

Strategic Plan
2026-2031

**CREATE
CHALLENGE**

CARE

**NATIONAL
COLLEGE
OF ART
& DESIGN**

EATE

CARE

ALLENGE

We need this *Create, Challenge, Care* strategy to guide us for the next five years because...

The world needs creative practice, purpose and skills *now* more than ever.

Students' lived realities have shifted significantly, so we must act *now* to deliver the innovative, bold and relevant education they need.

Building the College and campus that is needed for the future means taking on complex challenges *now*.

Being a leading art and design institution *now* isn't enough: we must work with partners in and beyond art and design to achieve meaningful social progress.

Brollach

Tá stair, comhthéacs agus seasamh faoi leith ag NCAD i gcomhthéacs an oideachais ealaíne agus dearaidh in Éirinn. Leanann NCAD de bheith ag tairiscint an raon is mó céimeanna ealaíne agus dearaidh sa Stát ag leibhéal fochéime agus iarchéime, agus is cúis bhróid ollmhór é go bhfuil tionchar mór ag ár n-iar-mhí léinn ar fud shochaí na hÉireann agus ar fud an domhain.

Tuigeann an Bord go rímhaith thábhacht shuíomh NCAD, agus ar gá maidir le rialú laistigh de chomhthéacs sóisialta, geilleagrach, aeráide agus polaitiúil atá ag athrú. Éilíonn tiomantas NCAD do rialachas infheicthe agus comhtháite, do láidreacht agus lúfaireacht fhioscach, agus do bhainistíocht réamhghníomhach acmhainní éifeachtacha atá dírithe ar an todhchaí. Is mó ná ráiteas uaillmhéine agus fócais dár gcéad chéimeanna eile an Plean Straitéiseach nua seo; is gealltanais é do na mic léinn, don fhoireann, agus do na pobail iomadúla a bhfuil nasc ag an gColáiste leo. Tá an Bord buíoch don Údarás um Ardoideachas, don Aire Lawless agus don Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais, Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta, agus do páirtithe leasmhara agus do mhaoinitheoirí, as a dtacaíocht leanúnach do NCAD.

Tá an Bord tiomanta do thodhchaí láidir agus bhríoch a chinntiú don institiúid an-speisialta seo. Tacaímid go hiomlán le gach duine ag NCAD chun cuspóirí an Plean Straitéisigh seo a bhaint amach, agus táimid ag tnúth le bheith ag obair le chéile chun ár misean comhroinnte *Cruthú, Ceistiú, Cúram* a bhaint amach.



Siobhán Moriarty, Cathaoirleach an Bhoird

Foreword

NCAD's history, context and position within art and design education in Ireland is unique. NCAD continues to offer the largest range of art and design degrees in the State at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and it is a source of immense pride that our alumni have had, and continue to have, great impact across society in Ireland and globally.

An Bord is acutely aware of the importance of NCAD's position, and our need to govern within a changing social, economic, climate and political context. NCAD's commitment to visible and coherent governance, fiscal strength and agility, and pro-active management requires effective, future-facing resources. This new Strategic Plan is more than a statement of ambition and focus for our next steps over the coming five years; it is a commitment to the students, staff, and the many communities to which the College is connected. An Bord is most grateful to the Higher Education Authority, to Minister Lawless and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and to stakeholders and funders, for their ongoing support of NCAD.

An Bord is determined to ensure a robust and meaningful future for this very special institution. We fully support everyone at NCAD in bringing this Strategic Plan to life, and we look forward to working together to realise our shared mission to *Create, Challenge, Care*.



Siobhán Moriarty, Chairperson

FOREWORD

Ráiteas an Stiúrtóra

Tá an misean, na luachanna, na spriocanna agus – go háirithe – na gníomhartha a mhúnlóidh céim nua spreagúil agus dhúshlánach do NCAD leagtha amach i *Cruthú, Ceistiú, Cúram* agus muid ag neartú an chlaochlaithe institiúidigh a baineadh amach le chéile faoin straitéis dheireanach.

