



Glasgow School of Art

Follow-up Report to the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)

October 2015

Preface

One year after publication of their ELIR Outcome and Technical Reports, institutions are asked to submit a Follow-up Report to QAA Scotland. These reports are also submitted to the Scottish Funding Council. Follow-up Reports are written in the institution's own words and require to be endorsed by the institution's Governing Body prior to publication on the QAA website. Guidance on the content and structure is provided by QAA Scotland.

Institutions are asked to focus on the action they have taken since the review and to include an indication of the effectiveness of that action. ELIR reports highlight positive practice as well as areas for development, and institutions are encouraged to comment on key areas of activity relating to good practice that they have prioritised since the ELIR.

Follow-up Reports are discussed with institutions as part of the ELIR annual discussion meetings. They also form the basis of a follow-up event which involves institutions that were reviewed around the same time coming together to explore the ways they have responded to their ELIR outcomes. This activity is intended to emphasise the enhancement-led nature of the review method.

GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

ELIR Follow-Up Report July 2014- October 2015

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Introduction

Glasgow School of Art participated in the third cycle of Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) between April and May 2014 and was judged to have effective arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience. The review team identified particular areas of positive practice, including:

- student engagement,
- student exchange,
- student support,
- professional development for academic staff,
- identifying and sharing good practice,
- significant progress in activities relating to employability.

This report represents the follow up to ELIR 2014 and uses the structure and design of information suggested in QAA Scotland's ELIR Follow-Up Report Guidance.¹

Process of Producing this Report

This report was collaboratively produced under the auspices of the Head of Learning and Teaching with contributions from Heads and Deputy Heads of Schools (representing their senior management teams), Undergraduate Programme leads in the Schools of Fine Art and Architecture, the Student Association President (outgoing and incoming), and heads of areas within the Learning and Teaching Team (including Employability and Enterprise and Widening Participation). To ensure the report reflected the various enhancement activities across GSA, an active consultation process took place within the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee and Academic Council meetings. These conversations were followed up through direct individual meetings with Heads of School and/or their Deputy

¹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/ELIR-3-Guidance-14.pdf>

Heads over the first months of Professor Gunn's position at GSA. The report has been designed to demonstrate the vibrancy of approaches in each of GSA's Schools, which is illustrative of the distributed nature of enhancement at GSA currently.

Changing Organisational Context regarding Learning and Teaching during the ELIR Annual Review Year

2014 was a significant year for GSA in terms of learning and teaching organisation.

1. *The Impact of the Mackintosh Fire:* The devastating fire within the Mackintosh building had huge impacts upon staff and students as well as adding further strain to the already stretched GSA estate. In order to ensure appropriate space was made available to accommodate students and staff within Fine Art as well as within core professional services, much of the summer was spent sourcing and redeveloping a new suite of office and teaching space in preparation for the 2014/15 academic session. The successful relocation of the School of Fine Art to the Tontine Building happened over the summer 2014.
2. *Changes in staff who oversaw Learning and Teaching Enhancement at an institutional level:* There was substantial flux in the human resources related to institutional-wide educational enhancement at GSA. In May 2014 the Undergraduate Coordinator who oversaw educational development across GSA (including the PG Certificate in Learning and Teaching) moved to a new post at Manchester Metropolitan University and part-time temporary cover was recruited for the period May-September 2014. In the summer of 2014 a new strategic position of Head of Learning and Teaching was introduced to GSA to provide strategic oversight of learning and teaching enhancement, as well as manage a Learning and Teaching Team (which included educational development opportunities across GSA, as well as Careers, and Employability and Enterprise). This post was recruited for in August 2014 and the new Head of L&T, Professor Vicky Gunn, started on 31st October. During October 2014, immediately prior to the new Head of Learning and Teaching commencing her position, the Deputy Director resigned from GSA and the institution undertook an Executive level restructure of professional services and academic provision. The resulting restructure saw an expansion of the roles of the Head of Learning & Teaching, Head of Research, and the Registrar as well as the removal of the position of Deputy Director. Of most relevance to the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching at GSA, the Head of Learning and Teaching's portfolio expanded from the strategic leadership of a Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy and a Learning and Teaching Team, to include GSA's Lifelong learning programmes, widening participation and articulation, and international academic development. The rationale for this restructure was to enable systematic enhancement of Learning & Teaching across the life stages of education in Art, Design, and Architecture (from childhood to postgraduate learning and beyond both locally and as relevant to the institution's internationalisation agenda). With respect to the development of enhanced PG(R) learning, the Head of Research and Head of Learning and Teaching oversee developments together.
3. *Academic Developments:* Additionally, early in the 2015/16 academic session, the academic structure of GSA was reviewed and a decision was taken to introduce a fourth School of Visualisation and Simulation. This School will be an evolution of the Digital Design Studio and the new School will be undertaking work to develop a new undergraduate programme with a potential start date of September 2017, as well as expanding recruitment to its postgraduate taught offer. Alongside the creation of this new School the Forum for Critical Inquiry was also reviewed, bringing the provision of History and Theory directly into the Schools of Design and Fine Art, allowing for Schools to enhance their curricular alignments and explore new and alternative pedagogical

