviews**

The SER for programmatic review of the BAJP can be viewed on the website, and in time, the documentary material relating to Institutional Review will be posted as well.

## **4. Objective 4**

### **National Framework of Qualifications, Access, Transfer and Progression**

#### **4.1 Introduction - Newpark and the NFQ**

The Bachelor of Arts in Jazz Performance (BAJP) is operated under the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and the HETAC awards standards appropriate to the programme.

From the outset the BAJP was developed in terms of learning objectives and outcomes, and a credit-based system was adopted from the initial stages (240 credits, 60 per stage).

Applicants and learners are made aware of the programme entry requirements, level, awarding body and the progression routes available to them after completion.

The document *Programme Content and Methodology of Assessment* is included in the supplementary documentation to this report and details the learning outcomes of each stage, subject by subject, together with the marking systems utilised and credits per subject.

Although not yet accredited domestically, the Music Centre has adopted a similar approach in the development of the Berklee Track. This has been undertaken both to increase programmatic cohesion, and to facilitate the accreditation process when undertaken in 2011-2012.

#### **4.2 Access**

Newpark Music Centre is committed to a fair, equitable and transparent system of access to all of its programmes. This commitment permeates all levels of the organisation, whether on the part-time, non-accredited programmes, or on the BAJP and Berklee Track.

##### **4.2.1 Audition for Full-Time Programmes**

Fundamental to all access to the BAJP and Berklee Track is the audition. All learners must audition to gain access to the programmes, regardless of the point of access, the transfer agreement under which the learner is entering, previous certified or uncertified learning etc.

Performance in the audition is the primary determiner to access, and is judged regardless of ethnicity, religion, background, age, disability or any other factor.



The primacy of the audition over all other factors results in the consideration of the learner's musical ability being the determiner of suitability.

#### **4.2.2 Access Initiatives**

While the Music Centre does not currently directly target under-represented groups, efforts have been made in the last number of years to improve access from the greater community, thus increasing awareness of the college's activities throughout Ireland.

1. *Direct Contact with Careers Guidance Counsellors* – Annually, all careers guidance counsellors nationally are contacted with details of the programmes, application dates, open day information etc.
2. *Outreach Workshops* – Piloted in spring 2011 in Headford, Galway, the planned format for the outreach workshops is to target a regional secondary school with a quality music department and tie in with other schools in the area so that students from a wider region may attend.
3. *Open Day* – The revised format of the college's Open Day is designed to provide greater access to the community. An off-site location with performance and information sessions provides both an educational experience and a recruiting platform for the Music Centre.

#### **4.3 Learner Support**

The Music Centre offers a variety of supports to learners with special requirements. These may relate to disability or learning issues, or external factors such as financial or personal difficulties.

The Music Centre has implemented special learning supports in a number of instances including dyslexia, visual impairment, psychological difficulties and learning delay.

With regard to financial issues, the Music Centre is committed to a sympathetic approach, being mindful of the strains experienced in this area by many learners. The principal aid in this area is the provision of flexible payment plans for learners.

#### **4.4 Recognition of Prior Learning and Transfer Mechanisms**

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an area of great interest and importance to the Music Centre. This is primarily down to two main factors:

Firstly, the legacy of the informal nature of non-classical music education in Ireland has led and continues to lead to the presentation of applicants to the full-time programmes with varying degrees and types of prior learning. For

example, learners may present with little or no formal musical training, but demonstrate considerable musical skills across a wide variety of areas.

The second factor is due to the increase in interest from international learners. Due to the fact that music education at primary and secondary levels in many other countries, particularly in Europe, forms a more integral part of the curriculum, international learners may present with skills well ahead of their Irish counterparts.

This has led to the development of mechanisms for RPL to cater for the wide variety of applicant to the full-time programmes.

## **BAJP**

The primary factor with regard to RPL for the BAJP is the audition. All applicants for the BAJP, regardless of previous musical experience or learning must do a performance audition to enter the programme. For entry into the later stages of the BAJP under the mechanisms for RPL, candidates must perform tunes from the Standard Jazz Repertoire consistent with the level required for entry into the stage for which they are applying.

In addition, the applicant must demonstrate the appropriate knowledge of the theoretical aspects of the programme (harmony, arranging, ear training etc.) This may be done through the recognition of certified or uncertified prior learning.

### **Certified Prior Learning**

Where the applicant has attended formal music education, evidence may be presented to demonstrate the required level of learning, usually in the form of appropriate assessment results.

