

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 27 January 2017

GSA Singapore/Singapore Institute of Technology Collaborative Review

Review Panel

Professor Ken Neil	Deputy Director (Academic) (Convenor)
Ms Janet Allison	Head of Policy and Governance (Deputy Registrar)
Ms Laura Glennie	President of the Students' Association
Dr Vanessa Johnson	Head of Student Recruitment
Dr Steve Love	Senior Researcher, School of Simulation and Visualisation
Professor Chris Platt	Head of the Mackintosh School of Architecture
Dr Gina Wall	Deputy Head of the School of Fine Art

Attending

Ms Lisa Davidson	Senior Policy Officer
Ms Vee Toyi	Policy Officer

The Review Event was held on Tuesday 4 October 2016

1. Introduction

Background Information

- 1.1 Since September 2012, GSA has delivered Years 3 and 4 of its Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Programmes in Communication Design and Interior Design in Singapore, in partnership with the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) and Temasek Polytechnic (TP). The programmes enable Diploma students from one of Singapore's Polytechnics to progress from a Diploma to a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) degree.
- 1.2 Years 3 and 4 at GSA Singapore are equivalent to Years 3 and 4 of the same programmes delivered at GSA Glasgow. Students studying in Singapore undertake the same programme of study as at GSA Glasgow, with resources and equipment according to GSA specifications, but also have access to the additional specialist resources, equipment and workshops of TP and students graduate with the same award as students based at the Glasgow campus.
- 1.3 Every student studying in Singapore has the opportunity to spend three weeks in Scotland at GSA through the Overseas Immersion Programme (OIP), working directly with their counterparts in the same programmes based in Glasgow. This credit-bearing component provides an opportunity to see the Degree Show, experience the history of Glasgow and GSA, be immersed in the local cultural and industrial context, and undertake location-specific projects.
- 1.4 A Partnership Review was held in February 2015, mid-way through the third year of the partnership. This Review made five commendations, four conditions and seven recommendations. During the course of session 2015/16, the School of Design reported progress against each of the conditions and recommendations, submitting a final update to the Academic Council meeting of May 2016.

Collaborative Review

- 1.5 The current session (2016/17) is the fifth year of operation of the partnership with SIT. The original Collaboration Agreement with SIT set out that both parties would conduct a review of the scope and nature of the arrangement for the delivery of the GSA Undergraduate Programmes under the Agreement prior to the date of enrolment of the fifth intake of SIT-GSA Students.
- 1.6 Collaborative Review is undertaken in addition to first year review and annual monitoring procedures and is the mechanism for examining the strategic direction of the collaboration. It does so by reviewing the operation of the collaborative partnership over the life of the agreement and the Memorandum of Agreement itself is reviewed as part of the process.
- 1.7 The Self Evaluation Report preparation was led by the Acting Head of the School of Design, in conjunction with the Academic Co-ordinator, with input from the Programme Director of GSA Singapore and the Programme Leaders for the BA (Hons) Communication Design and BA (Hons) Interior Design programmes. The School of Design commenced preparation of the review documentation in February 2016, and this was submitted to Policy and Governance in September 2016.
- 1.8 The Review Panel considered the following documentation in detail:
 - Collaborative Review – GSA Singapore/SIT Self-Evaluation Report
 - Memorandum of Agreement Review
 - SIT Review of Collaborative Agreement with GSA (August 2016)
 - Final Update to the Action Plan School of Design – Recommendations SIT Partnership Review February 2015
- 1.9 In addition to the above, the School of Design made available to the Review Panel supporting documentation including the Programme Monitoring and Annual Reporting reports, External Examiner reports, Staff Student Consultative Committee minutes or action points, Operation Committee minutes, Boards of Studies minutes and staff organisational charts.
- 1.10 Based on their consideration of the documentation submitted by the School of Design, the Review Panel identified topics to be explored further with students and staff during the Review Event. These topics covered a range of items and included the following:
 - Nature of the cross-cultural partnership and its impact on the student experience and the curriculum;
 - Ambitions for the future of the partnership, including new programme developments;
 - Suitability of the studio spaces (in particular with regard to *messy work*);
 - Access to workshop facilities at Temasek Polytechnic;
 - Parity of contact hours between GSA Glasgow and GSA Singapore;
 - Opportunities for students to feedback on their experiences;
 - Potential impact of the additional recruitment (over that set out in the original Memorandum of Agreement) to both programmes;
 - Impact of SIT achieving University status;
 - Research opportunities;
 - School of Design response to items highlighted in the SIT Review of the Collaborative Agreement, in particular with regard to employability and graduate attributes.
- 1.11 During the Review Event, the Review Panel met with:

