

Enhancement-led Institutional Review of Glasgow School of Art

Outcome Report

May 2014

Contents

About the Enhancement-led Institutional Review method.....	1
About this review.....	1
About Glasgow School of Art	2
Overarching judgement about Glasgow School of Art	3
Areas of positive practice	3
Areas for development	4
What happens next?	5
Further information.....	5

About the Enhancement-led Institutional Review method

A dedicated page of the QAA website explains the method for [Enhancement-led Institutional Review](#) of higher education institutions in Scotland and has links to the ELIR handbook and other informative documents.¹ You can also find more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.²

Further details about the enhancement-led approach can be found in an accompanying [ELIR information document](#),³ including an overview of the review method, definitions of the judgement categories, and explanations of follow-up action. It also contains information on the Scottish Funding Council's response to ELIR judgements.

About this review

This is the Outcome Report of the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Glasgow School of Art (GSA). The review took place as follows: Part 1 visit on 2-3 April 2014 and Part 2 visit on 6-9 May 2014. The review was conducted by a team of six reviewers:

- Professor Jeremy Bradshaw (academic reviewer)
- Miss Rachael Brimley (student reviewer)
- Mr Lars Ebert (international reviewer)
- Professor Mark Hunt (academic reviewer)
- Mr Paul Probyn (coordinating reviewer)
- Professor Andrew Walker (academic reviewer).

This report sets out the overarching judgement formed by the ELIR team on:

- the current and likely future effectiveness of the institution's arrangements for managing academic standards and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience.

It is possible for the overarching judgement to be expressed in three levels which indicate that the institution's arrangements are: effective; have limited effectiveness; or are not effective. More detail on these categories is provided in the ELIR information document.

The overarching judgement for this report can be found on page 3, followed by the areas of positive practice and the areas for development.

A more detailed [Technical Report](#) is also available for this review.⁴ The Technical Report sets out the ELIR team's findings under each of the headings in the ELIR 3 method.

¹ Further information about the ELIR method: www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/elir.aspx

² Further information about QAA: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus

³ ELIR information document: www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/ELIR-information.pdf

⁴ Technical report: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/provider?UKPRN=10002681#.U_xUq3hwY-I

About Glasgow School of Art

GSA was founded in 1845 and was one the first Government Schools of Design, promoting good design for the manufacturing industries. It is an accredited institution of the University of Glasgow, which has validated GSA undergraduate and postgraduate programmes since 1992.

GSA's stated ethos is to foster the conditions for creativity in order to promote critical thinking, experimentation, discovery and innovation. GSA seeks to be exceptional but not exclusive, and aspirational but accessible.

The academic structure comprises the School of Fine Art; the School of Design; the Mackintosh School of Architecture; the Digital Design Studio; and the Graduate School; as well as the Forum for Critical Inquiry (FoCI).

The main GSA campus is located in the Garnethill district of Glasgow and comprises the world renowned Mackintosh Building as well as the recently completed Reid Building, which opened in April 2014 and represents a £50 million investment by the Scottish Funding Council. GSA also has a second location in Glasgow, the Hub at Pacific Quay. The Glasgow School of Art in Singapore is currently located in three specialist design studios on the Singapore Institute of Technology campus of Temasek Polytechnic, and will move to purpose-built accommodation in 2014.

Overarching judgement about Glasgow School of Art

Glasgow School of Art has **effective** arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience. These arrangements are likely to continue to be effective in the future.

This is a positive judgement, which means Glasgow School of Art has robust arrangements for securing academic standards and for enhancing the quality of the student experience.

Areas of positive practice

1 The ELIR has identified a number of areas of positive practice and these are summarised below.

2 **Student engagement** - There is a positive and effective relationship between the Students' Association and the GSA executive, which ensures that the student voice is heard at the highest levels of the institution. The appointment of the Student Engagement Coordinator (a post funded by GSA but employed by the Students' Association) is an effective mechanism for supporting the President of the Students' Association in developing new strategies for student engagement.

3 **Student exchange** - The programme of student exchanges, involving a wide range of international partner institutions, is promoted effectively by GSA and is an integral part of the GSA student experience. Exchange opportunities are open to all undergraduate students and students from selected postgraduate programmes. Students commented positively on the opportunity to undertake study abroad and the support provided by GSA for this.

4 **Student support** - GSA provides a wide range of support services which are accessible and well signposted, and which are well regarded by students. Support services are subject to annual monitoring, periodic review and internal audit, as well as being benchmarked externally.

5 **Employability** - Since the 2010 ELIR GSA has made significant progress in bringing together a number of projects to embed employability across the institution. The recently appointed Student Employability and Enterprise Manager is likely to support the development of a strategic approach to employability.

6 **Professional development for academic staff** - GSA provides a wide range of professional development opportunities for all academic staff. These include the Postgraduate Certificate programmes in Teaching and Learning and in Supervision, which are mandatory for new lecturers, and the Academic Development and Promotion of Teaching (ADAPT) Continual Professional Development Framework, which leads to Fellowship and Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. Staff are positive about these opportunities which are placing a greater focus on learning and teaching.

7 **Identifying and sharing good practice** - GSA has developed a range of systematic mechanisms which facilitate the identification and sharing of good practice. These include an annual learning and teaching event, as well as the Programme Monitoring and Annual Reporting (PMAR) and Periodic Review processes which include quality enhancement as a standard heading in report templates and take a critical friend approach to disseminating good practice across the schools.

8 **GSA Singapore** - GSA's partnership with the Singapore Institute of Technology, which delivers selected School of Design programmes in Singapore, is effectively managed. The Overseas Immersion Programme, which involves Singapore-based students spending three weeks in Glasgow, provides a comprehensive introduction to GSA's culture and practices.

9 **Collaborative provision policy** - the Collaborative Provision Policy, which was recently developed at the time of the ELIR, has been widely consulted on and provides an effective framework for GSA to pursue its strategic intention to grow its international partnership activity.

Areas for development

10 The University is asked to consider the areas summarised below.

11 **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.

12 **Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy** - 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.

13 **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.

14 **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.

15 **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.

16 **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.

17 **Management 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.

What happens next?

18 QAA Scotland will continue to engage with the institution through the annual discussion visits which, amongst other matters, consider the ways in which the institution is responding to the ELIR outcomes.

19 One year after publication of the ELIR Outcome and Technical Reports, institutions are asked to provide a follow-up report to indicate how they are responding to the outcomes of ELIR. Institutions also engage in a follow-up event with colleagues from other institutions to explore the ways in which the ELIR outcomes are being implemented. The final version of the institution's follow-up report is published on the QAA website.

Further information

20 A more detailed [Technical Report](#) is also available for this review. The Technical Report sets out the ELIR team's findings under each of the headings in the ELIR 3 method.

21 This review and its findings relate to the institution as a whole and do not provide information about individual programmes of study or subjects. For further information about those, contact the institution or visit its [website](#).

22 University sector institutions in Scotland also engage in systematic Enhancement Theme activity. Further information about that work, which has a sector-wide and institutional focus, can be found on the [Enhancement Themes website](#).

23 Further information about QAA Scotland and the enhancement-led approach, including the ELIR method, can be found on the [QAA website](#).

For further information about the Scottish Funding Council see www.sfc.ac.uk.

QAA910 - R3933 - Aug 14

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2014
183 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G2 5QD

Tel: 0141 572 3420

Email: enquiries@qaa.ac.uk

Website: www.qaa.ac.uk

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786