models for the delivery of programme aims and content. In the first instance, this has resulted in a devolution of specialists in history and critical studies into each of the Schools (such a structure already exists within the School of Architecture). By September 2017, each School will have reviewed how the relationships between theory and studio practice will be facilitated through the curriculum.

These changes summarise the organisational context in which this report has been written and provide a narrative to support the actions taken outlined below.

Main Areas of Action since ELIR

To a certain extent, the resignation of the GSA Undergraduate Coordinator, recruitment to the new position of Head of Learning and Teaching, and the departure of the GSA's Deputy Director on top of the circumstances of the GSA fire, impacted on the School's immediate responses to the ELIR findings. To help the reader, this report outlines, firstly, the process of developing a GSA-wide Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (identified as an area for development within the ELIR outcomes report) and, secondly, responses to specific areas for development that all fall within the focus of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy.

Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy

(identified as an Area for Development in the ELIR Review Report)

“Progress with the planned review, development and delivery of the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy, ensuring that staff at all levels are aware of the strategy and that there are effective links with enhancement activity and initiatives at school and programme level.”

In November 2014 the Head of Learning and Teaching began facilitating a process to develop a Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy. The first part of this process involved identifying areas upon which GSA wishes to build in relation to its ambition to be a global leader in studio-based learning and research. These discussions occurred in Boards of Studies as well as at the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee in late 2014. A core part of the initiation of this process has been discussions relating to the theme of Studio+. Studio+ recognises that studio-based learning includes both discipline-specific activities and broader attributes development in a range of areas, and aims to provide a curriculum which explicitly equips students with the ability to articulate their disciplinary as well as broader knowledge, skills and experience. This discussion was the core theme of our annual Learning and Teaching event in spring 2015.

Following these discussions in the 2014-15 session, Boards of Studies agreed that a co-creation method would be employed to draw up a new Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy between August-October 2015. This new approach has extended our original timescale for development (from approval of the strategy by December 2014 to approval by December 2015). We believe, however, that this process will produce a strategy fit for purpose, focusing on key drivers in art, design, digital design and architecture education and allowing staff within GSA to engage with and implement GSA ambitions in an easily accessible manner. This co-creation activity, overseen by the Head of Learning and Teaching, assumes that the strategy produced from the process will be a living document and included the following elements:

1. A Brief that outlined 4 core areas of debate: studio as the ecology of learning and teaching at GSA; studio+ as a possible curricular vehicle for clarifying the

development of interdisciplinary and employability attributes; 21st Century studio as a rubric for enhanced use of technology within student learning (in addition to broader strategic decisions regarding the specifics of Estates' development); Open Studio as a rubric for the development of creative visual arts education over the life stages.

2. A student creative enquiry using similar headings but focused on gaining student engagement in the debates about studio-based pedagogies
3. Semi-structured thematic workshops that directed staff creation of elements of the strategy
4. A structure for incorporating both staff and student voices into the strategy.