GSA Glasgow

Ms Barbara Ridley, Acting Head of the School of Design

Dr Donna Leishman, Head of Department and Programme Leader, BA (Hons) Communication Design

Mr Patrick Macklin, Head of Department and Programme Leader, BA (Hons) Interior Design

Ms Katie McKee, Academic Co-ordinator

GSA Singapore (via skype)

Mr Chris Hand, Programme Director, GSA Singapore

GSA Singapore Student Representatives (via conference call)

Ms Rakeeza Sheren Abdul Nasser, Year 4, Communication Design

Mr Bernard Tan, Year 4, Communication Design

Ms Ka Yun Chung, Year 4, Interior Design

Mr Kar Kwang Lim Year 4, Interior Design

- 1.12 The Review Panel considered the following undergraduate provision offered by GSA Singapore:

BA (Hons) Communication Design (Singapore)

BA (Hons) Interior Design (Singapore)

- 1.13 Student numbers for session 2016/17 are as follows:

Programme (Years 3 and 4)	FTE
BA (Hons) Communication Design (Singapore)	137
BA (Hons) Interior Design (Singapore)	96
Total	233

2. Meeting with the GSA Singapore Student Representatives

- 2.1 The Review Panel met with a group of Class Representatives to discuss some of the topics detailed in section 1.12.
- 2.2 The Review Panel explored the students' view of the studio accommodation provided, in terms of size and suitability for their practice. The feedback was generally positive, although it was acknowledged that more space, particularly for Interior Design, would be welcomed. The students clearly valued the 24 hour access they had to the studios, which they said was particularly helpful for those students with other work commitments or those travelling from a distance. One student reported that, anecdotally, some students were staying overnight.
- 2.3 The students provided feedback regarding their access to the technical workshops at Temasek Polytechnic, which was also positive. One student noted that there had been a notable improvement in access since the previous session.
- 2.4 The Review Panel was pleased to note that the students felt they had the opportunity to feedback on their programme and that they considered that the Staff Student Consultative Committee system was working well. One student reported that any actions agreed at the Staff Student Consultative Committee were detailed in the minutes and followed up at subsequent meetings.
- 2.5 The Review Panel explored the students' perceptions of the difference between studying at diploma and degree level. The students clearly articulated their expectation had been that studying at degree level would entail engagement with greater theoretical and contextual content, than at diploma level, which focussed more on technical skills. The students were positive about the fact they were "*pushed to think more intellectually*" on their programmes. When asked whether these were

attractive attributes for employers, the students were of the view that it would depend on the industry, and on whether the company delivered research-based projects.

- 2.6 Students reported a positive experience of the Overseas Immersion Programme at GSA Glasgow, enjoying in particular the opportunity to work with the Student Ambassadors¹ in the Interior Design and Communication Design departments. The President of the Students' Association, who had been a Student Ambassador while studying, highlighted that the majority of the Student Ambassadors were from Years 1 and 2, and therefore not from the same peer group as the GSA Singapore students.

3. Meeting with GSA Singapore Programme Director

- 3.1 The Programme Director of GSA Singapore commenced his post in April 2016. The Review Panel was keen to hear his initial perceptions of the relationship between GSA Singapore and GSA Glasgow.
- 3.2 In the course of the discussion, it was apparent that the Academic Co-ordinator was a key link between the two campuses, and provided valuable support to the Programme Director. It was highlighted that working across time-zones, with technology which was sometimes unreliable, could be challenging and that more could be accomplished during face-to-face meetings. The steady flow of staff between Singapore and Glasgow was, therefore, helpful in this regard.
- 3.3 In terms of the delivery of the programmes, it was the Programme Director's view that Interior Design were successful in maintaining parity between Singapore and Glasgow, and he anticipated that, once the Programme Leader for Communication Design² had consolidated their position, there would be further enhancement in this regard in Communication Design.
- 3.4 With regard to understanding the notion of a *cross-cultural curriculum*, the Programme Director considered that students entered GSA Singapore with no real cultural canon. The Overseas Immersion Programme was a significant opportunity for students to increase their understanding and awareness of the wider world, and provided many students with their first experience of overseas travel and exposure to other cultures. The Programme Director reported that the Student Ambassadors played a valuable role in this and students were keen to foster links with the wider student population generally.
- 3.5 SIT was awarded the university status by the Singapore Government in March 2014. SIT's main objective is to provide industry-focused education in Singapore, and from session 2014/15 has awarded its own degrees, diplomas and certificates. In addition, SIT subsequently had developed dual degrees with many of its overseas partners (for example, a BSc Nursing, delivered jointly with the University of Glasgow, was launched in September 2016). In August 2015, it was announced that SIT would move to a new, centralised campus at Punggol in 2022. The Review Panel was keen to explore how these major strategic developments might impact on the direction SIT's partnership with GSA.
- 3.6 The Programme Director was of the view that it was inevitable that the significant developments outlined above would impact on GSA's partnership with SIT. SIT were focussed on cultivating their niche within the Singaporean Higher Education sector