Bhí an próiseas comhairliúcháin domhain agus leathan. Chuireamar i gcúimhne dúinn féin gurbh é ceann de na torthaí ar agóidí na mac léinn sna 1970idí ná gur shocraigh NCAD go comhfhiosach a bheith níos ábhartha agus níos freagrúla d'athruithe i sochaí na hÉireann. Leanfaimid orainn de bheith cuntasach i leith an dúshláin sin agus muid ag múnú páirt NCAD maidir le dul i ngleic le saincheisteanna práinneacha don tsochaí amháil athruithe déimeagrafacha, an gá atá le réitigh dhearfacha aeráide agus ceartas aeráide, fíricí geilleagracha atá ag athrú, agus teicneolaíochtaí suaiteacha agus neamhbheartaithe. Sin é an fáth go bhfuil an Plean Straitéiseach seo chomh bunaithe ar ár n-aitheantas ar na fórsaí tiomána fadtéarmacha a théann i bhfeidhm ar an tsochaí chomh maith lenár gcumas mar choláiste ealaíne agus dearaidh aghaidh a thabhairt ar dhúshlán chasta chomhaimseartha le muinín, uaillmhian, aclaíocht agus tionchar.

Táimid thar a bheith buíoch de phobal bríomhar NCAD: an fhoireann, na mic léinn, An Bord agus comhpháirtithe, páirtithe leasmhara agus maoinitheoirí, a chuir go léir le *Cruthú, Ceistiú, Cúram* le fuinneamh agus le léargas mór. Táimid thar a bheith buíoch de na mic léinn spreagúla Oisín Allen, Cian Giles, Ella Mc Nulty agus Aisling Strzoda, agus dá gceannairí dáimhe Claire Campion agus Aoife Mc Inerney, a d'aistrigh ár straitéis go dearadh, agus dár n-iar-mhic léinn ag Stiúideo Poist a chruthaigh an suíomh Gréasáin tacaíochta.

Táimid ag seoladh na straitéise seo le linn tréimhse neamhchinnte agus shuaite. Beidh gá le lúfaireacht agus le hinoiriúnaitheacht chun a chinntiú go n-oibrímid le chéile chun ár spriocanna straitéiseacha a bhaint amach. Mar chuid de chur i bhfeidhm *Cruthú, Ceistiú, Cúram*, coinneoidimid pobal NCAD agus ár bpáirtithe leasmhara ar an eolas go hiomlán faoinár ndul chun cinn thar na cúig bliana atá romhainn.

Táimid ar bís a fheiceáil cad a bhainfimid amach le chéile.



Professor Sarah Glennie, Stiúrtóir

Director's Statement

Create, Challenge, Care sets out the mission, values, goals and – importantly – the actions that will shape an exciting and challenging new phase for NCAD as we strengthen the institutional transformation collectively achieved under the last strategy.

The consultation process was deep and expansive. We reminded ourselves that an outcome of the student protests of the 1970s was that NCAD consciously resolved to be more relevant and responsive to changes in Irish society. We continue to hold ourselves accountable to that challenge as we shape NCAD's contribution to pressing issues facing society such as changing demographics, the need for positive climate solutions and climate justice, shifting economic realities, and disruptive and opportunistic technologies. That is why this Strategic Plan is so grounded in our recognition of the long-term driving forces operating in society as well as our potential as a college of art and design to respond to contemporary complex challenges with confidence, ambition, agility and impact.

We are extremely grateful to the dynamic NCAD community of staff, students, An Bord and partners, stakeholders and funders, all of whom contributed to *Create, Challenge, Care* with great energy and insight. We are especially grateful to the inspired students Oisín Allen, Cian Giles, Ella Mc Nulty and Aisling Strzoda, and their faculty leaders Claire Campion and Aoife Mc Inerney, who translated our strategy into design, and to our alumni at Post Studio who created the supporting website.

We are launching this strategy during uncertain and turbulent times. Agility and adaptability will be needed to make sure that we work together to achieve our strategic goals. As part of the implementation of *Create, Challenge, Care*, we will keep the NCAD community and our stakeholders fully informed about our progress over the next five years.