Timescales

1. Production of the LTES Brief:

During June-August 2015 A group including the Head of L&T, Deputy Heads of Schools of Design and Architecture, Undergraduate Programme Lead from School of Fine Art, Postgraduate Programme Lead from Digital Design, the Student President, the Student Engagement Officer and the Head of Learning Resources produced the LTES Brief. This brief outlined the discussion areas as well as central decisions to be made regarding enhancement for the period 2015-2018. To raise awareness of the rationale behind such a Learning and Teaching enhancement strategy, a document was produced alongside the brief that outlined the internal and external drivers for the development of a Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy. An open invitation went out to all staff to participate in the co-creation workshops.

2. Production of the student creative enquiry

During August 2015, to ensure that the specifics of the student voice were articulated and heard as part of the process of creating an LTES, a student-led Creative Enquiry was launched to ensure students had direct input into the co-creation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. Using the themes of the LTES brief, another student-focused brief was devised by members of the Learning and Teaching Team. A group of students were recruited at the start of Term 1. The group are currently working to deliver the project and aim to report at the end of November 2015

3. Co-creation workshops

To encourage engagement with the brief, 8 co-creation workshops were facilitated by the Head of Learning and Teaching and open to all staff as follows:

| | |
|--|----------|
| Learning and Teaching Strategy: A co-creation approach | 03.09.15 |
| Studio/Studio+ Relationships | 14.09.15 |
| Studio/Studio+ Relationships | 17.09.15 |
| 21 st Century Studio – Engaging with Technology Enhanced Learning & Teaching at GSA | 22.09.15 |
| PGT Electives and Credit Frameworks | 29.09.15 |
| Employability and Enterprise | 07.10.15 |
| Open Studio, Articulation and Widening Participation | 09.10.15 |
| LTES Pulling Together Day | 15.10.15 |

4. The Head of Learning and Teaching has drawn the material from the workshops together into achievable objectives and the initial draft to Boards of Studies has been submitted (28-29 Oct 2015)
5. The Head of Learning and Teaching will oversee the incorporation of the outcomes of the students' creative enquiry into an update report on LTES to Boards of Studies in March 2016.
6. The agreed outcomes of this process will be reported as part of the annual discussions with QAA Scotland.

At the same time the process of co-creation was occurring, an initial decision was taken (in discussion between the Head of Learning and Teaching and Registry) to introduce one key central enhancement group: A Learning and Teaching Enhancement Working Group, chaired by the Head of Learning and Teaching and including Deputy Heads of School, Undergraduate Programme Coordinators, and student representation. It will oversee subsequent implementation of the strategy at an institutional level. It will be reported by the Head of Learning and Teaching as part of her update reports to the Boards of Studies and Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee.

Specific Areas for Development:

As well as the over-arching development of a Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (which was delayed initially because of the changes to the structure of the Executive outlined above), each School responded immediately to the findings of the ELIR review. These are discussed under specific themes below:

1. Assessment and Feedback

“Ensure students have a clear understanding of grading criteria and practices, and also consider how the generic assessment scheme can be adapted to the school and programme level. GSA should also ensure that there is parity of feedback practice across the institution, so that all students receive timely, relevant and high-quality feedback on their progress at key points during their programmes. Although GSA has provided staff development in relation to assessment and feedback, students remain unclear about how their work relates to learning outcomes, how assessment criteria are used to make judgements about the achievement of learning outcomes, and how feedback might help in their understanding of why a particular grade has been awarded.”

Assessment and Feedback matters are discussed at individual Board of Studies for each School as well as through Staff-Student Liaison Committees and the Director’s Forum. These last two arenas were reviewed over two academic sessions: 2012-14 and the recommendations from this review process were approved via the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee in Sept 2014 and ratified by Academic Council in December 2014. Additionally, GSA has continued to be directly engaged with enhancement activities focused on assessment and feedback at two structural levels:

1. Institutional (through centrally provided opportunities for educational development and oversight provided by the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee). As a response to the ELIR findings and an outcome of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy co-creation process, these will be further supported through the work of a series of enhancement fora.
2. School (through structures in each School: A learning and teaching advisory committee in the School of Fine Art; a learning and teaching committee in the MackIntosh School of Architecture and Academic Discourse Meetings in the School of Design) level.