¹ GSA Glasgow students from Y1 – Y3 Communication Design and Interior Design, employed by the School of Design to support the delivery of the Overseas Immersion Programme. The Student Ambassador role is multi-functional, prioritising engagement in peer-to-peer dialogue and learning through shared immersion and participation in studio activities.

² The Programme Leader for BA (Hons) Communication Design commenced the post in January 2016.

against established, world-ranking institutions such as the National University of Singapore.

- 3.7 The Review Panel recognised that, in light of the fact that GSA was unable to award its own degrees the development of dual degrees with SIT would not be feasible. The Programme Director reported that SIT were not developing their Masters provision at present, but there were other areas, for example, the provision of CPD and potential research projects which warranted further exploration. The Programme Director would continue to utilise the bi-monthly meetings held with the Programme Director at SIT to ensure that opportunities to expand the partnership were investigated as appropriate.
- 3.8 The Review Panel considered the employment outcomes of Interior Design and Communication Design graduates detailed in the SIT Review of Collaborative Agreement with GSA. According to the statistics in the SIT report, those graduating from Interior Design from the 2012 and 2013 cohorts had been significantly more successful in securing full-time, permanent employment than those graduating from Communication Design. The Programme Director confirmed that he had held discussions with SIT's Career Services to determine why there was disparity, and suggested that a more nuanced narrative was necessary, in terms of understanding the statistics. It was acknowledged that South East Asia had experienced an economic downturn in 2015. The Programme Director considered that graduates from Communication Design were more likely to be working on a free-lancing basis and had possibly not taken this into account when responding to the Graduate Employment Survey. In addition, anecdotally, it appeared that companies were not employing graduates, offering paid internships instead.
- 3.10 The Programme Director anticipated that the planned work with alumni to map their employment progress would allow staff to better understand and support students' transition into the workplace.
- 3.11 In light of the conclusion of the SIT Review of Collaborative Agreement Report³ the Review Panel concurred that the School of Design should make this a key focus in 2016/17 and were pleased to note the various actions, outlined in section 6.a of the Self-Evaluation Report which, it was anticipated, would have a significant impact for subsequent cohorts. The President of the Students' Association welcomed these developments and suggested that subsequently, the School of Design might consider how some of these approaches could be implemented in GSA Glasgow.
- 3.12 It was set out in the Second Addendum to the GSA Singapore/Singapore Institute of Technology Collaborative Agreement, that unless otherwise agreed in writing, the targeted student enrolment numbers were:
- (i) 40 students for the Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Interior Design; and
 - (ii) 60 students for the Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Communication Design.
- 3.13 As evidenced in the Self-Evaluation Report, in each year that the partnership had run, there had been over-recruitment to each of the programmes (23% over in Communication Design in 2014 for example) which had a cumulative effect over both cohorts. There appeared to be uncertainty regarding when and how it had been agreed that SIT would recruit 70/50 students per cohort rather than the original agreement of 60/40.

³ While the academic performance of students in the GSA programmes had been promising, as evidenced by the number of students who graduated with at least 2nd Class Honours qualifications, employment outcomes of graduates had been less than favourable. If situation persists, it is perceivable that SIT would want to revisit and review the programmes' alignment and contributions to its objectives and desired outcomes.

