

## University of Glasgow

**Academic Standards Committee – Thursday 21 May 2015****The Glasgow School of Art: Report on the Periodic Review of the Mackintosh School of Architecture – Session 2014/15**

**Robbie Mulholland, Clerk, Joint Liaison Committee of the University of Glasgow and The Glasgow School of Art**

**Review Panel**

Dr Alistair Payne (Convenor)	Head of School of Fine Art
Ms Janet Allison	Head of Academic Registry
Dr Paul Chapman	Deputy Director, Digital Design Studio
Professor Lorraine Farrelly	External Subject Specialist, University of Reading
Ms Jill Hammond	Head of Student Support and Development
Mr Will Judge	President of GSA Students' Association
Mr Patrick Macklin	Programme Leader, Interior Design
Mr Mick McGraw	Undergraduate Programme Leader for School of Fine Art
Professor Elizabeth Moignard	University of Glasgow Senate Representative
Ms Larissa Weiner	Student Representative, Product Design

Apologies

Professor Vicky Gunn, Head of Learning and Teaching

Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam, Head of School of Design

Attending

Ewan Muir (Registry), Registry Administrator

Dr Craig Williamson, Registrar (25<sup>th</sup> and morning of 26<sup>th</sup> February)

Secretary

Ms Kathleen Simmonds, Policy Officer, Academic Services

**The Review was held on Thursday 26 February 2015, with a briefing session held on 25 February 2015.**

**1. Introduction: Background Information**

- 1.1 The teaching of architecture has existed since the inception of the Glasgow School of Art and the Mackintosh School of Architecture is fundamental to its profile, identity, activity and reputation. As one of its three main schools, it has had influence in shaping the profile and direction of the Glasgow School of Art. Since 1978 it has occupied the purpose-built Bourdon Building in the Garnethill campus. MSA has a reputation for linking practice and education in a direct way. This manifests itself in an ethos of practice-based teaching, research and knowledge exchange and an ambition to educate the next generation of architects in a changing professional landscape, which bridges the cultural and construction industries.

- 1.2 MSA keeps the worlds of architectural practice and architectural education close together, particularly through the presence of accomplished practitioner/tutors teaching in the design studio in both its full time and part-time study modes.
- 1.3 In the recent RIBA Validation Report, it was recorded that staff consider that they are all actively involved in the delivery of the School's ethos. That ethos is ingrained in its studio culture, a particular and well-established characteristic of all Schools in GSA.
- 1.4 MSA places great emphasis on studio working and learning in a community, reinforcing a culture of collaborative working that is intrinsic to the best professional architectural studios. This links the activities to the architectural profession and gives a robust preparation to students anticipating professional life and practice beyond academia.
- 1.5 Specialist subjects such as Architectural Technology and Professional Studies (and the tutors who deliver them) are integrated into the studio experience where possible. MSA studio tutors and subject specialists work, and in some cases lead, practices or research groups of national and international significance and are professionally active in countries as diverse as UK, Russia, Cambodia, Hungary, China, Iceland, Puerto Rico, Kenya and Ghana. This gives MSA design studios a rigorous, inclusive, culturally aware and intellectual atmosphere.
- 1.6 Studio at MSA is both a physical place and a mode of working. Every student has a dedicated workspace within a shared studio, often providing contact with other year groups. Studios are available seven days a week and are the creative hub for both students and staff. They are a significant component in MSA's learning and teaching culture.
- 1.7 Peer learning underpins this experience and 'thinking and making' characterises the activities. In this regard, the technical workshops have always been seen as extensions to that studio culture by staff and students. Studio as both place and activity is increasingly rare in UK HEI's but is something valued and shared with other Schools within GSA.
- 1.8 Studios are also central to defining and delivering learning and teaching and establishing an integrative practice. Within MSA, architecture is taught as an interdisciplinary endeavour, whereas other fields such as, structural and environmental engineering and quantity surveying, are more collaborators in the final architectural output.

