

## MA Arts Management

### Unique Selling Points for Programme

- We have a very **close relationship with the Arts and Cultural Sector**, as well as funders and policymakers, in part due to the closeness of NI as a sector, but also due to the high level of input from them in supporting the course through teaching and hosting placements/attending showcases. Each year there is an event which is attended by industry professionals and students present their research.
- **The interdisciplinary programme.** Students are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines and teaching covers a broad range of creative industries and practices. This prepares students for the real life experience of work in the arts management and cultural policy field. Many similar UK programmes focus on specific areas, such as galleries, etc.
- Good **balance of theory and practice** drawn from academic staff having significant industry practice experience and a balance between academic learning and support of industry professionals to deliver programme
- Students undertake **sector-based training of relevance to contemporary arts and cultural sector.** This includes the placement element which thrives thanks to our close links with the sector, the involvement of industry professionals in teaching and the combination of practical and theoretical coursework to ground students in directly transferable skills in to the workplace.

### Student Intake

There are currently 40 on the course between fulltime and parttime students (2019/20), 14 of whom are from China and three others are international students from other regions.

### Can you tell me more about the Placement?

The placement is a course requirement and it is unpaid. It consists of 18 full time days but these can happen consecutively, spread across several months, may be half days etc. – it is flexible. It has to take place between end Nov and end of June.

Students have taken on a variety of different types of work placements over the years. The type of placement depends on the student's area of interest and the organization that the approach, their skills and capacity and what work they have available. Students are encouraged to consider what areas of work and experience they would like to develop.

Students have taken on the following types of work:

- Assisting in the development of marketing and project plans
- Carrying out audience research for organisations
- Developing, delivering and writing up evaluations
- Assisting in the running and managing of events and projects

- Working in education programmes in established arts organisations
- Developing new ideas for public programmes
- Developing and pitching fundraising bids and applications

Students often take leadership roles on projects and are guided with support from the organization hosting them. Some examples of organisations that hosted work placement students are:

- [Arts Council of Northern Ireland](#)
- [The Strand Arts Centre](#)
- [Tinderbox Theatre Company](#)
- [Arts Care](#)
- [Cahoots NI](#)
- [Moving on Music](#)
- [Ulster Orchestra](#)
- [Oh Yeah Centre](#)
- [Young at Art](#)
- [Belfast Book Festival](#)
- [Thrive](#)
- [Arts Ekta](#)
- [AVA Festival](#)
- [National Museums of Northern Ireland](#)

- Are international students able to find placements ok?

Yes, students are meant to find their own placements. This is considered part of the learning experience. The Course Director leads the placement module and gives one-to-one advice. No student has ever failed to secure a placement.

Note that some students travel internationally or return home to do their placement – for example, in recent years students have returned to Hunan Province in China to do their placement at the Museum in their district.

- How is the placement assessed?

Students are asked to give an individual video presentation reflecting on their experience on the placement, considering what they have learned and how it relates to the theory and learning outcomes from the overall MA programme. Assessments are not shared with the host organisation.

## Careers

Some of our students go on for further PhD study in areas of cultural policy and arts management research here in Northern Ireland, in other parts of the UK and overseas.

Other students go on to work in the arts and cultural sector. The following are some of the jobs they have taken on:

- Research and Policy Development Coordinator
- Gallery Curator
- Development Officer at an international festival
- Independent film maker/producer
- Regional Coordinator of a national gender equality campaign
- Digital Content Manager in an independent publisher
- Creative Facilitator at an independent theatre company

- Front of House Manager at an arts or theatre venue
- Assistant Arts Officer in a local authority

In addition to working for established organisations, a number of our graduates go on to set up their own companies and organisations.

### Facilities

The MA in Arts Management is based in the School of Arts, English and Languages. The school features state of the art arts facilities that are available to students to use and develop arts programmes for.

All postgraduate students have access to the [Graduate School](#) which offers study space, bookable rooms for group study and activities and a range of training and support.

A number of talks and events are held in the [Brian Friel Theatre](#) at Queen's. Selected students present their dissertation research at a public event held for policy makers and the arts and cultural sector in Northern Ireland within the theatre space.

Students are also encouraged to make connections with and propose programme ideas for the [Queen's Film Theatre](#), an independent cinema on campus, the [Naughton Gallery](#), a dedicated gallery space on campus; and other performance spaces, like the [Harty Music Room](#) at Queen's. Students have access to a range of activities including free events and creative writing workshops through the [Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's](#). Each year, students can also engage with free lunchtime concerts and a range of workshops and events at the unique [Sonic Arts Research Centre](#) at Queen's, which also hosts the [Sonorities Festival](#). All of these cultural elements of campus life have formed part of student placements, research projects, in-class activities and general volunteering/professional development opportunities.

In addition to all of these great facilities, the location of the MA in Arts Management within the School of Arts, English and Languages and working with other MA programmes within the School and Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, means students on the programme can access a wide array of international research seminars and public talks (in film, public history, literature, cultural studies, music, theatre).