- 3.14 The Review Panel explored the consequences of the additional student numbers with the Programme Director, particularly with regard to employability and it was clear from discussions that the addition of ten or eleven students per cohort would not necessarily make it harder for graduates to find jobs in the highly specialised employment market, it did, however, have a noticeable impact on studio space and the staff/student ratio.
- 3.15 The Review Panel noted that, in his final report on 2015/16, the External Examiner for BA (Hons) Interior Design was of the view that:
- It is evident from my visit, and the discussion with the students, that the studios are not fit for purpose anymore. The success of the programme has led to cramped conditions and the students are reacting to this in a manner that will result in a loss of a studio culture, an important factor in the success of the programme. A rethink of the studio spaces, and what they contain, as well as how they are used, is now needed.*
- 3.16 The Programme Director concurred that the additional numbers in both programmes had impacted on the availability of the studio accommodation. Furthermore, the lack of an appropriate space for Interior Design students to make *messy light* work, meant students were using the studios for this activity which added to the pressure on the space. The Review Panel was pleased that the Programme Director was exploring with his counterpart at SIT the possibility of re-purposing one of the classrooms as a *messy work room*.
- 3.17 The Programme Director suggested that, with regard to the student numbers, initial discussions with colleagues at SIT had indicated that revision to the original numbers agreed, as set out in 3.12 above, would not necessarily be problematic. It was clear though, that fewer student numbers would translate to less income from tuition fees and the School of Design would require undertaking detailed reflection prior to making any firm decision on this point.
- 3.18 Access to appropriate workshop facilities was one of the key items highlighted by the Partnership Review in February 2015. While the Self-Evaluation Report signposted the significant improvements made in this regard, it also acknowledged that this issue continued to be raised at Staff Student Consultative Committees and at Operation Committees. Further, the Review Panel noted that both External Examiner Reports on 2015/16 highlighted workshop access as requiring urgent attention:
- Protocols for accessing the workshops – how could this be speeded up as it is hampering exploration stages of project work*
- Sadna Jain, BA (Hons) Communication Design*
- (Workshops have) been a constant source of frustration for the students and looking back through my reports has been a constant problem for GSA/Singapore as it appears in every report I have made - with no significant resolution. It still needs addressing. ... The current appointment system for the workshop access is not working and does not allow the programme to progress its approach to the subject. This needs addressing urgently.*
- Graeme Brooker, BA (Hons) Interior Design*
- 3.19 The Programme Director agreed with the views of the External Examiner, and described GSA Singapore as being a *guest* at Temasek Polytechnic, whereby access to services such as the technical workshops and student support services required a certain amount of negotiation. It was clear that there was further work required, in conjunction with SIT and colleagues at Temasek Polytechnic to resolve this issue satisfactorily.
- 3.20 The Review Panel was keen to explore the apparent discrepancy, suggested in the SIT Review of Collaborative Agreement with GSA, in terms of contact hours between

GSA Singapore and GSA Glasgow, in particular for Communication Design. The Review Panel noted that, during his tenure, the Acting Programme Director⁴ had normalised the contact hours, which had previously been excessive in terms of teaching contact. It was acknowledged that the course specifications could provide further detail with regard to contact hours and the Programme Director reported that he had and would continue to work with academic staff regarding learning and teaching methods.

- 3.21 With regard to the response the School of Design would make to SIT on the point above, the Programme Director was of the view that the comments made regarding the design portfolios should be addressed in detail. The Review Panel agreed that the Programme Director should liaise with the Acting Head of the School of Design in this regard.
- 3.22 Following the February 2015 Partnership Review, it was apparent from the supporting documentation, that Operations Committee meetings were being held bi-annually, in line with the original agreement. Further to his experience of the Operation Committee in May 2016, the Programme Director⁵ was of the view that this was a useful forum for discussing high-level strategy and distributing information. The management and oversight of the operation of the partnership, however, occurred at the bi-monthly meetings with the Programme Director of SIT.

4. Meeting with the Acting Head of the School of Design

- 4.1 The Review Panel met with the Acting Head of the School of Design and gave further consideration to a number of topics which had been raised in the meetings with the students and the Programme Director of GSA Singapore.
- 4.2 The Acting Head of the School of Design acknowledged that there had been a significant number of staffing challenges to address in the course of the partnership. There was no permanent Programme Director from October 2014 until April 2016, and the BA (Hons) Communication Design programme was without a permanent Programme Leader from October 2013 until January 2016. There had also been considerable staff turnover, particularly within Interior Design at GSA Singapore. The Acting Head of the School of Design reported that the School had ensured that, throughout these periods, additional staff had travelled from Glasgow to Singapore to support academic delivery. Furthermore, following the appointment of the Academic Co-ordinator in May 2015, Dr Donna Leishman as Head of Department and Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Communication in January 2016, and Mr Chris Hand as Programme Director in April 2016, the School had achieved *steady state* in terms of the staffing, and that the benefits in terms of delivery, organisation and management were apparent.
- 4.3 In light of the recent significant SIT developments, the Review Panel explored the Acting Head of the School of Design's view of the potential for extending the current partnership, which had historically focused only on the undergraduate provision. The Acting Head of the School of Design reported that SIT was consolidating its position within the HEI sector, and clarified that their newly achieved University Status did not necessarily put them in direct competition with the established universities in the region. In terms of SIT's student profile, for example, students principally came from what GSA would consider *Widening Participation* backgrounds, which differed considerably from institutions such as the National University of Singapore.
- 4.4 In terms of delivering four-year degrees in partnership, the Acting Head of the School of Design confirmed that SIT had not approached GSA with proposals in this regard,

⁴ There was an Acting Programme Director in post between April 2015 and April 2016.