## **2. Periodic Review**

- 2.1 The current session (2014/15) is the third that GSA has operated a Periodic Review model grouping cognate provision. However, this is the first time that MSA has been subject to Periodic Review within this model.
- 2.2 The Self-Evaluation Report preparation was led by the Deputy Head of MSA in conjunction with the Head of MSA and the Academic Support Manger. Staff and students were involved in the process and the documentation was reported and endorsed at MSA's Board of Studies and Student Forum.
- 2.3 During the event on 26 February 2015, the Review Panel met with:

Professor Christopher Platt	Head of MSA
Sally Stewart	Deputy Head of MSA
Alan Hooper	Undergraduate Programme Leader
Jo Crotch	Diploma/Postgraduate Programme Leader
Ken Macrae	Engineering with Architecture Programme Leader

Craig Laurie	Technical Support Officer – representing technical staff
Professor Johnny Rodger	Representing teaching staff, specialist subject area – HAUS
Rosalie Menon	Representing part-time teaching staff, specialist subject area Arch. Technology
Robert Mantho	Stage 5 Leader, representing teaching staff, subject area studio
Linnea Roennquist	Stage 2 Student
Jamie Mack	Stage 2 Student
Anna Sigmundsdottir	Stage 3 Student
Lee Fotheringham	Stage 3 Student (part-time)
Shane Bradley	Stage 4 (Hons)
Aaron Borchardt	Stage 4 (Dip)
Anna Kozak	Stage 4 (Dip)
Hsien Yi Lim	Stage 5
Corrie-Anne Rounding	Stage 5
Dan Tinto	Stage 5
Megha Behal	M.Arch. Studies
Kyratsoula Papanikolaou	M.Arch. Studies

2.4 In addition to meeting with staff and students, the Review panel undertook a tour of the Bourdon Building and the workshop facilities in the Reid Building in order to gain a greater understanding of the student experience, accommodation and resources.

2.5 The Review panel considered the following provision offered by MSA:

Bachelor of Architecture (Hons)	<i>A five year programme (incl PPYO)</i>
Bachelor of Architecture (PT)	<i>A four year mode of study</i>
Diploma in Architecture	<i>A two year programme (which may include the final year of the B.Arch (Hons) programme)</i>
Diploma in Architecture (PT)	<i>A three year mode of study</i>
Master of Architecture by Conversion	<i>A further 15 weeks full time supervised study extension to the final year of the Diploma in Architecture programme</i>
Master of Architecture by Conversion (PT)	<i>A further 30 weeks part-time supervised study extension to the final year of the Diploma in Architecture programme</i>
Master of Architectural Studies	<i>A one year programme</i>

2.6 Student numbers for session 2013/14 were as follows:

<b>Programme</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Bachelor of Architecture (Hons)	347
Bachelor of Architecture (PT)	10

Diploma in Architecture (FT)	112
Diploma in Architecture (PT)	13
Master of Architecture by Conversion	14
Master of Architectural Studies	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>515</b>

### 3. Overall Aims of MSA's Provision

3.1 The Self-Evaluation Report set out the overall aims of MSA's provision. The Review panel discussed areas where they felt that further explanation would be appropriate and decided that there were six main areas at Review for consideration. These comprised:

- Erasmus Exchange Arrangements
- Sharing of the Curriculum and Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to Architects Registration Board (ARB)/Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Professional Criteria
- Resources
- External Feedback Mechanisms: National Students Survey (NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)
- Research Teaching Linkages
- MSA's Regulations: 20 Credit Fail and Parity of Progression
- Part-time Provision: Bachelor of Architecture and Diploma in Architecture
- Student Representation and Feedback Mechanisms

### 4. Erasmus

4.1 The Review panel had a wide-ranging discussion regarding MSA's Erasmus programme. The Review panel acknowledged that it offered valuable experience for students but there were, nevertheless, challenges attached to the provision that had to be addressed, and which had been highlighted in external examiner reports. The Erasmus exchange model within MSA had been changed, with the revised provision offered from session 2013/2014. Previously, exchange had been offered as a full year exchange in Stage 2 and Stage 4 but it was now offered in Stage 3 and Stage 5 as a partial year exchange, or as a full year exchange in Stage 4 to specific partners.

4.2 In discussions, MSA staff informed the Review panel that there had been an increased number of students on exchange out but also an increase in students coming in to MSA. Some of the difficulties regarding the provision were logistical, such as co-ordinating the programme where partners operated a semester model. There were also some concerns regarding the thesis project and the increased workload this caused for MSA staff.

