

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 24 November 2017

The Glasgow School of Art: First Year Experience Curriculum Reform

Purpose

The University of Glasgow's Academic Standards Committee is invited to consider and approve the following proposal to reform GSA's first year curriculum as part of the First Year Experience Project.

Overview

The First Year Experience Project was established in the wake of the Mackintosh Fire as an opportunity to revisit and revitalise the first year student experience. The project aims to capitalise on the Mack Restoration in terms of the student experience in two key ways:

- To relocate all first year undergraduate students from across GSA into the Mackintosh Building;
- To renew the first year experience at GSA through a review of current first year provision with a specific aim to establish two scheduled periods for cross-programme collaboration and interdisciplinary working.

The project has scoped and articulated the ambition to reconceptualise delivery of stage 1 of all undergraduate programmes to offer two, SCQF level 7, 20 credit units of interdisciplinary learning, one in semester 1 and one in semester 2 beginning in academic session 2019/2020.

Rationale for Change

In the LTES 2015-2018,¹ GSA established a strategic objective to enhance opportunities for interdisciplinary, student-led activity. It clarified interdisciplinarity as a GSA cross-school offer and suggested amplifying connections across disciplines within the current curricular structures. This ambition reflected advocacy by the student body for GSA's curricular structure to provide a more holistic art school experience underpinned by both discipline specific and cross-discipline, integrative approaches. In response to the opportunities provided through the restoration of the Mack, it became clear that fulfilling this strategic objective could be achieved by bringing together the renewed building with a renewed first year structure.

The following principles,² were set out in order to facilitate engagement with this ambition and to deliver the core curriculum shift envisioned within the project.

1. Ensuring creative collaboration is at the heart of learning: simultaneously strengthening disciplinary practices and inspiring radical forms of interdisciplinarity
2. Cultivating creative, collaborative inspiration through location (the Mack)
3. Experiencing the integration of research, practice, and theory from day 1
4. Encouraging a sense of the unbounded nature of 'Studio'
5. Fostering transitions into disciplinary expertise through exposure to the domain houses of the specialisms.

¹ LTES 2015-2018: Objective 4.

² Adapted from: Irene McAra-McWilliam, *The Glasgow School of Art Mackintosh Building: Revealed and Restored*, December 2015

Scope of Curriculum Review and Reform

The first year curriculum renewal will cover undergraduate programmes with exception of programmes outlined below. It will include a review of stage 1 delivery, identifying commonality and opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations. Stage 1 curriculum will be revised to include two interdisciplinary, 20 credit units. To ensure the majority of GSA's first years can benefit from these units, there will be a shared curriculum architecture across the majority of programmes. The reform process will ensure that all programmes' stage 1 aims and ILOs continue to be met through the reconceptualised programme structure and component courses. Programmes to be included within the reform are:

School of Design:

- BA (Hons) Communication Design
- BA (Hons) Fashion Design
- BA (Hons) Interior Design
- BA (Hons) Silversmithing & Jewellery Design
- BA (Hons) Textile Design
- BA (Hons) Interaction Design

Innovation School

- BDes (Hons) Product Design

Mackintosh School of Architecture:

- BArch (Hons) Architecture

School of Fine Art:

- BA (Hons) Fine Art

School of Visualisation and Simulation:

- BSc Immersive Systems Design

Continuing Education

- International Foundation Programme

Three programmes are exceptions from the proposed curriculum reform due to their nature either as articulated direct entry programmes or programmes which are delivered in collaboration with the University of Glasgow. These are:

- BEng/MEng (Hons) Product Design Engineering
- BDes (Hons) Sound for the Moving Image
- BEng/MEng (Hons) Civil Engineering with Architecture

Overview of the approach

In December 2016, the Deputy Director (Academic) and Deputy Director (Innovation) along with Heads of School approved first year curriculum renewal, and in the meeting of April 2017, the establishment of First Year Experience Project Board (Appendix 1 Project Board Role and Remit). The project is being led by the Deputy Director Innovation with support from the Learning and Teaching Team.