More immediately (From June 2014), institutionally, colleagues within the nascent Learning and Teaching Team organised and delivered educational CPD workshops on assessment and feedback across GSA. To date these have included: specific workshops for part-time staff based within each school on ‘Assessment for learning and enhancing formative feedback’; A series of Learning and Teaching events with a range of themes: one focused on ‘The Crit as an assessment and feedback process’, one examined inclusive Learning and Teaching practices; A pedagogical research seminar focusing on the benefits of collaborative online projects and peer Crits in an online environment as formative progress processes. Work has

also been undertaken to redevelop the Postgraduate Certificate In Learning and Teaching to align more closely with Learning and Teaching practices within a studio-based learning environment, including assessment and feedback within the creative disciplines. These activities have supported colleagues across GSA in enhancing their approaches to assessment and feedback practices in order to ensure colleagues provide students parity in feedback experiences.

A range of devolved, specific developments have occurred at a School and programme level, including systematic assessment and feedback inductions at the start of the academic year with students as relevant to each School and, local initiatives, such as:

- Provision of non-mandatory exit tutorials in some undergraduate programmes in the School of Design as well as specific student engagement in the process of managing crit situations to ensure a record of feedback is available;
- Within new programme specifications the assessment and feedback processes are clearly outlined as well as the correlation between assessment criteria and learning outcomes within the School of Fine Art. The course documents now explicitly link all departments within the programme and articulate the students' learning across the different areas within the UG Fine Art programme. These documents also clearly state the feedback to their on-going work, the stages at which formative and summative feedback will be delivered and the type of feedback this will be (i.e. verbal, written, peer etc.).
- The Mackintosh School of Architecture is working towards an Assessment and Feedback model, which will provide clarity and transparency in the processes involved and be developed in relation to the timescales identified in the forthcoming co-created Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy. It aims to establish a model of good practice that will deliver processes which are clear, open and fair, and provide appropriate mechanisms for feedback to and from students. This activity is overseen by the Head of Undergraduate Programmes in MSA and has focused on four areas: Clarification of the assessment process; Improved feedback documentation; Revised Quality Learning and Teaching procedures; Student Representative roles and processes.

More systematically,

- In continuing to meet GSA's commitment to enhancing students' understanding of how feedback operates in a studio-led environment, all three schools are undergoing a review of internal student feedback mechanisms, including Quality Enhancement Questionnaires which students complete at the end of each course. Enhancements through this process will be captured through the Schools' Programme Monitoring and Annual Review cycle, allowing for the sharing of good practice.
- Engagement will continue to be enhanced in relation to the National Student Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey. The responsibility for interpreting these surveys moved from Registry to the Learning and Teaching Team in August 2015. The aim is for outcomes of these surveys to be analysed closely both within respective Schools and by the Head of Learning and Teaching. This analysis is to be reported at Boards of Studies and Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes with resulting Schools-based action plans forming the basis of a range of developments and enhancements in the student experience for 2015/16 and onwards.
- The Learning and Teaching Team, lead by the Head of Learning and Teaching, are now looking at an adaptation of the session on assessment within the PG Certificate Learning and Teaching so it can operate as a standalone CPD system that is offered across the School once a year, (but also has a credit-bearing aspect for inclusion within the Postgraduate Certificate).

- The impact of activity planning and the prospect of developing teaching norms to manage workplans should provide detailed intelligence regarding the actual type and timing of formative and summative assessment to compare against student experience of them, (This process is occurring as part of a project lead by the Head of Research to introduce Annual Research Plans within a broader work planning model supported by Human Resources). The key timescale for the enhancement of learning and teaching is March 2016, when the respective Heads of Research and L&T will have clarified teaching norms in each School. As a key part of developing the GSA Work Planning Model, a family of GSA course types is being devised to encompass the full range of courses offered at Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels across all schools. This portfolio will provide Heads of Departments with GSA Teaching Norms for each course type. These norms will enumerate contact time and volumes of sessions required to deliver course elements such as formative and summative feedback and assessment. Teaching Norms will provide clarity to Schools on the institutional Learning and Teaching resources required to deliver taught programmes. Students will be provided with a clearer understanding of the succession of course types across a degree programme and will benefit from having clearer expectations of the contact time relevant to each course type.