4.3 The Review panel was keen to explore whether students were assessed and gained credits while on exchange. Students were assessed before going out on exchange and obtained an aggregated grade for the year. The basis of Erasmus funding did not allow for the re-marking of work that had previously been marked elsewhere. The Review panel was, therefore, concerned that a student's mark for the year was based on six months of study, albeit this was in line with the University of Glasgow's Regulations for exchange and study abroad. MSA staff advised that this was a

contentious point and it was a significant risk for students to go out on exchange in Stage 5.

- 4.4 MSA informed that it was carrying out ongoing annual reviews of its Erasmus programme. There was acknowledgement by the staff group that students, in general, had not been sufficiently clear on all the issues attached to Erasmus. In order to address this, MSA had written out to students to get feedback on the Erasmus programme. Students were invited to attend a review meeting and responses were fed back into the MSA staff review of provision.
- 4.5 A number of students expressed dissatisfaction that MSA's Erasmus provision had changed from Stage 2 and Stage 4 to Stage 3 and Stage 5. They felt it would be more appropriate in Stages 2 and 4, when it could be used for building their portfolio. Some comment suggested that while it offered a great opportunity for students, they would not consider it in Stage 3, given that they had seen peers coming back from exchange and struggling with course expectations. In that sense, it was felt that exchange students did not have the same body or quality of work as those who had not been on exchange.
- 4.6 Students had a general perception that exchange students had to compromise their work due to concerns about the pressure of having to complete work in a shorter timescale. Students felt that this came at a time in their studies when they were preoccupied with the quality and standard of their work for progression to Honours, together with the requirement to look for employment for their Professional Practice Year Out (PPYO).
- 4.7 The Review panel acknowledged that MSA was currently undertaking reviews of the Erasmus Exchange Programme. However, the Review panel **recommended** that MSA report on the interim reviews that had taken place in Years 1 and 2 via the GSA Committee cycle in term 1 of session 2015/16. (**Recommendation 1**)
- 4.8 The Review panel **recommended** that MSA undertake a comprehensive review of the MSA Erasmus programme. Issues that must be addressed included: assessment and credits; workload management; timetabling; the student experience; and organisational management. Students must be consulted as part of the review process. The resultant report must identify a plan for the future provision of Erasmus at MSA. (**Recommendation 2**)

## 5. Curriculum Sharing

- 5.1 The Review panel was interested to explore MSA's approach to Curriculum Sharing and considered that it would be helpful to look at themes of curriculum integration within MSA (horizontally and vertically), outwith MSA and across GSA. As an adjunct, the panel also wished to ascertain the impact on the curriculum of Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements. Specifically, the panel wished to know how ILOs were mapped against RIBA criteria and how these were communicated to students.
- 5.2 The Review panel was informed that there were now shared, cross-School PGT electives. In addition, HAUS and FoCI had explored sharing content for undergraduate elective courses. There were also cross-School projects, for example at Stage 1. Stage 3 students integrated with other related disciplines, such as engineering and surveying, and it was noted that the project in Stage 4 allowed for the possibility to engage with other areas of GSA. Additionally, the Erasmus programme provided the opportunity for exchange in and out of MSA.
- 5.3 In terms of sharing vertically within MSA, there were no courses with shared content. However, there was evidence of integration across Stages where students worked together in terms of "ice-breakers" and projects (Stages 2, 4 and Masters, and