### **Uncertified Prior Learning**

Credit for uncertified prior learning is granted through the successful completion of an appropriate assessment, similar to the end of stage assessment required for entry to the stage for which the applicant has applied.

### **Bridging Studies**

Where an applicant's prior learning is of an appropriate level to access the programme, but a particular knowledge deficit is identified, a programme of bridging studies may be utilised to address this and facilitate the granting of credit to the later stage.

#### **4.5 International Transfer Agreements**

One of the most exciting areas in the Music Centre's development since the signing of the Articulation Agreement with Berklee College of Music has been the development of transfer agreements with other Berklee network schools.

Credit transfer agreements are now in place with Conservatorio Souza Lima, Sao Paulo, Brazil; International Music College, Freiburg, Germany; and Koyo Conservatory, Kobe, Japan.

#### **Enterprise Ireland *Going Global* Feasibility Study**

The development of the agreements with these international partners was aided by Newpark Music Centre's successful application for grant funding from Enterprise Ireland under the *Going Global* initiative. This provides for Irish organisations to perform feasibility studies with regard to expansion into international markets.

The funding from Enterprise Ireland facilitated the feasibility study for these agreements, including travel to Brazil and Ecuador (for the Berklee International Network Summit).

The feasibility study progress report is included in the supplementary documentation to this report.

#### **International Learner Transfers**

In the 2010-2011 academic year, 3 learners transferred to Newpark from Souza Lima in Brazil, and one from the International Music College in Freiburg.

In September 2011, an additional 2 learners from Brazil, and two from Germany have enrolled as transfers.

The agreement with Japan is more recent, and still in the developmental phase. A delegation from Newpark Music Centre will visit Kobe in autumn 2011 to conduct initial auditions.

#### **4.6 Progression Opportunities**

In the field of jazz education, domestic progression opportunities into directly related fields are somewhat narrow. There is one masters programme in Jazz Performance, offered by DIT. The Masters in Music Technology in TCD has also proved a popular progression route for BAJP graduates.

The international picture is considerably better, with many high quality masters programmes available. Newpark Music Centre has identified particular programmes as appropriate programmes for BAJP graduates. These are as follows:

1. Eujam - an innovative joint master's degree programme offered by the

- conservatories of Amsterdam, Berlin, Copenhagen, Paris and Trondheim.
2. Masters in Music Performance offered by the Rhythmic Music Conservatory in Copenhagen, Denmark.
  3. Master of Music at the Jazz Institute, Berlin, Germany.
  4. Jazz Masters Degree at the Conservatorium Amsterdam, Holland.
  5. Master of Arts in Music, Luzern, Switzerland.

#### **4.7 The Berklee Track – Special Consideration**

The Berklee Track is of note as a special consideration under this objective, due to its unique nature in Irish education.

As outlined elsewhere in this document, the programme provides for the transfer of credits from Newpark's Berklee Track programme to the diploma and degree programmes in Berklee College of Music, Boston.

Also mentioned in previous sections of this report is the Music Centre's intention to seek domestic accreditation for the Berklee Track during 2011-2012 to commence in September 2012.

This will provide for the following areas of growth:

1. As a stand-alone programme in domestic education.
2. As a transfer mechanism for Irish learners accessing Berklee.
3. As an access point for international (including US) learners to Berklee, via Newpark Music Centre.
4. As a transfer mechanism for learners (both domestic and international) to the Bachelor of Arts in Jazz Performance.
5. As a transfer mechanism for learners in Newpark to other BIN schools worldwide.

The Music Centre is in a strong position, being the only English speaking school in the world, outside of the USA. This presents a strong opportunity, including the attraction of US learners to Newpark, prior to returning to Boston (there are currently two US learners enrolled on the Berklee Track).

Attending the programme in Newpark Music Centre also represents a considerable cost saving for the learner; the recommended annual budget for tuition fees and accommodation in Berklee is \$50,000, as opposed to the relatively modest €5,000 tuition fee at the Music Centre.

The Berklee Track commenced in September 2010, and will thus be in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year of operation (the first year with both stages of the programme running) in September 2011.

## **5. Objective 5**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Enhancement**

Newpark Music Centre has experienced rapid growth and development since the accreditation of the Bachelor of Arts in Jazz Performance in 2005. This growth has brought with it significant challenges, but has impacted highly favourably on Irish music education.

One of the challenges for the Music Centre has been the organisation's development from one of a relatively informal system of music education to that of a higher education provider in the context of National Framework of Qualifications and the policies and procedures implemented by HETAC.