2: Management of enhancement projects

“Enable the School to achieve the full benefit of its enhancement activities by ensuring that projects have clear objectives, that their effectiveness is measured, and that the outcomes are acted upon.”

To improve cross-School engagement with the Enhancement Themes, Glasgow School of Art embarked on a three-year plan focused on *Transitions*. This plan has an explicit aim of enabling the mainstreaming of outcomes as well as increasing interactions between academics across GSA with the Enhancement Themes. This is being achieved through a series of directed phases:

- Phase 1 (2014-15): *Transitions In*. This was lead by the Head of Continuing Education and centred on articulations and access into GSA. The outcomes from this work were closer working relations between the access team and respective admissions tutors as well as the development of an articulation policy which will enable formal relationships between FE Colleges (resulting in our first articulation with Clyde College).
- Phase 2 (2015-16): *Transitions Through*. (This is lead by the Head of Learning and Teaching) Looking at specific cross-GSA and embedded activities within each schools’ curriculum aimed at facilitating transitions of a ‘stepping up’ nature or a deliberate ‘moving out of a known comfort zone’. This work is now on-going. It will enable (1) examples of good practice relating to supporting students through stages of their learning to be shared across the School; (2) the development of principles around the ‘stepping up’ of learning at GSA to be clearly articulated (with an ultimate aim of improving student experience of these stages).
- Phase 3 (2014-17): *Transitions Out* (This has been lead by the Head of Learning and Teaching since her arrival at GSA in late October 2014) – which runs concurrently for the full three years of the theme and pulls all of the work together from the perspective of the outcomes of a GSA education. To date it has focused on the experience of students who were in receipt of Phoenix Bursaries (a supportive post-academic studio-based opportunity offered to students affected by the fire) to explore the particular nature of transitions out of Fine Art as well as the *Makers and Producers (MAPS) social media graduate community*: MAPS network aimed to establish a bridge from Glasgow School of Art to the local creative sector by establishing an online community of students,

emergent graduate makers, and early stage practitioners. The outcomes of this project are expected to inform future delivery and support the development of a relevant creative business network that will bridge the gap between GSA and the creative business sector. (Due to report November 2015.)

3: Employability

“Continue to develop, implement and embed a strategic approach to employability across the institution, ensuring that students can articulate a range of employability skills when they graduate.”

Learning and Teaching Team-Led Activities

Following ELIR 2014, the then Deputy Director brought together the Careers Service and the Employability and Enterprise Manager into the newly formed Learning and Teaching Team. This team is led by a newly recruited Head of Learning and Teaching and its focus is threefold:

1. *Embedding Employability and Enterprise teaching in the curriculum* through a range of activities including translating implicit activity, occurring within the curriculum that is commensurate with the development of professional attributes, into explicit statements. Activities connected to this for the academic session 2014-15 include:
 - The Student Employability and Enterprise Manager and the Careers Advisor working with Programme Leaders to increase the delivery of professional development support sessions within the timetable.
 - The Student Employability and Enterprise Manager becoming a formal member of Boards of Studies.
 - The outlining of a possible review as to how assessment practices capture employability and enterprise practice. This follows on from work undertaken through an HEA funded project (The Anatomy Project) that mapped examples of employability type assessment activities within the programmes at GSA (The final project outputs go live at the end of October 2015). The aim is to undertake more detailed analysis of assessment practices in collaboration with Programme Leaders to enable enhancement of practice and outline where gaps exist in terms of the opportunities to learn provided.
2. *Building and emphasising opportunities through extra and co-curriculum activities* by implementing and promoting more collaborative opportunities with external partners, developing and redefining a ‘transitions out’ initiative, and scheduling and delivering Employability and Enterprise activities across the institute. One specific example of this is MAPs Network activity outlined earlier in this document.
3. *Engaging employers and external partners* by generating new and developing and maintaining existing relationships with local businesses and communities.
 - From 2014 there has been a review of the management and coordination of live projects, which involve delivering curriculum-related work for a local partner, such as a business or social enterprise, began in the autumn 2014. The Student Employability and Enterprise Manager is overseeing this with the Knowledge Exchange Manager and the Careers Advisor and is due to complete the review by the end of 2015-16 academic session.
 - From 2015, the Student Employability and Enterprise Manager has also started to scope what possibilities exist for growing the opportunities of an incubator like experience for all GSA students. Recommendations for practical ways forward regarding this will be reported to the Executive during the 2015-16 academic session.