- Stages 1, 5 and Masters). Stage 5 and MArch students both had access to PGT electives, which were shared with the entire PGT community across GSA.
- 5.4 Staff informed that the studio culture within MSA and the sharing of studio space contributed to integration. Indeed, the student group in their discussions with the Review panel expressed enthusiasm for studio culture at MSA. Students appreciated their individual space in studio, the opportunity to share space with other year groups and experiment through peer learning.
  - 5.5 The Review Panel **commended** MSA for providing a positive student experience in terms of the studio atmosphere and environment where students benefited from interacting with others. (**Commendation 1**)
  - 5.6 MSA informed the Review panel that the curriculum was relatively full given the need to satisfy RIBA criteria. Timetabling issues impacted on the scope of curriculum integration and any integration across GSA had to be meaningful. However, MSA acknowledged that students wanted to have shared connections and this was something that could be explored further and taken forward.
  - 5.7 In respect of the impact on the curriculum of PRSB requirements, the Review panel was notified that two years ago a complete set of maps had been developed to incorporate ARB/RIBA professional criteria. This had been prompted by the RIBA visiting board and ARB prescription submission, when criteria had to be evidenced. As a result, MSA had developed a comprehensive matrix. Additionally, the panel was informed that Stage maps broke down into course maps and students saw ILOs on briefs at the beginning of the course. Moreover, assessment sheets broke down ILOs so that students could use a self-assessment sheet. This was done for Stages 3, 4 and 5 and the intention was to integrate this further for Stages 1 and 2 in due course. MSA had also introduced a Student Handbook.
  - 5.8 However, it was commented to the Review panel that while enhancements had been made and there had been increased student awareness of assessment and that assessment workshops had taken place, it was the experience of staff that students did not often read ILOs.
  - 5.9 Undergraduate students expressed an interest in learning with other year groups and having access to School of Design electives. Students had enjoyed undertaking a project with Product Design Engineering students. Students were aware that the project was not marked but that it could comprise part of the assessment of their portfolio at the end of the Stage, when it was graded.
  - 5.10 Postgraduate students were aware that cross-discipline PGT electives had been introduced to Stage 5 at MSA (since session 2012/13). They did feel that interaction with other Schools was of benefit and welcomed the range of electives.
  - 5.11 Students who were aware of ILOs mapping to ARB/RIBA criteria were at the later stages of their studies, namely Stages 4 and 5. These students considered that this had been made very clear to them. They were aware of ARB/RIBA criteria and of the information provided on the VLE at MSA's site.
  - 5.12 The Review panel acknowledged that MSA had made improvements to course documentation. However, the panel **recommended** that MSA build on their good practice to include the relationship of ILOs to professional criteria, namely RIBA mapping, in Programme and Course Specifications across all Stages. (**Recommendation 3a**)
  - 5.13 As part of this process, the Review panel **recommended** that MSA increase student awareness of Programme and Course Specifications and specify how this would be achieved. (**Recommendation 3b**)

## 6. Resources

- 6.1 The Review panel had a wide-ranging discussion regarding MSA's resources, with particular focus on workshop provision and the Bourdon Building itself. The Review panel wished to explore whether the workshop facilities that had been centralised and located in the Reid Building were adequate in terms of MSA students' expectations. The Review panel also wished to consider whether changes to the Technical Support department had impacted on the teaching and learning experiences within MSA. Moreover, the Review panel wished to consider comments that had been made in the Self-Evaluation Report regarding the quality of the Bourdon Building as a learning and teaching environment.
- 6.2 The senior management of MSA had concerns that the Bourdon Building was not fit for purpose as a learning and teaching environment. However, they informed the Review panel that work had been done with the Estates department to improve matters. Moreover, the Bourdon Building was now on GSA's Estates agenda. Staff felt that the building was problematic but that the studio culture was excellent and, indeed, the studios were lively and vibrant places.
- 6.3 Students were animated in their enthusiasm for the studio culture at MSA. They appreciated having their own space, which they felt became their own. They also had the opportunity to interact with other Stages and benefit from peer interaction, which they considered important. Students felt that any disadvantages in the age of the building were outstripped by the benefits of studio culture.
- 6.4 MSA informed the Review panel that MSA students were the biggest users of the Technical Support department. With the migration of the workshops to the Reid Building and centralised provision, it had been hoped that architecture students would have access to other disciplines and, indeed, that there could be interdisciplinary collaboration. The Review panel was informed that there had been some difficulties and expectations had not been fully realised. The issue of workshops had been discussed frequently at MSA's Student Forum. MSA staff and Technical Support were aware of ongoing student concerns and there had been dialogue and visits between MSA and the Technical Support department.
- 6.5 Student groups informed the Review panel that there had been long discussions about the access and the effectiveness of the centralised workshop provision and that the issue had been consistently raised and addressed within MSA. Students compared their previous access to workshops as being "*constant and direct*" and previously there had been two dedicated technicians. However, they now felt it was more time consuming to go to the workshops in the Reid Building and that support was spread too thinly. Students felt that this affected their coursework. In terms of the student experience, they expressed that they missed the previous workshop atmosphere where there had been a personal connection with technicians who specifically knew their projects.
- 6.6 There was comment from students that the facilities in the Reid Building were "*brilliant*" and "*safer*". However, students believed they could not access the full range of services, such as metal making, and that with centralisation there were staffing issues and queues together with a lack of suitable scheduling for specialised inductions. Students felt that the space was too small for the number of students across GSA who wished to access the facilities. However, students were complimentary about the workshop staff and appreciated their efforts.
- 6.7 The Review panel acknowledged that MSA was engaged with students' concerns regarding centralised workshop provision, but **recommended** that MSA put a plan in place to engage further with the Technical Support department regarding supporting students in the management of resource. **(Recommendation 4a)**