We are excited to see what we will achieve together.



Professor Sarah Glennie, Director

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Our Vision:

To change the world through bold and curious thinking, making and doing.

Our Purpose:

NCAD exists to foster, generate and inspire imaginative, ambitious and positive change through art and design for people, communities and society.

College and Community: Our Values

We live our values every day – in class, on campus, in our community and through co-creative and connected practice in Ireland and globally.

Our Values

– Bold & Curious:

We are not afraid to challenge perspectives and boundaries, and develop new forms of creative practice. When we take risks, we do so with confidence and agility.

– Brave & Care:

We are ethical and clear-sighted in our decisions, and understand the meaning and extent of our responsibility to each other, our communities and the planet.

– Connect & Be Connected:

We are inclusive, value connections across the College, and create meaningful ways for our teaching, learning and research to be fully connected to and with the world.

Vision, Purpose & Values

**BOLD
BRAVE &
CONNECTED & CURIOUS**

1 **EMPOWER**

EMPOWER OUR STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS TO
CREATE, CHALLENGE AND CARE.

4 **BE A VOICE**

BE AN ACTIVE PROGRESSIVE VOICE FOR
ART AND DESIGN

4

BE ROBUST

BE A ROBUST, WELL-RESOURCED COLLEGE.

2 **ADAPT & FLEX**

ADAPT & FLEX FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE LEARNERS.

2

Goal 1

Empower our students and researchers to create, challenge and care

The heart of Goal 1 is the delivery of learning, teaching and research which inspires values-led change for people, communities and society. The world needs creative practice, purpose and skills more than ever.

In Teaching and Learning, we will:

- Review all programmes through an institutional and values-led framework to ensure our core values and purpose are embedded within each student's learning journey.
- Resource and support staff from across the College to actively contribute to the development and expansion of learning and teaching through this framework.
- Connect students, staff and alumni using our national and global art and design networks, thus expanding the reach and impact of our learning, research and creative practices.

In Research we will:

- Develop relevant, sustainable and inclusive research supports, enabling academic staff and researchers at all career stages to undertake impactful research in ways that align with the values of NCAD and inform the future development of learning and teaching.
- Support staff and students to undertake research which is deeply grounded in ethical practice, integrity and care.
- Reach outwards, connecting our research nationally and globally through innovative, strategic partnerships that offer new opportunities for, and uses of, art and design research.
- Communicate clearly NCAD's research practices and achievements internally and externally.

Goal 1 matters because an NCAD education creates independent thinkers who can contribute to finding solutions to future social and economic challenges. By ensuring that our teaching and learning meets the highest standards of creative practice and intellectual inquiry, our students and researchers will be empowered to be boldly curious and clear-sighted in their learning, making, and their approach to social purpose. Developing structures for shared thinking and innovation across the NCAD community will help us achieve this for current and future learners.



Goal 2

Adapt and flex for current and future learners

The heart of Goal 2 is the need to make brave and clear-sighted decisions that reflect the diverse needs of the students we are educating today, and to equip ourselves to meet the needs of future learners. Students are facing new challenges and shifting realities, and we must proactively manage how NCAD responds.

For Students, Campus and Community, we will:

- Develop targeted initiatives and pathways to broaden our learner base and meet their needs as learners at NCAD.
- Support staff to understand and respond effectively to diversity among the student and learning communities.
- Learn from the learners: ask questions of students and ensure their responses contribute towards informed decision-making.
- Examine how to diversify the NCAD staff community to better reflect contemporary Irish society.

Goal 2 matters because NCAD's distinct approach to learning focuses on doing, experimenting and taking creative risks. We must make brave and clear-sighted decisions that reflect the needs of the students we are educating today and equip ourselves to meet the needs of future learners. Doing so requires a *One NCAD* understanding of the needs of a more diverse student body and actions across all areas of College activities.

