University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 27 January 2017

Programme Approval (Update): BA/BSc (Hons) Immersive Systems Design at The Glasgow School of Art

Feedback from ASC:

Paper	Outcome
Programme Approval: BA/BSc Immersive Systems Design	It was noted that ASC had given in-principle approval in May 2015 for a BSc (Hons) Immersive Systems. The proposal under consideration now was for a BA/BSc (Hons) Immersive Systems Design. ASC considered that the ILOs did not distinguish between the degree designations BA and BSc.
	ASC agreed to approve the introduction of the programme, but not with the designation BA/BSc until the ILOs were reconsidered to address the distinction between the BA and the BSc. At this stage, therefore, the programme can be advertised as a **BSc (Hons) Immersive Systems Design** but not as a BA/BSc (Hons) Immersive Systems design until the ILOs have been reconsidered.
	ASC also requested clarification on :
	- whether students would be admitted to the BA or to the BSc at point of entry - the point at which students would be required to finally confirm their pathway
	ASC also queried the use of the term 'essay' for one of the BA pathways and noted that this was required to be a substantial piece of independent work.
	ASC noted also that there could be potential administrative issues for students by advertising it as a BA/BSc (Hons) – perhaps in terms of UCAS; transferring between degree titles etc.

Distinction Between BA and BSc

We thank the ASC for their careful review of the programme and associated paperwork.

The programme sought to address this distinction in ILOs, which were reviewed in light of the distinct ILOs offered on the Dissertation / Extended Essay options available in the final year. This allowed distinct ILOs for the final year of the programme.

However, in light of the current programme design, and in discussion with the Head of Learning and Teaching at GSA, the programme team accepts that there is no current distinction in ILOs at Stage 3. A range of options were considered for addressing this, however, we feel that successfully and fully addressing these issues may entail more significant changes to the programme structure and that these should not be rushed through.

While it remains the goal of the programme team to develop a BA offering, it is felt at the current time that focus should be on establishing the programme as approved under the title BSc (Hons) Immersive Systems Design. In the course of the development of the BA, the programme team will consider the other points of clarification requested by ASC and ensure that these are addressed, in full, in the subsequent approval documentation.

It has, therefore, been agreed that the programme and course documentation will be amended, as appropriate, to reflect the above position and remove all reference to the BA. This will be submitted to the relevant GSA committees for approval within the course of Term 2 of session 2016/17.

Dr Daniel Livingstone
Head of Postgraduate Programmes, School of Simulation and Visualisation
10 January 2017

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE

PROGRAMME APPROVAL: 11 MAY 2016

Consideration of BA/BSc (Hons) Immersive Systems Design

Approval Panel: Professor Ken Neil (Convenor), Ms Janet Allison, Mr John Ayers, Ms Jo Crotch, Ms Jill Hammond, Mr Alan Hooper, Dr Vanessa Johnson, Mr Mick McGraw, Professor Elizabeth Moignard, Ms Shona Paul, Dr Alistair Payne, Professor Chris Platt, Mr Lewis Prosser, Dr Maddy Sclater, Dr Sarah Smith, Ms Alison Stevenson.

Attending: Dr Darryl Charles (University of Ulster), Dr Philippa Lovatt (University of Stirling), Mr Alexander Horowitz (Student Representative), Ms Vee Toyi (Policy and Governance).

Programme Team: Dr Steve Love, Dr Daniel Livingstone.

Secretary: Ms Lisa Davidson, Policy and Governance

Consideration

1.1   The Convenor welcomed the Approval Panel and Programme Team and outlined the schedule for the UPC Programme Approval meeting. The Convenor confirmed that any conditions set by the Approval Panel must be addressed by **9 September 2016** in order to ensure subsequent consideration by Academic Council.

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 **9 September 2016**.

1.3   The Convenor highlighted that many of the issues pertinent to the earlier consideration of the BDes (Hons) Sound for the Moving Image would also be relevant for the BA/BSc (Hons) Immersive Systems Design programme. In particular, the issues pertaining to accommodation of the programme, technical support requirements, the critical theory content and the harmonisation of the programme structure. Therefore, while the conditions would be set out in full, some of the earlier discussion surrounding these items would be reflected in greater detail in the report on the BDes (Hons) Sound for the Moving Image.

1.4   The Programme Leader, DDS Programmes provided the context for the proposed BA/BSc (Hons) Immersive Systems Design, highlighting that the programme would develop graduates with strong practical software and immersive systems (Virtual Reality) development skills, an understanding of how people and technology interact, combined with the creative insight essential to help create the future in immersive systems. If validated, it was the Digital Design Studio's intention to launch the programme in September 2018.