We encourage students to take their own initiative and develop their own ideas for new programmes, such as music performances, public events and more. Funding is available through the Graduate School for student-led activities while the Students' Union and wide array of societies offer other routes for getting involved in campus life and culture. During the MA programme, students will gain skills in this area and we are very happy to advise them on approaching colleagues in Queen's University to take some ideas forward to reality.

## Modules

The MA consists of 6 compulsory modules and a Dissertation module. Additionally, students may audit modules in other programmes within the School of Arts, English and Languages in a range of forms and a full selection of research seminars and events are offered throughout the year. Students are supported through the Graduate School with weekly sessions in Academic Writing and Peer Proof-reading as well as dedicated support sessions for international students. Through the Graduate School, students can access a wide range of both academic and professional development training opportunities, some accredited and some not.

Compulsory module sessions on the MA will involve a mixture of lectures, discussion and team-based work. Lectures will cover key points and provide opportunities for questions and critical analysis. It is an expectation that students will be reading assigned literature and come to sessions prepared with questions. Fulltime students can expect a minimum of 6 contact hours per week plus additional Graduate School sessions and optional activities. As a Master's level programme, all students are expected to undertake a minimum of 6 – 8 hours of independent study and reading per week per module. Excellent library and study facilities are available for this as well as excellent online resources and a newly updated Virtual Learning Environment.

The compulsory modules are as follows:

- **Semester 1**

- **Cultural Policy: Its Relationship to Arts Management**

- This module provides students with an understanding of the objectives, structures and formation of cultural policy at a local, national and international level. Through international and local case studies, students will investigate some of the economic, political, social and artistic objectives of cultural policy, the ways in which arts managers are guided to achieve these goals and how this process is monitored and evaluated. The module will equip students with knowledge of the key debates taking place in the field of cultural policy studies, with a particular focus on how this impacts the work of an arts manager. All of this study will involve analysis of vocabulary used in, and theories underpinning, cultural policy making.

- **Managing the Arts I: Thinking Strategically**

- This module is part one of a two- part module on Managing the Arts. Sitting alongside the Cultural Policy module, Part One is designed to foster big picture and strategic thinking around managing the arts. It and its companion module in Semester 2 provide students with grounding in management and planning in contemporary cultural and creative industries. While emphasising the arts and cultural nonprofit sector, it offers a range of solid tools for analysis and planning that can be applied in commercial creative businesses and within freelance work.

- Being strategic involves considering the specificities of context, the management, motivation and encouragement of people—board members, stakeholders, partners, teams and staff. Students will consider the role of cultural leadership against the backdrop of a rapidly changing consumer-driven environment. Students will learn more about juggling the demands of the organisation and the wider community and the need to improve the skills base and support networks for creative leaders. Assessment is conducted through both theoretical essays and practical exercises (preparing and presenting plans for case study organisations such as festivals, theatre companies, arts organisations, galleries).

### **Research approaches impacting arts management**

Arts management is an interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary and/or cross-disciplinary field of practice and study that involves both academic and practice-based research. Any exploration of knowledge in relation to the subject, must consider multiple epistemological approaches from, for instance, political science, cultural studies, sociology, economics, management and the arts and humanities as well as from within and outside academia.

This module will facilitate critical thinking about knowledge generation, scholarship, and methodology through the lens of the profession of arts management.

Module sessions will explore the following questions:

Who creates knowledge in arts management? From what disciplines does knowledge about arts management apply? How? For whom? What are its uses? How is this knowledge used? How can we critically engage with processes of knowledge acquisition and dissemination and apply this to the development of the discipline?

Sessions will involve critical reading of academic research from the disciplines listed above as well as research emanating from evaluation reports and studies commissioned by arts and cultural organisations and practitioners. Students will hear and read research from the perspective of different disciplines and realize their impact in practice. Students will also engage in a discussion with a panel of practitioners about how research is and may be better connected to real-world practice.

Through this module and with the support of staff, students evolve their dissertation proposals. This is especially valuable for students coming into Western style approaches to critical thinking and reading and for students returning to education after a period of work.

### **Professional Development and Work Placement (full-year module)**

This module is designed to aid students in developing their own professional practice and supporting their translation of course research and theoretical learning into the contemporary arts and cultural workspace. It embeds some of the underpinning themes of the MA in Arts Management programme: the promotion of critical, reflective and reflexive thinking in research and practice; the opening up of discussion on international and transcultural working and how to develop diverse and equitable practices; and the practice of ethical and informed decision-making within the contemporary cultural and creative sector. As an interdisciplinary course offered to all MA students in AEL, it is specifically aimed at supporting students who are planning to work in the cultural and creative sector as both freelance and employed workers and has been structured to support the professional development of those who intend to practise as both artists and managers within their chosen field.

The course is built around the student's experience of a voluntary work but also helps students to situate their learning in their longterm career planning. Assessment is completed via a personal Learning Journal and a 10-minute Video Presentation.