- 6.8 The Registrar had informed the Review panel of the likelihood of a review of Technical Support provision at GSA. In light of this, the Review panel **recommended** that MSA fully engage with this process.

**[Secretary's Note:** At the Executive Group meeting of 10 March 2015, it was agreed that an appropriate review of Technical Support services would take place in Term 1 of session 2015/16] **(Recommendation 4b)**

**7. External Feedback Mechanisms: The National Student Survey (NSS) and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)**

- 7.1 The Review panel wished to consider formal feedback mechanisms, particularly the external feedback mechanisms, such as NSS and PTES.
- 7.2 The Review panel was informed that there was a small cohort of postgraduate students at MSA, an even smaller number of whom participate in PTES. Masters students and final year Diploma students were also considered as a single grouping for PTES. MSA considered this was an issue in terms of statistical outcomes and had made attempts to address matters by liaising with the Policy and Planning Officer, who administers the PTES survey, regarding disaggregating the two different programmes and providing more detailed statistics to include a breakdown for courses.
- 7.3 In terms of NSS, the Review panel was informed that there were some significant problems. This included students being surveyed when they are on their Professional Practice Year Out, when they are not actually present at GSA. Further, some students have left GSA or graduated when the survey occurs.
- 7.4 MSA informed that they were addressing this matter by undertaking additional student surveys, with questions based on the NSS, while students were present at GSA. This was being planned for Stages 1 to 3 and there was a move towards making the QLT surveys available electronically.
- 7.5 In terms of completing the NSS, it was suggested that strengthening the communication link between MSA and students who are on their PPYO would be advantageous. Staff also considered that it may be worth reporting the outcomes of NSS at Student Forum, in addition to SSCCs, Boards of Studies and via the PMAR process.
- 7.6 The Review panel was interested to hear students' views on NSS and PTES. Students informed that the NSS was discussed often and, indeed, three times a year at SSCCs. However, some students were unaware of the importance of NSS for GSA, as a key institutional feedback mechanism.
- 7.7 Undergraduate students acknowledged that being on their PPYO was problematic for completion of the NSS but did not want to feel that there was someone "*tracking them down*". Some students informed that they were not aware of how outcomes of the survey translated into changes at MSA, and some felt that the outcomes of the survey did not affect them directly, given that they had progressed to another Stage.
- 7.8 Postgraduate students thought the time of year that PTES was distributed was problematic but they did seem to be aware of the external importance of the results of the survey for GSA in terms of academic league tables. Students again made the point that they did not see how the outcomes of the PTES survey would affect them personally. However, they did inform that there was a lot of opportunity to provide feedback through regular meetings and that they were conscious of staff wishing to take on board their opinions and make improvements.
- 7.9 The Review panel was of the view that MSA should further address issues regarding formal feedback mechanisms. To this extent, the Review panel **recommended** that



MSA put a plan in place to engage with students in raising awareness of the importance of participation in external feedback mechanisms, particularly NSS and PTES. It was **recommended** that MSA produce a specific report for consideration in this regard via the GSA Committee cycle. **(Recommendation 5)**