1.5   The original proposal had outlined a BSc (Hons) Immersive Systems with three named awards in *User Experience*, *Smart Technologies* and *Visualisation.* Students would undertake a common curriculum in Years 1 and 2, specialising in Years 3 and 4 in one of the pathways above. Throughout the development process, the Programme Team were focused on creating a computing-based curriculum within an art school context. The Programme Leader, DDS Programmes, highlighted that, in the course of the

programme's development and following further engagement with Marketing and GSA's Executive Group, while the overall rationale remained the same, the Programme Team had proposed changes to the specific pathways on offer. The key changes are set out below.

1.6   The award was amended from BSc to BA/BSc. The award of BA or BSc would be determined according to whether a student chose to undertake a BSc Dissertation or a more critical studies focused/creative option in Year 4 of the programme. In addition, while students would still specialise in one of the pathways in Year 3, the specialism would no longer form part of the named award. Further, and in order to better define the offer, the programme title was amended from Immersive Systems to Immersive Systems Design.

1.7   The pathway in *Visualisation* was retitled to *3D Modelling* to clarify that the focus of the curriculum was on 3D Visualisation, rather than Data Visualisation. Additionally, during development it was apparent that many of the topics in the core Immersive Systems courses were relevant to game development, which had prompted the creation of a fourth pathway in Games and Virtual Reality.

1.8   The Programme Leader, DDS Programmes, considered that these changes remained within the existing financial rationale and marketing strategy which had positioned the degree as competing in the broader area of interactive computing and digital games. The external marketing report had focused on games and animation when considering the potential recruitment market for the degree, and this remained the core target audience.

1.9   The Approval Panel received feedback from Mr Alexander Horowitz, currently undertaking the MSc Serious Games and Virtual Reality programme. Mr Horowitz reported that students on the MSc Serious Games and Virtual Reality had provided detailed feedback on the proposals both at a dedicated focus group and at the Board of Studies which approved the programme approval documentation in March 2016. Students considered that the curriculum proposed was appropriately broad and, on paper, appeared stimulating. Mr Horowitz highlighted that students had felt that it would be beneficial if the programme helped students develop their own independent studios, providing guidance on funding/business models with an emphasis on preparing for *the real world*. Students deemed that the methods of learning, teaching and assessment were appropriate, and were enthusiastic about the inclusion of Hackathons and GameJams for learning and teaching.

1.10   The Approval Panel received feedback from the External Subject Specialist, Dr Darryl Charles, who was of the view that the approval documentation was comprehensive and clear and the programme appeared interesting and relevant. The pathways were current and, in Dr Charles' view, offered good opportunity to specialise in state-of-art areas. Dr Charles noted the high-quality feedback provided by the students.

1.11   Dr Charles suggested that the Programme Team give further consideration to the resources of the programme, specifically regarding the software packages that would be used throughout the programme. This related to whether students would be steered towards free or low-cost tools, a working knowledge of which would be beneficial to those wishing to start-up individual ventures post-graduation, or focus on providing in-depth knowledge of commercial tools which would equip graduates for working in larger companies. The Approval Panel acknowledged that the latter option would be costly in terms of software licensing, and that it would be unlikely that the Digital Design Studio would be able to fund this provision for individual students.

1.12   Dr Charles also highlighted the importance of ensuring that the programme clearly set out the requirements for ethical approval, in particular with regard to gathering data.

1.13 In terms of where students on the programme would be accommodated, the Head of the School of Fine Art reiterated that the development of Stow College site to allow the Digital Design Studio's relocation was currently scheduled for 2018 onwards. The Programme Leader, DDS Programmes restated the Digital Design Studio's view that it was important in terms of the student experience for students enrolling on undergraduate programmes to be located with their peers on the Garnethill site.

1.14 In line with the previous discussion, the Approval Panel agreed that the Digital Design Studio should ensure that they provide appropriate input to discussions in the Back to the Mack Committee, Space Committee and the Stow Estate Working Group committees to ensure that the accommodation requirements of the new programmes were taken into account.

1.15 Similarly, with regard to the installation of specialist studio spaces, and agreement on the resourcing and responsibility for this, the Approval Panel recognised that this was contingent on the allocated accommodation. It was agreed that it should be a condition of the validation of the programme that this issue was addressed, and reflected in the Financial Rationale as appropriate. It was understood that any significant change to the Financial Rationale would require approval by the Director or Deputy Director of Finance and Resources.