The Music Centre has learnt much from the Programmatic Review process, and the self-evaluation stage of Institutional Review, both in terms of how to self-evaluate and how to implement change as a result of these processes.

The conclusions and recommendations that follow are organised in the same structure as the sections of the SER, and address each of the individual objectives of Institutional Review.

The Music Centre is committed to the enhancement of its education provision. It is hoped that these recommendations, together with those from the panel following the site visit in November 2011, will further develop the quality of the programmes provided and of the organisation as a whole.

### **5.1 Objective 1 – Public Confidence**

#### **Conclusions**

The Music Centre is widely respected both domestically and internationally as a quality provider of jazz and contemporary music education. Key factors in public confidence in these areas are the award recognition by HETAC, the Music Centre's affiliation with Berklee College of Music, and the international connections and networks with which the Music Centre is involved.

As a provider of part-time music education to the local community, Newpark has a reputation as an established and quality school. Learners are attracted by the inclusive ethos of the Music Centre and the school is recognised as an integral part of the local community of music education.

The Music Centre has a core body of dedicated and committed staff, which cites the collegiate atmosphere of the Music Centre as one of its principal benefits as a place of employment, and as a differentiating factor from other institutions. Appropriate measures are in place in the staff selection procedures of the music centre to further enhance the confidence of the public in the teaching staff.

The Music Centre's engagement in the major review processes has contributed to public confidence in that the college has demonstrated its ongoing commitment to the improvement of its education provision.

The Music Centre recognises the importance of the provision of information to the public, and is committed to constant improvement in this area.

## **Recommendations**

The *SEC* makes the following recommendations specific to the issue of public confidence:

### **1. Award Recognition – The Berklee Track**

- Accreditation at level 6 will contribute to public confidence, and also enhance the institution's arrangements for access, transfer and progression.

### **2. International Affiliations**

- Every effort must be made to consolidate and increase the international reputation of the Music Centre.
- The latest developments with Japan are among the most promising, and should be pursued as a priority over 2011 / 2012.

### **3. Institutional Review**

- It is essential that all those involved in the process of Institutional Review strive to make it as positive and beneficial as possible to the Music Centre.

### **4. Provision of Information to the Public**

- Though much improved, this area should be constantly monitored and updated.
- The website should be examined and the architecture updated if required, making greater use of interlinking web resources to provide further information to the public.

## **5.2 Objective 2 – Strategic Planning and Governance**

### **Conclusions**

The development and incorporation of strategic planning in the Music Centre has been an incremental process since the inception of the initial full-time programmes. The accreditation of the BAJP, and the potential for accreditation of further programmes under the same system, coupled with the development of the Berklee Track, has led to a situation where medium to long term planning can be structured in a meaningful way.

The Music Centre has a strong sense of where it lies in relation to both the domestic and international education systems, and a definite plan of where it wishes to progress over the next 5-7 years. With the potential for expansion into new facilities, the educational plan can now be assisted by realistic logistical planning, providing a vision for the future of the Music Centre's activities that is clearer than ever before.

## **Recommendations**

The *SEC* makes the following recommendations arising out of the objective of Strategic Planning and Governance.

### **1. Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance**

- An appropriate procedure should be incorporated into the QA system to ensure the ongoing monitoring of strategic planning and its effectiveness.

### **2. Permeation of Strategic Planning**

- Efforts should be made to ensure that all staff are familiar with the strategic plan. This is vital for organisational cohesiveness and also important for staff morale.

### **3. Resource Planning**

- Adequate resource planning must play a fundamental role in the development of strategic plans.

### **4. Human Resource Management**

- Effective human resource planning should be included as an integral part of strategic planning.

### **5. Academic Council**

- The Academic Council is to be expanded as planned.
- A clearer definition of the duties of the Academic Council and the Course Board should be made.

### **6. Management Positions**

- The significant recent changes in the management positions should be closely monitored over the coming year, under the dual remit of the Management Committee and the Board of Directors.

## **5.3 Objective 3 – Quality Assurance**

### **Element 1 – Policy and Procedures**

#### **Conclusions**

The quality assurance procedures in place at the Music Centre are functional and fit for purpose. The college is committed to the ongoing development of quality assurance, and the procedures are regularly monitored and updated where required. The college has learnt much in recent years, primarily as a result of the major review processes, and this is reflected in constantly improving quality assurance management.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Comprehensive benchmarking of the colleges QA procedures to ensure favourable comparison with industry best practice, to commence autumn 2012.
2. A sectional reorganisation of the manual should be undertaken in conjunction with the process recommended above; the manual has become somewhat disorganised with the addition of new procedures.