## **8. Research Teaching Linkages**

- 8.1 The Review panel had detailed discussions with staff and student groups regarding Research Teaching Linkages and how current research feeds into teaching. The panel was informed by MSA that the curriculum was delivered in a way that allowed MSA research practices to be integrated into the curriculum, particularly in reference to Stages 2 to 5, and identified the Mackintosh Environmental Architecture Research Unit (MEARU), the delivery of Architectural Technology and specialist pathways in the Master of Architectural Studies as examples.
- 8.2 Staff further indicated that they pursued research interests in the main through research centres or clusters. Further, the Review panel was informed that two out of the eight research projects submitted as part of the REF 2014 came from MEARU.
- 8.3 Staff members discussed how their own personal research informed teaching, such as housing and the Stage 4 research project, and referenced staff research on the tenement building and high rise housing. In addition, teaching in Architectural Technology was derived from staff research, and vice versa. Lectures given at undergraduate level informed students of the research work of staff and every term there was the MSA Research Symposium where staff had the opportunity to discuss their work. Moreover, books written by staff appeared on the list of prescribed texts. Staff did acknowledge that there was perhaps a lack of understanding of GSA's Research Art Design Architecture Repository (RADAR).
- 8.4 During discussions with postgraduate students there was an apparent lack of awareness from some students of the research work undertaken by staff. However, others noted that research was embedded into the curriculum, providing the examples of the Creative City and the Queens Cross Housing projects.
- 8.5 Undergraduate students felt that staff research was not directly involved with their coursework but did have awareness of the research project in Stage 4 and of research in the curriculum in terms of the delivery of Architectural Technology assessments. Students informed that they were unaware of practitioner specialisms and did not know much about the work of other tutors. However, they expressed an interest to know more about the work, knowledge and perspective of their tutors.
- 8.6 The Review panel **recommended** that MSA engage with students to enable them to have a greater understanding of how MSA programmes relate to current research and how it is embedded within research teaching linkages within MSA. The panel acknowledged that while this was apparent to staff it was not always evident to students. **(Recommendation 6)**
- 8.7 The Review panel **recommended** that MSA further explore collaborations both within MSA itself and across-School at GSA, for example electives and HAUS/Forum of Critical Inquiry (FoCI) provision, and report progress on this matter. **(Recommendation 7)**

## **9. Review of MSA Regulations: Students Failing More than 20 Credits and Re-attendance**

- 9.1 The Review panel was aware that MSA's Regulations were different to that of the other Schools across GSA. Students who had failed more than 20 credits after the August re-sit diet subsequently had to re-attend for the complete Stage, despite successfully completing courses and retaining credit from the previous session. The

Review panel understood that there had been student appeals in this regard and wished to consider the matter in more depth.

- 9.2 The Review panel was informed that failing more than 20 credits flagged concern that students were having problems coping with the expectations of the Stage. In explanation, the panel was told that a programme was an integrated design process, for example Architectural Technology was linked to Studio, and the delivery of component courses was not separate or discrete. MSA students had to re-attend the complete Stage, therefore, for a better level of engagement and understanding.
- 9.3 This issue was not addressed in discussions with the student groups but there was some acknowledgement by staff that this could be perceived as problematic and unfair.
- 9.4 The Review panel noted that MSA students failing more than 20 credits had to re-attend the complete Stage, despite successfully completing courses and retaining credit from the previous session. This had resultant financial implications for students and a perceived lack of parity across GSA. The Review panel **recommended** that MSA review its Regulations in order to address this matter and seek approval for changes through the standard Academic Regulations timescale. (**Recommendation 8**)

## **10. Part-time Provision: Bachelor of Architecture**

- 10.1 The Review panel wished to consider the part-time provision offered by MSA given concerns over the parity of the student experience with full time students and also enquire into whether practitioners made good tutors.
- 10.2 MSA informed that they were concerned that parity for part-time students was being eroded and informed that there was an ongoing review of part-time provision.
- 10.3 The Review panel was informed that the downturn in the economy had affected student numbers on the course and that perhaps more could be done to address recruitment and provide support for students. It was suggested that a consideration for the future may be to give students credits for the work they do in architectural offices.
- 10.4 In discussions with the Review panel, a part-time student commented that the cohort of part-time students was small and this had been reduced further by students dropping-out. The part-time mode was enjoyable but timetabling was a significant issue, given the need to balance studies with working in an architectural practice. However, the panel was told that although being a part-time student was a different experience, it was not different in a negative sense.
- 10.5 The Review panel was interested to find out from full time students whether they had contact with students on the part-time course. Students informed that part-time students appeared to be their own separate group and perhaps there could be a better way that they could be integrated. However, students also commented that it was a personal choice for part-time students as to whether they wished to be more integrated. Full time students commented that there was communication via their dedicated Facebook page and Drop Box and the first project was a group project.
- 10.6 The Review panel was interested to know whether practising architects made good tutors. The consensus from staff was that they did and that practitioners were vital to MSA. The fast paced nature of architectural practice meant that it was important for MSA to keep that connection. Staff thought the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching would be advantageous for practitioners but that it would not necessarily mean that a good practitioner would become a good teacher. There was general agreement that more could be done for fractional staff in terms of induction.