The Deputy Director Innovation chairs the First Year Experience Project Board which has overall responsibility for the project and has membership drawn from across the Schools, Student Representation and appropriate professional services. The Board takes responsibility for communication and curriculum review within the respective academic Schools and will ensure the development of the required interdisciplinary programme architecture in consultation with key stakeholders. Colleagues within Learning and Teaching will support the Project Board, Programme Leaders and programme teams to redevelop curriculum, courses and course documentation as part of the reform, offering workshops and dedicated support to programme teams.

Programme amendments are expected to be undertaken predominantly through Programme minor amendment based on the scale and scope of the reform within the first year of programmes and the curriculum curricular structures in place. However in establishing the scope of each programmes reform the scale and scope of change will be considered in line with guidance as set out by the University of Glasgow³.

³ Definitions of Major and Minor Change:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/senateoffice/gea/progdesignapproval/programmeapproval/majorminor/>

The project timeframe for delivery has been established in the Project Boards plan of work (Appendix 2) and is set out in five key stages:

- Stage 1 Project Initialisation and Planning April 2017 to June 2017
- Stage 2: Programme review and reconceptualization May 2017 to December 2017
- Stage 3: Academic Approvals Stage January 2017 to April 2017
- Stage 4: Curriculum Development and Course Delivery May 2018 to September 2019
- Stage 5: Evaluation September 2019 to June 2020

Appendix 1 Project Board Remit and Membership

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART First Year Experience Project Project Board Remit and Membership

The First Year Experience Project has been established in the wake of the Mackintosh Fire as an opportunity to revitalise the first year experience and truly offer a holistic, creative, collaborative and inspirational art school experience for our students. The School has an ambition to transform the Mack into an 'open studio' for 1st year students, creating a place of high-intensity creative practice, forging and enriching linkages between teaching, research and professional practice, and establishing new opportunities to engage with audiences within and out with the GSA.

We will achieve this ambition through revitalising our 1st year curriculum for delivery in the 2019-20 academic session, embedding distinct, interdisciplinary, thematic opportunities for student and staff collaboration and interconnected working. These opportunities will take the shape of two thematic 'emanations' within each Semester accredited for at least 20 credits work of learning.

To facilitate this ambition and to deliver the core project outcomes the project will be shaped by the following principles:

1. Ensuring creative collaboration is at the heart of learning: simultaneously strengthening disciplinary practices and inspiring radical forms of interdisciplinarity
2. Cultivating creative, collaborative inspiration through location (the Mack)
3. Experiencing the integration of research, practice, and theory from day 1
4. Encouraging a sense of the unbounded nature of 'Studio'
5. Fostering transitions into disciplinary expertise through exposure to the domain houses of the specialisms.

Remit

The Project will be led and overseen by a Project Board who is responsible for the strategic leadership and coordination of the First Year Experience Project. Their role will be to ensure that the project achieves its academic ambitions and truly enhances the student experience. The Board is responsible for:

- Establishing the project's strategic academic ambitions and underlying principles
- Ensuring students are actively engaged in all aspects of the project's work
- Agreeing, monitor and evaluating the project from inception to delivery
- Coordinating school based and cross GSA activities to ensure curriculum delivery in line with key milestones
- Coordinating and collaborating with GSA professional services to ensure key input to project development and compliance with GSA policy and procedure
- Reporting regularly through appropriate academic governance committees.

Membership

Irene McAra-McWilliam	Project Lead	Gina Wall	SoFA
Laura Glennie	SA President	Sarah Smith	SoFA/FACS
Kirsty Hendry	GSASA	Luca Brunelli	MSA
Irene Bell	School	Alan Hooper	MSA
Patrick Macklin	SoD	Thea Stevens	SoD/DHT
Michael Dancer	SoD	Vicky Gunn	L&T
Daniel Livingstone	SimVis	Mark Charters	L&T
Sandy Louchart	SimVis		