### **Element 2 – Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes**

#### **Conclusions**

The mechanisms for the approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes are functioning well. This has been demonstrated by the successful design and implementation of the BAJP and Berklee Track, programme updates made by the Course Board, and the successful programmatic review of the BAJP.

#### **Recommendations**

1. A more realistic approach to the timelines for the phasing in of change would improve the follow-up to major review processes.

### **Element 3 – Assessment of Learners**

#### **Conclusions**

The assessment of students is carried out both professionally and effectively. This is a view reinforced by the reports of external examiners. Learners are assessed using a variety of methods, which are published and communicated to the learners at the commencement of each stage.



## **Recommendations**

1. The procedure for timetabling of examinations should be followed rigorously to avoid late issue of assessment timetables.
2. Further explanation of the credit-weighting system should be provided in response to learner feedback.
3. The college's examination regulations should be more comprehensive and detailed fully in the QCD manual.

## **Element 4 – Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff**

### **Conclusions**

Feedback from learners, external examiners, the programmatic review of the BAJP and other stakeholders illustrate that the Music Centre's recruitment procedures ensure the employment of competent and dedicated staff. Staff have the opportunity to develop and extend their skills, and are encouraged to avail of every opportunity to do so.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Music Centre should consult with external advisors with regard to the development of a functional, formal performance appraisal system.
2. Where a position is considered an extension of hours rather than a new position, it may be offered internally to the most suitable candidate, taking into account seniority, competences and other factors.

## **Element 5 – Learning Resources and Student Support**

### **Conclusions**

Though limited by the physical infrastructure available, the college offers adequate resources and supports for learners, with the exception of adequate social space. The college is currently expanding its library provision and has committed to do so on an ongoing basis. The Music Centre has introduced a variety of learner support initiatives, reviewed on a regular basis, and has considered feedback from a variety of sources (external examiners, learners, staff) in developing these.

### **Recommendations**

1. Further online library resources should be investigated and made available to learners where possible. *Grove Online* and *Jstor* are two resources that should be investigated without delay.
2. Every effort should be made to expedite the development of the Glasthule premises as a campus for the full-time programmes. This should include provision of social space as a high priority.

3. Detailed procedures regarding international learners should be formalised in line with recently published HETAC guidelines and included in the QCD manual.

## **Element 6 – Information Systems**

### **Conclusions**

The Music Centre uses a variety of systems to collect, analyse and use relevant information. The student database and financial software systems integrate well for the purposes of student records, invoicing, payments, budgets etc. The information used for monitoring purposes is collected, analysed and used for the relevant purpose, though the systems involved are somewhat fragmented.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Music Centre should investigate the available academic software used by other institutions. An integrated solution incorporating learner details, progression, results etc. would enhance the analysis of information and ultimately lead to quality improvements.

## **Element 7 – Provision of Information to the Public**

### **Conclusions**

The Music Centre has recently made improvements to the quantity and quality of information provided to the public, and is committed to further improvements in this area.

### **Recommendations**

1. The architecture of the website should be examined and the site possibly re-designed to present information in a more ordered and accessible fashion.
2. The information on the website should be expanded during the remainder of 2011 to include further information on learner profiles, graduate activities etc.
3. The information on the full-time programmes considerably outweighs that of the part-time programmes; this issue should be addressed to provide a balanced view of the organisation as a whole.

## 5.4 Objective 4 – NFQ, Access, Transfer and Progression

### Conclusions

Newpark Music Centre offers fair and equitable access to its programmes. The BAJP is operated in accordance with the National Framework of Qualifications and HETAC awards standards, and the Berklee Track has been developed in a similar manner to facilitate cohesion once accredited.

Supports are provided to learners with special requirements, and these have been applied successfully over the years.

The college's mechanisms for RPL work well with regard to the varying level of experience demonstrated by applicants, and the international transfer agreements represent an exciting development for the mobility of the international music learner.

The Berklee Track, although in its early stages, presents an exciting opportunity for the Music Centre, given its unique nature, and the potential to attract international and domestic learners.

### Recommendations

The *SEC* makes the following recommendations with regard to this objective:

1. The Newpark Music Centre outreach workshop initiative should be expanded to include as many areas as possible over the coming years.
2. The permeation of information regarding access, transfer and progression to learners should be verified.
3. The experience of learners attending as a result of the credit transfer agreements should be tracked and monitored closely, particularly in the initial stages of the agreements.
4. Accreditation for the Berklee Track (Level 6) should be sought as a priority.