- **Semester 2**

## **Engaging Audiences**

This module provides an opportunity to investigate the practicalities of some of the wider policy contexts for fostering and supporting engagement in the arts explored in Semester 1 for fulltime students. Sessions will involve exploring, debating and putting into action conceptual, research, and practice-based perspectives on arts marketing, audience development and engagement.

Consideration will be given to the evolution of modes of communicating and engaging with audiences and non-audiences within arts management and how this has shifted focus amongst these key areas of work: the maintenance, development and diversification of the public as supporters and collaborators for the arts as well as visitors and ticket buyers. The different arts management tasks and relationships that this work fosters with the public will be examined. Discussions and work will be applied to real world scenarios. Students will develop confidence in theoretical approaches to audience engagement and learn practical aspects of data analysis, problem-solving in audience development, the use of branding, digital communications and evaluation. This programme is co-delivered with Thrive, a leading professional audiences research and development agency.

## **Managing the Arts II: Planning for the Arts**

This module is a continuation of Managing the Arts I and is designed to foster essential administrative and financial skills in the field of Arts Management. It will further develop understanding of the processes involved in planning, managing and leading arts events and organisations with a particular focus on financial and business planning. Topics to be covered include: fundraising and income generation strategies as well as project budgeting and cash-flow analysis and developing a business plan. This is a richly practical module in which students develop critical business management skills applicable to all aspects of arts, cultural and creative industries. Assessment is by practical coursework, completing and delivering plans and budgets based on real case study organisations.

## **Dissertation**

The dissertation is a double weighted module – it is worth one-third of the overall mark for the MA. It, aims to further develop students' research skills and knowledge of current trends (practical and theoretical) in cultural policy and arts management.

Students will undertake an independent research project (dissertation) that will be completed over the summer. This is a rich experience for all students which although challenging develops sound independent learning and research skills, applicable to a wide range of settings. Problem identification, proposal and schedule development, critical thinking and analysis, project management are all transferable skills all students develop. Producing original research also develops their confidence in presenting an informed argument, offering reasoned evidence and offering solutions to contemporary issues and concerns in cultural policy and arts management.

Recent topics have included:

- Autism on Screen: A Study of Audience Response to Autistic Portrayals and the Impact of Representation
- The Inclusivity of History Museums in England to Non-Western Visitors
- 'Bye Bye Billy Elliot: Males, Gender Participation and the Stereotypes that exist within ballet in the UK.'

### Staff Expertise

As the programme marries academic theory with contemporary practice, all course learning is delivered by a combination of academic staff and industry professionals. All current academic staff also have backgrounds within the contemporary arts and cultural sector in a range of international management and policy practices. This means that students get the full advantages of living working knowledge of contemporary trends in arts and cultural management and support in translating research and learning to those industry settings.

In addition, students can expect to gain significant benefit from the interdisciplinarity of the programme. Like the wider arts and cultural sector, the programme draws on expertise from multiple artforms and roles. Lecturers have specialist knowledge in artistic programming, audience research, international projects, community-based practice, public policy, entrepreneurship and commercial enterprise and come from a range of artform disciplines. This is ideal for students joining the programme keen to widen their opportunities and gain relevant transferable knowledge and skills

### Profile of Course Director – Dr Ali FitzGibbon

Dr Ali FitzGibbon has combined research in arts management with independent producing, programming and consultancy in the cultural sector since 2015. She has been a lecturer on the MA in Arts Management at Queen's University Belfast since 2012, joining the School as a fulltime staff member in 2019 and assuming the role of MA Convener in November 2019. She has nearly 30 years of experience in the international arts and cultural sector and a substantial portfolio of experience working as a programmer and producer at community, national and international level in theatre, festivals, outdoor and youth arts. In addition, she regularly undertakes advisory work on strategic management and leadership in the voluntary, social enterprise and community sectors.

She is on the editorial board of the Irish Journal of Arts Management and Cultural Policy and has worked in an advisory capacity for a range of local authorities and public bodies in arts and cultural planning and policy.

Ali's research has been focused on the field of management and leadership in the cultural and creative industries in the UK, examining the influence of public policy and public management on cultural sector behaviour, particularly in relation to cultural labour. Her interests are drawn to investigation into behaviours around risk-taking in cultural policy and cultural industries and what role risk management plays as a barrier to innovation, concepts of sustainability, diverse models of production and artistic freedom. She is currently developing three strands of research. The first is looking at connections between non-profit management research and theory and cultural/arts management, in particular considering the ethics of the cultural and creative industries. The second strand is looking at processes of decision-making within local and international cultural markets (looking particularly at the interplay between domestic and international festivals and touring circuits). Her final interest is a continuation of her research since 2015 on artists as stakeholders in industry and policy decision-making.

### Link to Webinar:

MA Arts Management at Queen's University Belfast:

<https://qub.adobeconnect.com/pzwafroxybwk/>

Link to Coursefinder Page:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate-taught/arts-management-ma/>

Link to School of Arts, English and Languages:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/ael/>

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