⁵ The Programme Director of GSA Singapore commenced his post in April 2016.

and noted that, owing to the fact that GSA were unable to award its own degrees, it was highly unlikely that dual awards would be pursued in the short to medium term. As noted by the Programme Director, developing Masters Provision did not appear to be a priority for SIT. There were, however, other opportunities for pursuing a more multi-layered, extended collaboration. For example, SIT had expressed interest in extending the undergraduate provision to include the BA (Hons) Interaction Design programme. The School of Design had also identified the potential to deliver various CPD courses to partners both within SIT and with partners in the region, and had engaged with the Head of Professional and Continuing Education in this regard.

- 4.5 It was noted that the Acting Programme Director had supported staff development to focus research activity within GSA Singapore. A number of cross campus research opportunities had emerged from reflection on project activity, learning and teaching outcomes. For example, in May 2016, when a member of GSA Singapore's Communication Design academic staff visited Glasgow, they delivered a workshop at GSA and supported research engagement through attendance at the conference 'Thinking Digital' (Gateshead, UK). In a further example, the Programme Leader for BA (Hons) Interior Design had submitted an abstract '*Flat-share: A Critical Survey of High Density Dwelling in Glasgow and Singapore, a response to the Tenement / HDB project*' to the 2015 DesignEd conference in Hong Kong. The paper was accepted and presented by its co-authors; two members of Interior Design academic staff (one Glasgow and one Singapore based).
- 4.6 The newly appointed Programme Director continued to support staff research interests and in August 2016, GSA's Senior Research Manager visited Singapore to further explore staff research development, in addition to meeting colleagues from SIT's Enterprise and Innovation Hub to discuss future research and collaboration potential. The programme team would continue to engage with the Senior Research Manager to support future individual and collaborative research developments.
- 4.7 With regard to the notion of cross-cultural learning, the Acting Head of the School of Design was of the view that this was embedded in the nature of the collaboration and that students in Glasgow and Singapore benefited from this model. For example, in 2015/16, Design Domain was co-delivered across Glasgow and Singapore, culminating in a selection of work generated through Design Domain Singapore being part of a satellite exhibition for Shakespeare's 400th Anniversary. The Head of Design History and Theory, together with Dr Jesse O'Neill, had reviewed the context and theory curriculum to ensure that it encompassed more than only western philosophies.
- 4.8 The Review Panel was keen for an update regarding the School of Design's progress towards establishing a student exchange programme which had been a recommendation following the Partnership Review of February 2015. It was noted in the update to Academic Council in May 2016, that the School of Design had not achieved this (although was reviewing this on an annual basis), citing that the cost of travelling to Singapore was prohibitive for the majority of students and that attempts to secure sponsorship had not been successful. The Review Panel was unclear as to why an exchange to Singapore would be more prohibitively expensive than those currently undertaken, for example, in Japan, by students on the BA (Hons) Silversmithing and Jewellery Design and BA (Hons) Textile Design programmes.
- 4.9 In the discussion with the Review Panel, the Acting Head of the School of Design highlighted that student exchanges were usually held in Term 1 of Year 3. For students at GSA Singapore, this was a period of intensive, extended induction as they made the transition from diploma to degree-level study and would not, therefore be a suitable time for an exchange visit between Glasgow and Singapore to be held. It was less clear why a student exchange programme could not be developed for Term 2 of Year 3 and members of the Review Panel was of the view that this option

should be explored further, given the potential benefits to students in Glasgow and Singapore.