- 10.7 Students expressed an opinion that the vast majority of tutors had studied at GSA and they would like to see a greater variety and range of architects, including architects who worked in the public sector.
- 10.8 The Review panel noted that MSA provided a part-time mode for the Bachelor of Architecture and Diploma in Architecture and that this was being currently reviewed. However, the Review panel was concerned that the student experience for part-time students was not the high standard as that of full time students. The Review panel **recommended** that MSA produce a report on part-time provision that covers timetabling and workload management issues. **(Recommendation 9)**
- 10.9 The Review panel also **recommended** that MSA should provide enhanced induction and development opportunities for part-time and fractional members of staff and consider employing fractional staff from a wider pool than GSA graduates. **(Recommendation 10)**

## 11. Student Representation

- 11.1 The Review panel wished to explore student representation within MSA.
- 11.2 The Review panel was informed that there were two student representatives for each year group. There was also the Student Forum which was an in-house group specific to MSA, which met monthly and discussed housekeeping issues. The Student Forum was distinct from SSCCs. The Review panel was informed that course staff had attempted to improve the feedback loop, in the sense that feedback was made to the cohort by a course tutor and not a committee.
- 11.3 MSA further informed that in addition to student representatives, SSCCs and the Student Forum, there was also the Professor's Surgery. Students were encouraged to feedback to their year group. Staff felt that student representatives were now being properly briefed and supported but that in the past they perhaps did not understand what they were taking on in terms of commitment. Student representatives were encouraged to feedback to the year group.
- 11.4 Students confirmed that student representatives were elected in the first two weeks of the academic year. Students thought that there was a better understanding of the role of student representatives than in previous years. Further, they informed that there was a section on GSA's VLE dedicated to student representatives. There was training available and MSA had produced a helpful student handbook. Students thought that student representatives had a useful and influencing role to play at MSA and informed that student representatives had played an important role in re-instating the space that had previously been occupied by the workshops.
- 11.5 Some student representatives informed that they heard from their Stage Leader infrequently and it was up to them to keep informed on when things were happening. Other student representatives informed that their Stage Leaders were very involved. It was reported to the Review panel that, in general, there was always the opportunity to approach a Stage Leader as well as other staff, and this tended to be on an informal rather than a formal basis.
- 11.6 Students informed that the Student Forum was specifically for student representatives. The timing of it could be problematic due to possible clashes with lectures, but actions were listed and responded to and if actions were not taken, this was queried. Information was disseminated to the cohort through a dedicated Facebook page that was specifically for the student group. On a yearly basis, at meetings of SSCCs, feedback and actions were tabled for all courses. On the whole, students felt that staff understood their concerns.

- 11.7 One postgraduate student had been a student representative at another university. He thought the contrast between GSA and his previous institution was considerable and noted that it was “*amazing how much integration and influence*” student representatives had at GSA. He informed that GSA student representatives had a voice and were treated as peers more than students.

## 12. Summary of Perceived Strengths and Areas for Improvement for MSA

### Commendations

- 12.1 The Review panel commended the Mackintosh School of Architecture on the following and identified that these were areas of good practice for dissemination across GSA:

#### *Commendation 1*

- 12.2 The Review panel noted that student groups reported a positive experience of studio culture at MSA. Students appreciated their individual space in studio, the opportunity to share space with other year groups and experiment through peer learning. The Review panel **commended** MSA for providing a positive student experience in terms of the studio atmosphere and environment where students benefited from interacting with others.

#### *Commendation 2*

- 12.3 The Review panel noted MSA’s diligent approach to Periodic Review and **commended** the high quality and presentation of the paperwork provided and that deadlines for submission had been met. In addition, the Review panel **commended** the staff group on their candid and reflective responses in their open and constructive discussion with the Review panel.

#### *Commendation 3*

- 12.4 The Review panel noted the evident improvement to the clarity and content of course documents over the review period and **commended** MSA for this enhancement.