1.16 The Head of Technical Support reiterated that students entering at undergraduate level would require significantly more technical support than those currently studying at postgraduate level. The Programme Team agreed that they would reflect on this and factor in additional support where appropriate. Discussions between IT, the Digital Design Studio and Technical Support regarding who would most appropriately provide this support would continue.

1.17 In terms of the staffing resource, some members of the Approval Panel were of the view that the Programme Team should revisit the projected staff FTE, recommending that further resource be allocated and front-loaded to support the early years of the delivery of the programme.

1.18 As with the BDes (Hons) Sound for the Moving Image programme, in terms of the critical theory content of the programme, the Approval Panel agreed that this represented an exciting opportunity to develop distinct, bespoke critical theory content to complement the new programme. The Approval Panel was of the view that this could either be undertaken within the Digital Design Studio, or in conjunction with Design History and Theory within the School of Design. In the interim, the Programme Team should consult with the Head of Design History and Theory and provide input where appropriate with regard to the development of new elective content for the Years 1 – 3 Design History and Theory courses which could be offered to students on the BA/BSc Immersive Systems Design programme.

1.19 The Programme Team confirmed that they would harmonise the programme structure and adjust the credit weighting of the courses as appropriate to facilitate inter-programme compatibility.

1.20 In line with the earlier discussion regarding offering the courses to visiting students, the Programme Team agreed to make all Year 1, 2 and 3 courses available.

1.21 The Programme Team confirmed their intention to seek accreditation from the British Computer Society (BSC). The Approval Panel discussed the potential value, in particular from a marketing perspective, attached to this accreditation.

1.22 The Approval Panel agreed that until the accreditation had been awarded, reference to this should be removed from the programme specification. In addition, and in the event that accreditation was not awarded until after the launch of the programme, it was

agreed that the Programme Team would seek confirmation from the BSC regarding the position for students who enrol in the first cohort(s).

1.23 The Head of Learning Resources highlighted that in May 2015, when the *Implications for Library and Learning Resources* pro forma was completed, the cost of subscribing to the IEEE *Xplore* Digital Library was unknown. Subsequently, the Library had received a quote of £15,000 per annum for institutional access. The Head of Learning Resources confirmed that it would not be possible to purchase this subscription and the Programme Approval Panel agreed that the Programme Team would check the programme and course specifications to ensure that there were no references to IEEE Xplore Digital Library.

1.24 In addition, the costs for the Library (£1635.00 in Year 1 and £635.00 for each subsequent year) had not accurately been reflected in the *One off and Central Services PF* sheet in either Financial Rationale. The Approval Panel agreed that the Financial Rationale(s) should be updated as appropriate and the change approved by the Director or Deputy Director of Finance and Resources.

1.25 Given GSA's intention to move to a Semester system from 2017/18, the Approval Panel discussed what impact this would have on the structure of the new programmes. The Approval Panel agreed that the Programme Team should review the documentation in light of this discussion, and make adjustments where appropriate.

1.26 The Approval Panel had a detailed discussion regarding the two financial rationale models which reflected the uncertainty regarding the provision of additional SFC funded places. One model assumed that no additional SFC places would be allocated; the other that additional SFC funding would be made available. In the latter case the financial rationale was set out on the principle that the SFC funded places would be transferred from other Schools.

1.27 The Approval Panel agreed that recommending the validation of the programme with the model which had no new funded places attached would result in substantial losses (cumulative deficit of just under £400 000 after four years). This was clearly untenable.

1.28 It was noted that the latter model generated a surplus in Year 3 and a cumulative surplus in Year 4, however, given that these numbers were only a transfer from other Schools, the Home/EU fee income and the SFC funded place income would not count as additional income for GSA. The Head of the School of Fine Art reported that the Executive Group had recently had a positive discussion regarding the re-allocation of SFC funded places and it appeared that there was appetite to make adjustments from 2017/18 onwards. The Approval Panel agreed that it was only on this basis that they could make the recommendation to validate the programme.

1.29 The Head of Professional and Continuing Education considered that there was potential for the Programme Team to apply to the SFC for additional Widening Participation and articulation funded places and would continue to engage with colleagues and provide support as appropriate in this regard.

Approval Panel Decision

2.1 Following the above discussion, the Approval Panel **agreed** to recommend to Academic Council that the BA/BSc Immersive Systems Design be approved subject to the satisfaction of the conditions set out below.

2.2 Subsequent to the satisfaction of the conditions noted below, Dr Charles agreed to review any amended documentation and associated material submitted by the Digital Design Studio.

2.3 In addition, the Approval Panel **agreed** that the Programme Team should also consider the recommendations set out 4.1 – 4.3 below and report on progress within one year of the Programme Approval Meeting (May 2017).