- 4.10 The Review Panel highlighted that at the student meeting, students had provided positive feedback about having 24 hour access to the Studios, however, it had been implied that some students were staying overnight rather than travel long distances home. The Acting Head of the School of Design confirmed that extended opening hours were in operation at GSA Singapore, but shared the Panel's concerns that students were using the studios as an alternative to going home and provided assurances that this would be investigated.
- 4.11 The Acting Head of the School of Design was of the view that the studios provided generous accommodation, and that students particularly from Interior Design, had successfully taken ownership of these spaces in recent sessions. The Acting Head of the School of Design considered that the additional student numbers recruited by SIT had not led to overcrowding of the studios.
- 4.12 As mentioned in the meeting with the Programme Director, the provision of a suitable space to produce *messy work* was being negotiated with the Programme Director of SIT. The Acting Head of the School of Design highlighted that the concept of a requirement for a *messy space*, was a challenging one for Singaporeans to understand, given its culture of cleanliness and orderliness.
- 4.13 In discussions regarding student access to technical and workshop facilities, the Acting Head of the School of Design signposted the steps taken since the Partnership Review of February 2015 to address the significant issues experienced in the early years of the partnership. While admitting that GSA Singapore were reliant on Temasek Polytechnic for the provision of these facilities, and that there were improvements which could be made in this regard, the Acting Head of the School of Design was of the view that students were given reasonable access to the resources they required. This was in line with the feedback the students provided in the earlier meeting, but in contrast to the views expressed by the External Examiners in their reports on 2015/16 and the Programme Director.
- 4.14 The Review Panel explored the impact of the contact hours normalisation project which had been led by the Acting Programme Director. The Acting Head of the School of Design acknowledged that there had been over-teaching, causing unmanageable staff workloads, in the early years of the partnership and the Acting Programme Director had provided the staff with development and guidance in this regard. The normalisation of the contact hours had contributed to furthering the parity of experience for students on both programmes. It was acknowledged by the Review Panel that there was further work to be undertaken at GSA Glasgow with regard to the Teaching Norms project and that this valuable work should inform future development at GSA Singapore in this regard.
- 4.15 In terms of the Review of the Memorandum of Agreement, with particular regard to the Overseas Immersion Programme, the Acting Head of the School of Design confirmed that this was originally a four week programme which had been condensed to be delivered intensively over three weeks. This decision had been made at the start of the partnership, and was a reflection on the fact that many students came from *widening participation* backgrounds and the cost of a four-week experience would be prohibitively expensive, particularly in light of the fact that the majority of the students had to take up loans from SIT to attend.

5. Meeting with the Academic Staff from GSA Glasgow

- 5.1 The Review Panel met with the Programme Leader of the BA (Hons) Interior Design, the Programme Leader of the BA (Hons) Communication Design, and the Academic

Co-ordinator. The Review Panel explored topics which had been raised in the previous meetings.

- 5.2 The Review Panel was keen to explore the notion of cross cultural learning, and in particular whether other opportunities for cross-campus learning were being developed and exploited to their fullest potential.
- 5.3 The Programme Leader for BA (Hons) Interior Design provided the following good example of how Interior Design had developed a project to be delivered asynchronously between Singapore and Glasgow. In 2015/16, the department piloted a project which explored the interior spaces of the Tenement (Glasgow) and the Housing Development Board (HDB, Singapore). This project was delivered simultaneously in Glasgow and Singapore and aimed to facilitate cross campus peer learning, critical analysis and reflection. Students from Singapore had the opportunity to visit the National Trust's Tenement House as part of the Overseas Immersion Programme. The outcomes of this student project were exhibited in Glasgow during the 2015/16 Degree Show, which coincided with the Overseas Immersion Project and provided the student groups from both campuses with the opportunity to engage in further critical dialogue.
- 5.4 The Review Panel commended the department on its development of a project which allowed students in GSA Glasgow to work virtually with students at GSA Singapore to undertake and fulfill a shared brief. The Programme Leader highlighted that the time difference and IT infrastructure had presented logistical challenges, but that means of working within the constraints of the VLE, and utilising social media platforms had enabled its delivery. It was clear that this development had brought benefits to both cohorts of students.
- 5.5 The Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Communication Design programme reported that she had visited GSA Singapore in August 2016 for detailed discussions with the programme team, with a particular focus on student employability. These discussions had been beneficial and there appeared to be an appetite for the development of similar shared projects.
- 5.6 In the discussion with the academic staff, it was clear that access to appropriate and reliable technology would further enable this type of project working to become regularised. The Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Interior Design highlighted the recent work of the School of Design's VLE champions with the Learning Technologist, and the Review Panel noted that the planned move to an alternative platform would better support this type of activity. The Periscope (app) also offered potential in terms of connecting students across the two campuses. The Review Panel agreed that it would be helpful for the BA (Hons) Interior Design programme team to share their experience with colleagues in Communication Design.
- 5.7 The Review Team were keen to revisit the academic staff's view of moving the Overseas Immersion Programme to term time to allow students to interact with their peer cohort in Glasgow. The staff re-iterated that the School of Design had concluded that the current provision offers the best possible student experience including an opportunity to view both the GSA Glasgow and the GSA Singapore Degree Shows in situ, high quality central city accommodation, access to academic staff based in Glasgow, workshop facilities combined with peer learning via their engagement with GSA student ambassadors and the cost of OIP being within the budget.
- 5.8 In the Partnership Review of February 2015, it was suggested that the School of Design could give consideration to recruiting Student Ambassadors from out with the School which might provide GSA Singapore students with a wider view of GSA Glasgow. The Review Panel explored whether there had been any move to extend the Student Ambassador programme. The academic staff reported that the School made a considerable financial investment in the Student Ambassadors, and

highlighted the significant role they played in demonstrating the how the studio environments worked within their respective programmes. The staff were of the view that budgetary constraints would prevent widening the scope of the Student Ambassador programme to students from other Schools. They were, however, keen to explore alternative ways of enabling students from GSA Singapore to mix more widely with students from across GSA, and would work together with the GSA Students' Association in this regard.