Student-Led Activity

Additionally, in 2015/16, the president of the Students' Association, in conjunction with Academic Services, will lead the development of a Student Partnership Agreement. It is anticipated that the project-based goals of the Student Partnership Agreement will link closely with the recommendations from the Review of Existing Student Representation and Engagement Systems. A key focus will be empowering The Students' Association to take direct ownership of extra-curricular activity, in particular those which relate to project-based professional practice, experimentation through the arts, and employability.

4: Provision of information

"Progress the work being undertaken by senior staff in each of the three schools to review the provision of information for students. GSA should ensure that students on all programmes have access to comprehensive and user-friendly information, in addition to programme specifications, about their programmes of study and other aspects of academic provision at GSA."

Throughout 2014-15 Schools reviewed their current processes around student information regarding programmes. Discussions relating to this occurred at both Boards of Studies and Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee. It was noted that both the School of Fine Art and Mackintosh School of Architecture have been developing handbook-style material for their programmes. (Indeed, under the auspices of the Head of the School of Fine Art, the School of Fine Art underwent a full curriculum mapping project during 2012/13 with new Course Specifications produced for the UG Fine Art Programme during session 2013/14. These were introduced during 2014/15 and form the basis of information for students.) All of the schools recognise that engagement in and production of information suitable to students at GSA is an on-going enhancement issue. Oversight of these processes at a senior level now falls within the remit of the newly convened, Learning and Teaching Enhancement Working Group.

5: Management of information

"In the context of GSA's reliance on a large number of part-time teaching staff, the institution should further develop its processes for monitoring the numbers and roles of part-time staff on both permanent and temporary contracts."

In the summer of 2014 Human Resources conducted a full review of all staff across GSA in order to ascertain the number of full-time and part-time staff employed within each area of the institution. Following this the School has started a review of work planning for academic and research staff. This has been followed by the introduction of a GSA-wide strategic initiative to implement an enhanced Activity Planning scheme from Session 2015-2016. The process is lead by Tom Inns and the initiative is lead by the Chair of the Activity Planning Working Group (Head of Research) and the Head of Human Resources. Through this review, it is intended that a new structure will be in place for the start of academic year 2015/16 which will enable close identification of the balance between teaching, scholarship, research and administration for each member of academic staff. This discussion will inform the on-going consideration by what will become an Activity Planning Implementation Group (Lead by the Head of Research) of the balance of the academic workforce in terms of the number of full time/part time staff on permanent/temporary contracts. The number of academic staff employed on flexible contracts continues to be reviewed by both the Head of Human Resources and Heads of School in order that the use of flexible contracts is minimised. It is anticipated that as this developmental process is reiterated it will generate human resources based structures that will enable quicker communication with part-time staff about GSA policies and practices.

6. Provision for postgraduate research students

“In the context of the planned growth in postgraduate research student numbers, ensure sufficient capacity for the support and enhancement of the research student experience.”

Two key aspects of this agenda now sit with the Learning and Teaching team:

- Ensuring the currency and relevance of the PG electives, especially with the imminent recruitment to the new MRes, (which embeds researcher development into the supervision process).
- Identifying the resources (time and opportunities) to enable postgraduate researchers to gain teaching experience commensurate with Vitae’s Early Career Researcher taxonomy and the UK Professional Standards Framework Associate Fellow category.

These will be a focus of design, planning, and implementation activity in 2015-16. The delay in this was a result of ensuring that the restructuring of the team allowed for engagement with this area to be mainstreamed.

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