

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 15 April 2016

Programme Approval: MSc in Environmental Architecture at The
Glasgow School of Art

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

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE

PROGRAMME APPROVAL

10 February 2016

Consideration of MSc in Environmental Architecture

Approval Panel: Professor Alistair Payne (Convenor), Ms Janet Allison, Ms Joanne Crotch, Dr Vicky Gunn, Ms Jill Hammond, Dr Daniel Livingston, Professor Elizabeth Moingard, Mr Scott Parsons, Professor Christopher Platt, Ms Barbara Ridley

Attending: Ms Clare Grant (Academic Registry), Professor Susan Roaf (Heriot Watt), Mr Alejandro Moreno Rangel (Student Representative)

Programme Team: Professor Tim Sharpe and Dr Filbert Musau

Secretary: Mr Ewan Muir, Academic Registry

Consideration

- 1.1 The Convenor welcomed the Panel and Programme Team and outlined the schedule of the meeting for UPC Programme Approval. The Convenor confirmed that any conditions set by the Approval Panel must be addressed by **22 February 2016**.
- 1.2 Further, the Convenor confirmed that, following consideration by the Approval Panel, any amendments deemed necessary to the approval documentation must be addressed in full, highlighted as appropriate and submitted to Academic Registry by **22 February 2016**.
- 1.3 The proposed Programme Leader provided the context for the proposed programme MSc in Environmental Architecture.
- 1.4 The Mackintosh Environmental Architecture Research Unit (MEARU) is a well-established research hub based within the Mackintosh School of Architecture which has a broad scope of research areas in Environmental Architecture. These areas include sustainability, low energy and environmentally responsible design. The MSc in Environmental Architecture programme has been developed with a view to draw from this specialised research expertise in an academic context.
- 1.5 The curriculum of the programme has been designed to deliver a holistic view of building design within the context of Environmental Design. The research based context of the programme has also been enriched with the addition of theory of Environmental Design. The development of the programme through MEARU has also

allowed for consideration to be given for research and teaching linkages and includes the development of a thorough research proposal in stage 2 of the programme.

- 1.6 The proposed programme differentiates from the existing GSA Architecture postgraduate provision with a more comprehensive and specialised curriculum in the field of Environmental Architecture in order to attract from a wider spectrum of students. The potential recruitment pool for the proposed programme can include Architecture and Design graduates who wish to have a more specialised postgraduate experience in the field of Environmental Architecture as well as applicants from a built environment background who are looking to develop their experience in design theory.
- 1.7 The panel received feedback from the student representative, a former GSA Master of Architectural Studies and current PHD student, who highlighted the research potential in the proposed programme and the distinction from the current Master of Architectural Studies programme.
- 1.8 The panel received feedback from the External Subject Specialist who praised the scope and proposed content of the programme, particularly evidence based learning and perceived value for students. The External Subject Specialist highlighted the growing demand for specialised Architecture programmes and the proposed programme indicated a positive investment in current GSA expertise and research practices. It was also noted that the academic level of the programme was comparable to equivalent programmes at Oxford Brookes University and Heriot Watt University.
- 1.9 The panel noted that the recommended entry qualifications of a Second Class (upper) or First Class honours degree would ensure a high calibre of students who would commence the programme.
- 1.10 The external subject noted the lack of a part-time option for the programme. The panel discussed the tradition that the part-time option for GSA programmes were based on a compressed timescale and further development at an institutional level needed to be carried out to fully explore the challenges and opportunities of part-time provision across GSA. The panel agreed that the MSc Environmental Architecture programme team should consider the development of a part-time provision for future sessions.
- 1.11 The panel discussed the suitability of the broad subject range of postgraduate taught electives offered. The Head of Learning and Teaching confirmed that the offered electives ensure that students have access to expertise across all GSA's academic areas. The Programme Leader for the Masters of Architectural Studies also confirmed that from experience students had demonstrated measured awareness regarding their choice of electives. It was also noted that GSA should consider the provision of popular electives in order to ensure availability for all postgraduate taught students who wish to undertake them.
- 1.12 The panel discussed and commended the research teaching linkages evident from the programme documentation. The programme team confirmed that any project work stemming from live projects through MEARU would be the basis for credit bearing assessments. The focus of research proposal development during stage 2 of the programme would have a positive impact on research teaching linkages and provide an opportunity for students to consider doctorate study following completion of the programme.
- 1.13 The Head of Learning and Teaching noted that section 27 of the Programme Information Document (Work Based Learning) required additional work in order to specify the variety of work based learning available through MEARU. The Programme team confirmed that in addition to research, MEARU engaged in commercial consultancy which would allow opportunities for students to engage in live projects. The panel agreed that Section 27 should be revised to reflect this variety with input from the Head of Learning and Teaching.