- 5.9 The Review Panel considered the potential for development of an Overseas Immersion Programme in Singapore for students from GSA Glasgow to participate in, which had been explored briefly in the previous review. The academic staff were clear that this continued to be a positive aspiration for the future, it was however apparent that this would be a highly resource intensive activity, both in terms of cost to the students and the time it would take to develop a suitable programme.
- 5.10 The academic staff appeared keen to create further rich opportunities for students on the programmes in Glasgow and Singapore to engage with each other, recognising the manifold benefits this would bring to their learning experience. The Review Panel explored whether the development of a student exchange programme to be delivered in Term 2 would be a possibility. Overall, academic staff appeared unconvinced that a student exchange programme was the most efficient way of promoting cross-cultural activity, the preference being to focus on the development of field-trip projects and related activity. The Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Communication Design queried whether Glasgow based students would gain from undertaking an exchange in Term 2, and was of the view that potential disruption in an important juncture of their learning might lead to difficulties further into their studies for Honours.
- 5.11 In terms of the student staff contact hours, the academic staff confirmed that the work undertaken by the Acting Programme Director in this regard had had a positive impact on the delivery of the academic programmes in Singapore. The Review Panel explored whether there remained differences between the learning and teaching methods used in each of the two campuses to deliver the programmes and the academic staff appeared unable to confirm whether this work had addressed the issues of parity between delivery in Glasgow and in Singapore.
- 5.12 The Review Panel discussed the research potential of GSA Singapore with the staff. It was clear that the staff felt there were many opportunities to be explored, though it was highlighted that SIT was not a research funded institution, and that academic research was not, therefore high on its agenda. The staff were of the view that there was further scope for potential research collaborations with other established Universities and agencies in Singapore.
- 5.13 The academic staff offered examples of how the research agenda for GSA Singapore was being established. The Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Interior Design provided an example whereby the department had managed a small project on Dementia Care in conjunction with Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital. This project had attracted significant media attention and SIT was keen to repeat the model in further clinical applications. The Review Panel noted that the department of Interior Design had staff with established research profiles. The GSA Singapore staff in Communication Design were early career researchers and were benefiting from being mentored by the Programme Leader.
- 5.14 The research-teaching linkages between GSA Glasgow and GSA Singapore were also highlighted, and offered examples whereby Dr Jesse O'Neill's research was feeding into Design History and Theory delivered in Year 2. The Review Panel was pleased to note that there were complex research projects in development,

incorporating staff from Singapore, Glasgow and the Institute of Design Innovation in Forres.

- 5.15 The Review Panel discussed the SIT Review of the Collaboration Agreement with GSA, with particular reference to the concerns raised within the report regarding the employability of graduates. In the course of discussions it was recognised that the analysis contained in the SIT Review was limited to two years of data and that to seek to identify trends without a minimum of three years of data might be counterintuitive. The Review Panel, therefore, considered that it was important that the GSA response be appropriately measured.
- 5.16 It was clear that the academic staff members had given detailed consideration to this point and anticipated that the actions underway⁶ in 2016/17 would have a significant impact on the future employability of their graduates. The Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Communication Design considered that working with alumni to map their employment progress provided a well-timed opportunity to explore graduate destinations, not only within Singapore, but within the wider region.
- 5.17 With reference to the above discussion, the Review Panel was keen to explore whether there were any plans for reforming the programme curriculum. It was confirmed that, at present, there were no plans to amend the curriculum, rather that the Programme Director would be liaising with GSA Student Employability and Enterprise Manager and the SIT Careers Service to further embed and enhance professional practice within the curriculum. The Review Panel was of the view that this was perhaps a missed opportunity for developing the curriculum, and one which could have additional benefits for the programmes delivered in GSA Glasgow.
- 5.18 Following discussions with regard to senior staff workload, the Review Panel recognised the scale and complexity of the undertaking in GSA Singapore, which when taken together with the sizable cohorts of students and large staff team in GSA Glasgow, could be challenging to manage efficiently. The Review Panel also recognised the considerable amount of effort and input provided by staff in Singapore and Glasgow to successfully deliver the programmes and provide a positive experience for all students.