Adapt & Flex



BRAVE
& CARE

Goal 3

Be a robust, well-resourced College

The heart of Goal 3 is our understanding that building the College and campus that is needed for the future means being unafraid of complexity and challenges now. We value our position as a publicly funded institution and we are committed to being a responsible, effective and agile organisation.

For Staff, we will:

- Invest in structures to enable staff to connect across areas and expertise, and work towards agile, innovative and efficient processes for collaboration and exchange. Staff are our greatest resource, and we are more robust and resilient when we work together.
- Use lean and efficient management processes across the College to deliver values-led strategic projects at scale that meet our purposes.

In the Campus Development Programme we will:

- Work with multiple stakeholders, including state agencies, to take NCAD towards the campus it needs to be. The campus development is a long-term project which extends beyond the life of this Strategic Plan.
- Ensure that campus development is informed by our values, stated strategic goals and objectives, in line with our vision for future learning, teaching and research.
- Support staff, students and the wider campus community to thrive during a period of significant change that the complex capital programme will bring.
- Establish the robust and effective governance and management necessary for this period of significant change.

Goal 3 matters because we are committed to creating better environments for students, staff and our expanded NCAD community. We need to adapt and flex in response to changing social and economic circumstances, and recognise that while change is necessary and important, it cannot be merely reactive.



CONNECT
& BE...

Goal 4

Be an active, progressive voice for art and design

The heart of Goal 4 is NCAD's determination to be a brave, confident and meaningful advocate for the art and design sector nationally and internationally. We want to work with partners in and beyond art and design to achieve meaningful social progress.

For Students and Alumni, we will:

- Build national and international partnerships which enable student and alumni creative practices, work, learning and research to be connected for impact, locally and globally.
- Develop a vibrant network of alumni, and better understand and communicate the value of their work in the world.

Within Society, we will:

- Own our position as a leader in art and design education, seek out opportunities to contribute to the discourse nationally and globally, and be a positive and insightful advocate for the sector.
- Contribute to an evidence-based understanding of the value of creative practice to positive social and economic progress.
- Use our informed, expert and innovative art and design voice to bring strength and value to partnerships and networks within and beyond our sectors and disciplines.

Goal 4 matters because for generations, NCAD has played a leading role in Ireland's artistic and creative life. Over recent years, we made a concentrated effort to lead in progressive thinking about the ways in which art and design practitioners and educators are developed. This unique and important role is deeply connected to, and with, Ireland's wider creative and cultural sectors.