- 1.14 The Head of Policy and Governance (Deputy Registrar) highlighted that, although the submitted paperwork was thorough and considered there were a number of minimal corrections which were required to be addressed. These included language used, grammatical errors and typos. The panel agreed that these corrections along with any additional minimal amendments would be forwarded to the programme team following the meeting.
- 1.15 The panel discussed the MSc in Environmental Architecture programme with reference to the proposed postgraduate course credit restructure. Under this proposal, due to be implemented in session 2018/19, courses will shift from 15/30 credits to 10/20 credits. The programme team confirmed that consideration was given to this restructure through the development stages however, it was agreed that in order to maintain consistency with the current Masters of Architectural Studies programme the standard 15/30 credit structure was implemented. The team also confirmed that in its current form the proposed programme would not pose significant challenges to restructure to 10/20 credits. The panel agreed that exploring this further would be beneficial.
- 1.16 The Head of Policy and Governance (Deputy Registrar) sought clarification of the proposed programme title as throughout the documentation the programme was referred to as both 'MSc in Environmental Architecture' and 'MSc Environmental Architecture: Energy, Performance and Health'. The programme team confirmed that, following discussions with Marketing and Recruitment, the programme title would be 'MSc in Environmental Architecture' in order to prevent any restrictions through future programme developments.
- The Director of Marketing, Communication and Strategic Development confirmed that through experience with other programme developments the proposed title was the most suitable and measured marketing and advertising would be implemented to allow potential applicants a comprehensive understanding of the programme content. The panel agreed that the programme documentation should be updated to consistently reflect the proposed programme title.
- 1.17 The Head of Student Support noted that although the documentation indicated that an Equality Impact Assessment for the programme had been carried out there was no evidence of the assessment provided. The panel agreed that the documentation should be updated to reflect this and an Equality Impact Assessment be carried out within 12 months. It was also agreed that this assessment would inform section 24 of the Programme Information Document (Equality) and the programme team should seek guidance from the Head of Student Support.
- 1.18 The panel considered the stated Intended Learning Outcomes of both the proposed Programme and Course Specifications. It was noted that in a number of the course specifications the language within the learning outcomes was ambiguous and open to misinterpretation. The panel agreed that this language should be revisited in conjunction with the SCQF's guidance on Intended Learning Outcomes.
- The panel also noted that there was a discrepancy between the programme Intended Learning Outcomes and the courses Intended Learning Outcomes. The panel agreed that this discrepancy should be addressed in order to constructively align the specifications at programme and course level.
- The Deputy Head of the School of Design queried the high number of Intended Learning Outcomes within the course specifications and the ability of the programme team to assess whether every outcome had been achieved. The panel agreed that programme team should revisit the course specification and give consideration to the appropriateness of the number of intended learning outcomes.
- 1.19 The Programme Team highlighted the potential relationship between the proposed programme and Guangzhou University, China arising from current teaching linkages between the institution and GSA. Although the relationship is not a formalised

articulation agreement, it is hoped that students from the institution's three year Masters Programme will be recruited to the MSc in Environmental Architecture.

- 1.20 The Programme Team also highlighted that negotiations had taken place to secure two Construction Scotland Innovation Centre funded places for session 2015/16.
- 1.21 The panel commended the proposed programme as an important and distinctive development for GSA which would hopefully serve as a pioneer in the development of similar postgraduate taught programmes across the school.

Conditions

- 2.1 The Approval Panel agreed that the documentation required a number of minimal amendments. Academic Registry will provide a list of these amendments and revised documentation should be submitted to Academic Registry.

[Action: **Proposed Programme Leader, MSc in Environmental Architecture**]

- 2.2 The Approval Panel agreed that the programme title should be consistently referred to as MSc in Environmental Architecture throughout the paperwork. Revised documentation should be submitted to Academic Registry.

[Action: **Proposed Programme Leader, MSc in Environmental Architecture**]

- 2.3 With regards to Section 27 of the Programme Information Document (Work Based Learning), the Approval Panel agreed that the documentation should be revised to reflect that, the programme is a taught programme with a balance of work-based learning and research mindfulness. This revision should be developed with input from the Head of Learning and Teaching. Revised documentation should be submitted to Academic Registry.

[Action: **Proposed Programme Leader, MSc in Environmental Architecture**]

- 2.4 The Approval Panel agreed that there was no evidence that an Equality Impact Assessment had been undertaken and the paperwork should be updated to reflect this. Consideration of this assessment should also be given to section 24 of the Programme Information Document (Equality). Revised documentation should be submitted to Academic Registry.

[Action: **Proposed Programme Leader, MSc in Environmental Architecture**]

- 2.5 The Approval Panel agreed that the Programme and Course Intended Learning Outcomes should be revised. Consideration should be given to the following areas:

- a) Language used should align with SCQF Intended Learning Outcome guidance.
- b) The alignment of programme Intended Learning Outcomes and course Intended Learning Outcomes.
- c) The appropriateness of the number of Intended Learning Outcomes

Revised documentation should be submitted to Academic Registry.

[Action: **Proposed Programme Leader, MSc in Environmental Architecture**]

Recommendations

- 3.1 The panel agreed that, following recommendations from the Head of Learning and Teaching, an action plan should be established to consider the move to a 10/20 credit postgraduate course structure.

This plan should also consider the provision of a part time study option for the MSc Environmental Architecture programme following recommendations from the Director of Marketing, Communication and Strategic Planning and the Head of Learning and Teaching.

This plan should be provided to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee through MSA Board of Studies.

[Action: **Proposed Programme Leader, MSc in Environmental Architecture**]

- 3.2 The Programme Team should undertake an Equality Impact Assessment on the programme within 12 months of the UPC Programme Approval Meeting (Term 2 2016/17). This assessment should be developed with input from the Head of Student Support.

[Action: **Proposed Programme Leader, MSc in Environmental Architecture**]

Outcome

- 4.1 UPC **approved** the programme documentation of the MSc in Environmental Architecture Programme to Academic Council, subject to the above conditions being met.

Panel Decision

The Panel **agreed** to recommend to Academic Council that the amendments to the MSc in Environmental Architecture be approved subject to the above conditions.



Professor Tim Sharpe:

Dr Alistair Payne: Alistair Payne (confirmed by email 02/03/2016).....

Please e-mail a copy of this document (typing a signature will suffice) to the Panel Convenor (a.payne@gsa.ac.uk) and Academic Registry (e.muir@gsa.ac.uk), by **22 February 2016** to ensure subsequent consideration by Academic Council.

Explanation of Terminology (as approved by Academic Council)

Conditions: *All conditions must be satisfied before the programme can be validated.*

Recommendations: *The Programme Team is asked to report after one year, unless otherwise specified, on the progress made in addressing these./*