### Recommendations

- 12.5 The Review panel made a number of recommendations. Unless otherwise stated, all recommendations must be completed during session 2015/16 and be formally reported by the Head of MSA to each Board of Studies, Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee and Academic Council:

#### *Recommendation 1*

- 12.6 The Review panel acknowledged that MSA were undertaking ongoing reviews of the Erasmus exchange programme. However, the Review panel **recommended** that MSA report on the interim reviews that had taken place in Years 1 and 2 in term 1 of session 2015/16.

#### *Recommendation 2*

- 12.7 The Review panel **recommended** that MSA undertake a comprehensive review of the MSA Erasmus programme. Issues that must be addressed included: assessment and credits; workload management; timetabling; the student experience; and organisational management. Students must be consulted as part of the review process. The resultant report must identify a plan for the future provision of Erasmus at MSA.

#### *Recommendation 3a*

- 12.8 The Review panel acknowledged that MSA had made improvements to course documentation. However, the panel **recommended** that MSA build on their good

practice to include the relationship of ILOs to professional criteria, namely RIBA mapping, in Programme and Course Specifications across all Stages.

*Recommendation 3b*

- 12.9 As part of this process, the Review panel **recommended** that MSA increase student awareness of Programme and Course Specifications and specify how this would be achieved.

*Recommendation 4a*

- 12.10 The Review panel acknowledged that MSA was engaged with students' concerns regarding centralised workshop provision, but **recommended** that MSA put a plan in place to engage further with the Technical Support department regarding supporting students in the management of resource.

*Recommendation 4b*

- 12.11 The Registrar had informed the Review panel of the likelihood of a review of Technical Support provision at GSA. In light of this, the Review panel **recommended** that MSA fully engage with this process.

**[Secretary's Note:** At the Executive Group meeting of 10 March 2015, it was agreed that an appropriate review of Technical Support services would take place in Term 1 of session 2015/16]

*Recommendation 5*

- 12.12 The Review panel was of the view that MSA should further address issues regarding formal feedback mechanisms. To this extent, the Review panel **recommended** that MSA put a plan in place to engage with students in raising awareness of the importance of participation in external feedback mechanisms, particularly NSS and PTES. It was **recommended** that MSA produce a specific report for consideration in this regard via the GSA Committee cycle.

*Recommendation 6*

- 12.13 The Review panel **recommended** that MSA engage with students to enable them to have a greater understanding of how MSA Programmes relate to current research and how it is embedded within research teaching linkages within MSA. The panel acknowledged that while this was apparent to staff it was not always evident to students.

*Recommendation 7*

- 12.14 The Review panel **recommended** that MSA further explore collaborations both within MSA itself and across-School at GSA, for example electives and HAUS/FoCI provision, and report progress on this matter.

*Recommendation 8*

- 12.15 The Review panel noted that MSA students failing more than 20 credits had to re-attend the complete Stage, despite successfully completing courses and retaining credit from the previous session. This had resultant financial implications for students and a perceived lack of parity across GSA. The Review panel **recommended** that MSA review its Regulations in order to address this matter and seek approval for changes through the standard Academic Regulations timescale.

*Recommendation 9*

- 12.16 The Review panel noted that MSA provided a part-time mode for the Bachelor of Architecture and that this was currently being reviewed. However, the Review panel was concerned that the student experience for part-time students was not the high standard of that of full time students. The Review panel **recommended** that MSA

produce a report on part-time provision that covers timetabling and workload management issues.

*Recommendation 10*

- 12.17 The Review panel **recommended** that MSA should provide enhanced induction and development opportunities for part-time and fractional members of staff. The panel also noted from feedback received at the Periodic Review event, that MSA should consider employing fractional staff from a wider pool than GSA graduates.

**13. Revalidation of Programme Provision**

- 13.1 As an integral part of the Periodic Review process the Review panel considered the revalidation of individual programmes. The Self-Evaluation Report explicitly and frequently referenced individual programme provision. Examples were offered throughout. In conducting the Review, the Review Panel explicitly explored individual programme provision and the student experience therein. All discussions within the Review panel, and with staff and students involved in the Periodic Review process, retained a focus on programme provision.

- 13.2 The Review Panel invited Academic Council to recommend to the University of Glasgow that the following degree programmes should be revalidated for a period of six years, these being:

Bachelor of Architecture (Hons)

Diploma in Architecture

Master of Architecture by Conversion

Master of Architectural Studies