<u>Conditions</u>

Condition 1

3.1 The Approval Panel agreed that any recommendation to Academic Council regarding the validation of the programme would be subject to confirmation that students on the programme would be suitably accommodated from September 2018.

3.2 Therefore, the Senior Management of the Digital Design Studio should ensure that they maintain appropriate representation on the relevant committees, including the Stow Estate Working Group, seeking to address the current estates matters within GSA. The Senior Management should also maintain close communication with the Head of Estates regarding the allocation of appropriate accommodation for the new programme.

[Action: **Acting Director, Digital Design Studio**]

3.3 Subsequent to the allocation of the accommodation, programme approval documentation should be reviewed, and where appropriate, amended, to reflect that this issue has been addressed.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

Condition 2

3.4 With regard to the installation of the specialist studio spaces, following the allocation of accommodation, the Programme Team should engage with the Head of Technical Support in order to finalise agreement on where resourcing and responsibility for undertaking the installation of the studios most appropriately sits. In the event that the discussions result in a significant change to the Financial Rationale, this should be undertaken and approval for the change sought from the Director or Deputy Director of Finance and Resources.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

Condition 3

3.5 The Programme Team should reflect on the level of technical support undergraduate students may require and factor in additional support where appropriate. Discussions between the Digital Design Studio, IT and Technical Support regarding which areas should most appropriately provide this support should conclude and confirmation regarding who would provide this set out in the programme approval documentation as appropriate.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

Condition 4

3.6 The Programme Team should consult with the Head of Design History and Theory and provide input where appropriate with regard to the development of new critical theory content for the programme.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

Condition 5

3.7 The Programme Team should harmonise the programme structure, adjust the credit weighting of the courses and update the programme and course specifications as appropriate.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

3.8 Related to the above and in light of recent developments, the programme approval documentation should be reviewed and, where appropriate, remove reference to *Studio +*.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

Condition 6

3.9 In line with discussions set out in 1.20, the Programme Team should update the Year 1, 2 and 3 course specifications as appropriate to reflect that these would be made available to visiting students.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

Condition 7

3.10 Reference to any possible accreditation by the British Computing Society should be removed from the programme specification until this has been awarded. In addition, and in the event that the programme launches prior to the award of the accreditation, the Programme Team should seek confirmation from the BSC regarding the position for students who enrol in the first cohort(s).

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

Condition 8

3.11 The Programme Team should ensure that there are no references to the IEEE Xplore Digital Library in the programme and course specifications.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

3.12 Related to the above, the Financial Rationale(s) should be updated to include the costs for the Library (£1635.00 in Year 1 and £635.00 for each subsequent year) in the *One off and Central Services PF* sheet in either Financial Rationale. The change should be approved by the Director or Deputy Director of Finance and Resources.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

Condition 9

3.13 The Programme Team should review the documentation in light of GSA's intention to move to a Semester system from 2017/18 and make adjustments where appropriate.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

Condition 10

3.14 The recommendation to validate the programme is contingent on the procurement of an appropriate amount of SFC funded places. The Senior Management of the Digital Design Studio should ensure that, through membership of the Executive Group and in close conjunction with the Directorate, they participate in all discussions regarding the re-allocation of SFC funded places, with a view to positioning the BA/BSc Immersive Systems Design programme accordingly.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

4.1 The Programme Team should develop distinct, bespoke critical theory content to complement the BA/BSc Immersive Systems Design programme. This could either be undertaken within the Digital Design Studio or in conjunction with Design History and Theory within the School of Design.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

Recommendation 2

4.2 The Programme Team should undertake an Equality Impact Assessment of the programme within twelve months of the UPC Programme Approval Meeting (Term 3 2016/17). This assessment should be developed with input from the Head of Student Support and Development.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

Recommendation 3

4.3 Subsequent to the launch of the School of Visualisation and Simulation, the Programme Team should ensure that the programme specification and associated course specifications are updated accordingly and that reference to the *Digital Design Studio* is removed.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

Recommendation 4

4.4 The Programme Team should continue to engage with the Head of Professional and Continuing Education with a view to securing Widening Participation and Articulation-related SFC funded places.

[Action: **Programme Leader, DDS Programmes**]

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Satisfaction of Conditions

I confirm that the conditions listed above have been addressed in full.

Dr Daniel Livingstone: ....Daniel Livingstone..................   Date: ……9/9/2016……

Professor Ken Neil: ....Date: ……20/09/2016…

Please e-mail a copy of this document (typing a signature will suffice) to the Panel Convenor (k.neil@gsa.ac.uk) and Policy and Governance (l.davidson@gsa.ac.uk), by **9 September 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.*