CONNECTED

Achieving our Goals in 2026–2031

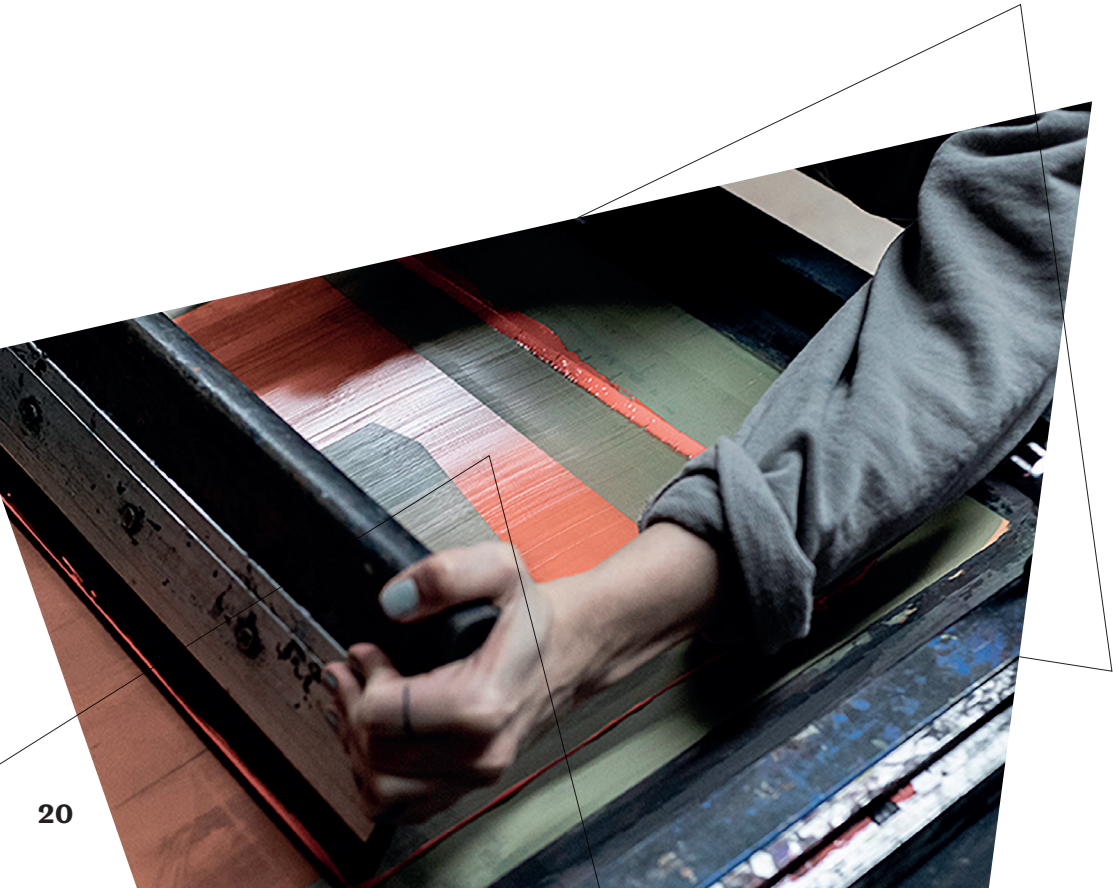
A separate Implementation Plan details actions and targets for all four Goals. This will be updated regularly and communicated to staff, students and stakeholders.

Underpinning all our actions are:

- Learnings from *Futures Bold and Curious*.
- Rigorous implementation planning processes and systems.
- Cross college project teams with clear goals and phased timelines.
- Planning agility and informed decision making.

Create, Challenge, Care will ensure NCAD in 2031 is:

- Delivering the creative practice, purpose and skills needed in society.
- An institution where students experience an innovative, bold and relevant education which equips them for the realities of contemporary life.
- In a new and future-ready stage of College and campus development.
- A key institution within the art and design sector in Ireland, working with partners in and beyond the sector to drive meaningful social progress.



Create, Challenge, Care is a living document.
Please see strategy.ncad.ie for full details of
all milestones, actions, targets and progress.
Information will be updated regularly.

**COLÁISTE NÁISIÚNTA
EALÁINE IS DEARTH
NATIONAL COLLEGE
OF ART & DESIGN**

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Designed by NCAD students

Some briefs arrive with real opportunity, and this was one of those. Students Aisling Strzoda, Cian Giles, Ella Mc Nulty and Oisín Allen were tasked with designing this strategy document. All four are part of the Bureau+ a research-driven, student-managed studio within the Studio+ programme. Studio+ is a campus-based environment where students take on real commercial and cultural projects.

The brief was to design a foundational document, outlining the institution's purpose, mission, values, goals and objectives, for an audience of staff, students, stakeholders and a wider national and international public. The document needed to be accessible, legible and engaging, while communicating the importance of art and design in current and future social and political climates and speaking clearly to NCAD's unique position as an independent art and design college. The scope included format exploration, printing methods, colour, imagery and graphics. Designs also needed to translate to a digital format, with assets handed over to an external team for web implementation.

Aisling, Cian, Ella and Oisín worked directly with senior management presenting concepts and refining based on feedback from multiple stakeholders throughout. They worked collaboratively, via Miro, group critiques, with regular tutor feedback. Four contributors shaping one cohesive outcome. Whilst also engaging in a full programme of additional modules. Early directions were tested and reworked. The team were deeply involved in research, concept development and iteration, layout tests, mock-ups and printed experiments throughout. Decisions were made by testing rather than committing too early. What emerged balanced boldness with clarity, expressive, but never at the expense of the message.

The result is this strategy publication, alongside a full asset handover to the digital team for web implementation.