6 Identification of Good Practice and Dissemination across GSA, as appropriate

- 6.1 The Review Panel considered that the commendations set out in section 7 below represent good practice and invited Academic Council to consider how the GSA Singapore successes can be best disseminated for awareness and action cross-GSA.

7. Commendations

- 7.1 The Review Panel commended the School of Design on the following:

Commendation 1

- 7.2 The Review Panel noted that the significant staff commitment made to the partnership with SIT, and the considerable amount of time and resource expended on managing this relationship successfully.

Commendation 2

- 7.3 The Review Panel considered that the HDB/Tenement project was an excellent example of how project briefs could be used to bring students from Glasgow and Singapore together to work with and learn from each other to the mutual benefit of all.

⁶ See Page 33 of the Self-Evaluation Report

Commendation 3

- 7.4 The Review Panel commended the School in its identification and exploration of CPD opportunities. This was viewed as a positive and proactive development.

Commendation 4

- 7.5 The Review Panel commended the School on its provision of and investment in Student Ambassadors for the Overseas Immersion Programme. The GSA Singapore students clearly valued the interaction with students in Glasgow and that peer-to-peer learning enriched their studio experience.

Commendation 5

- 7.6 The Review Panel commended the School on the engagement of staff across both campuses, in particular through the periods of staff turnover, and their evident care and concern to give the students at GSA Singapore a valuable and positive learning experience.

Commendation 6

- 7.7 The Review Panel was impressed by the students' concise and articulate explanation of the difference between diploma and degree study and commended the staff for creating an appropriate environment within GSA Singapore for this to be apparent to the students.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The Review Panel has made the undernoted recommendations:

Recommendation 1

- 8.2 The Review Panel recommended that the Acting Head of the School of Design should set out formally, the ambitions for the partnership with SIT for the following five years. This should include consideration of the delivery of new programmes, CPD short courses and research potential.

Recommendation 2

- 8.3 The Review Panel recommended that the Acting Head of the School of Design, in conjunction with the Senior Researcher for the School of Design, should develop an explicit research agenda for GSA Singapore and ensure that this links with the School of Design RKEC Strategic Plan.

Recommendation 3

- 8.4 The Review Panel recommended that the School of Design reflects on further ways of exploiting the potential for intercultural learning. While recognising that the Overseas Immersion Programme provides a good platform for this, the School should explore other ways of connecting students from GSA Singapore with peers across GSA.

Recommendation 4

- 8.5 The Review Panel recommended that the Programme Teams, in conjunction with the School of Design's VLE champions, should further explore the usage of virtual environments, in particular to consider the holding of asynchronous critiques and developing partnership project briefs between different locations. The Review Panel recommended that this be shared within the School of Design and across the institution in order that the wider GSA might learn from the School's experience.

Recommendation 5

- 8.7 Notwithstanding the considerable work undertaken since the Partnership Review in February 2015, the Review Panel recommended that the Programme Director

continued to engage with colleagues at SIT and Temasek Polytechnic to address the outstanding issues with regard to workshop access.

Recommendation 6

- 8.8 The Review Panel recommended that the Programme Leaders, together with input from the programme teams and the Programme Director, should reflect further regarding how the programme curriculum could be enhanced to explicitly address employability.

Recommendation 7

- 8.9 The Review Panel remained unclear regarding whether there remained a disparity between the contact hours in Singapore and those in Glasgow. If there was a disparity between the campuses, the reasons for this should be set out and the appropriate clarification provided. The Review Panel recommended that the Acting Head of the School of Design investigate this further, and report as appropriate.

Recommendation 8

- 8.10 The Review Panel recommended that the Acting Head of the School of Design, in conjunction with the Programme Director should reflect on the recruitment targets for GSA Singapore. Subsequently, the Programme Director should engage with the Programme Director for SIT to define and agree targets for entry in 2017/18.

9. Follow-up Reporting from the School of Design

- 9.1 The School of Design is invited to provide a brief report explaining how the conditions and recommendations have been, or will be, met to the March 2017 meeting of Academic Council, via the School of Design Board of Studies and Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee. The report should include an action plan and timeline for addressing the conditions and recommendations set out in the Review Report. Progress will be reviewed as part of the action list discussions at subsequent meetings of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee and Academic Council.
- 9.2 A formal report on the progress made in addressing the conditions and recommendations of the Review will be submitted to Academic Council (via Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee) approximately one year from the date that the Panel's Report was received by that Committee. The School of Design should also report on the steps it has taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review and on the actions taken. The Convenor of the Review Panel will review the progress reports to ensure that the recommendations have been adequately addressed and reported, including evidence of dissemination of recommendations to students. Academic Council may request further follow-up reports in certain circumstances, for example, where progress has been limited or delayed.

LD October 2016