

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 25 May 2018

Programme Approval Report for the MSc Visualisation Programme
(Major Programme Amendment) at The Glasgow School of Art

UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE

PROGRAMME APPROVAL: 14 February 2018

Consideration of Programme and Course Approval Documentation for the Master
of Science in Visualisation pathways

- Approval Panel: Professor Ken Neil (Convenor), Professor Alistair Payne, Ms Barbara Ridley, Professor Gordon Hush, Professor Vicky Gunn, Ms Janet Allison, Mr John Ayers, Ms Shona Paul and Dr Vanessa Johnson
- Appointed Members:* Dr Donna Leishman, Mr Nicholas Oddy, Mr Henry Rogers, Mr Iain Atchison and Ms Sheila Kay.
- Attending: Professor Elizabeth Moignard, Professor Clare Willsdon, Dr Gina Wall, Dr Maddy Sclater (Learning and Teaching), Ms Alessia Williams, Mr Robert Mantho and Mr Patrick Macklin.
- Programme Team: Dr Daniel Livingstone, Ms Jane Deasy (Student Representative) and Dr Colin Allison (External Examiner).
- Secretary: Mr Gordon Brady, Registry Officer
- Apologies: Mr Alan Hooper, Mr Gordon McLoughlin, Ms Alison Stevenson and Ms Sally Stewart.

Consideration

- 1.1 The Convenor welcomed the Approval Panel and Programme Team and outlined the schedule for the UPC Programme Approval meeting. The Deputy Registrar confirmed that any conditions set by the Approval Panel must be addressed by **4th April 2018** in order to ensure subsequent consideration by Academic Council.
- 1.2 The Convenor requested that the Programme Team provide an overview of the documentation presented to the Approval Panel.
- 1.3 Dr Livingstone gave an overview of the proposed programme amendments, stating that the changes to the programme structure were influenced by the Postgraduate Taught (PGT) credit reform process.
- 1.4 He explained that this was a little more complex with the Visualisation programme having three pathways; the Medical Visualisation programme being taught jointly with The University of Glasgow
- 1.5 He continued that all three pathways shared a common design policy, but that a further review of these documents may highlight further minor amendments are necessary due to unanticipated staff absence impacting on the time available to undertake the changes required.

The current structure for the programme had 4 x 15 credits courses, including one

focussing on research. There are also 3 electives for each pathway, resulting in quite a lot of commonality across the whole programme and students get fundamentally the same experience for these aspects of the programme.

1.6 Restructuring Semester 1 was a challenge and students reported that they did not want to lose this structure for the programmes. It is proposed that the structure for the first Semester would change to 1x20 credit course and 1x40 credit course. The share of 3D modelling across the whole programme would be marginally increased and for the Serious Games and Virtual Reality pathway, the programming had been cut, as it was felt to not be core to the experience.

1.7 For Semester 2, Medical Visualisation was studied at The University of Glasgow. This was in 3x20 credit blocks. The proposed changes to this have still to take place due to staff absences.

For the Heritage Visualisation pathway, the proposal is to amalgamate 2x20 credit courses into one 40 credit course. This would leave one elective at this stage and be in common with practice elsewhere in GSA.

For the Serious Games pathway, as well as the core 2x20 credit courses plus a 20 credit elective, there are plans to re-introduce "Audio for Games" as an elective.

1.8 The changes for part time study options would apply to MSc Visualisation as they would for the Sound for the Moving Image postgraduate programme. [See 1.15 of UPC Programme Approval document for Sound for the Moving Image]

1.9 Similar to discussions that took place during the MDes in Sound for Moving Image Programme Approval meeting earlier today where the Head of the School of Design asked if a course could be 20 credits but taught over 50 contact hours, there was concern that the number of contact hours cited would be undeliverable. These may need to be slightly moderated within the School of Simulation and Visualisation.

1.10 Employer feedback had been sought and obtained from a previous graduate from the course. Their input had been generally positive, but they had stressed the need for the programme to continue to offer a programming option, although in a 'non-core' capacity. They suggested it was important for students to see its value.

1.11 The Class Representative from the Visualisation programme said it was felt that this proposal would bring general improvements, but that no particular change stood out.

1.12 The External Examiner commented that the proposals would result in a fundamental change to the structure of the programme. He strongly advised that the impact of these changes was reviewed at the end of the first year of implementation. He also said that there was a need for 100% clarity of the changes and the reasons for them to be clarified to the student cohort. He enquired if there would be an increase in the range of electives on offer as a result. Dr Maddy Sclater advised that there would be around 20 different electives available to the students on this programme.

1.13 The External Examiner also commented that the up-scaling of the 'Research Skills' Course from 15 to 20 credits was an educational need and wondered whether downsizing from 15 to 10 credits would be preferable. The Head of Learning and Teaching confirmed that the increase in credits is due to the disciplinary as well as educational benefits; she outlined that the research grounding was essential to negotiate Stage 3 of the programme. She did agree that this was a 'GSA decision', but highlighted that it was about research methods and not skills overtly. The weighting also allows the Stage 2 electives to be more open in terms of choice. The External Examiner added that although it was an institutional decision he would be worried if the methods were module specific. The Head of Learning and Teaching explained that they would be domain and discipline specific. A University of Glasgow colleague said they fully supported the development, especially if the new course was

intrinsically subject specific. Dr Livingstone advised that the changes to a more discipline specific approach would be in the plans for delivery of the course which need to be clearer, citing that it did not, at present, highlight the need to separate students by pathway.

- 1.14 The External Examiner advised that there a lot of positives to larger modules but this may result in a higher number of low grades for students. He further suggested this could be resolved with an appropriate assessment 'machine'. The Head of the Innovation School asked for confirmation that there were 3 summative assessments and if there had been student feedback on this. Dr Livingstone responded that the students were generally happy with the topics and the pathway assessment loads were in line overall and confirmed that there were 3 summative assessments.

He also added that a consultation with the student body had produced a suggested model which was very similar to that being proposed by the programme team; the aggregate mark being part of this suggestion. The Head of the School of Design said that the Course Specifications did not make the assessment strategy clear and asked if the volume of ILOs reflected the 3 amalgamated results.

The Head of Design History and Theory asked how the complex elements would be addressed in summative assessments. Dr Livingstone responded that this was indeed challenging, and an essay component had been dropped. There was a concern over the level of technical content and the expertise reflected at a Masters' level. The programme would now be more practical generally, but the staff remained very keen to not drop any summative assessments as they are good motivation for the students.

- 1.15 There was a brief discussion about the diversity of the three pathways within the programme with Dr Livingstone highlighting the ethical thread in both Heritage and Medical Visualisation. He confirmed that there would be very minimal changes to these areas of the programme. He also reiterated the need for amendments to the papers in order to reflect the 'Audio for Games' elective option for this programme.
- 1.16 It should be noted from another meeting that there was a minimal change to the 'Cadaveric Dissection' course taught at the University of Glasgow that will require an amendment to the Programme and Course Specification paperwork.

Commendations

- 2.1 The Approval Panel made the following commendation:

The general standard and quality of the papers submitted had been praised at previous meeting this morning and the Convenor said they would like it recorded that they greatly appreciated the work that had been done to get the papers to this stage, especially bearing in mind the unanticipated staff absences this session.

Approval Panel Decision

- 3.1 Following the above discussion, the Approval Panel **agreed** to recommend to Academic Council that the Master of Design in Sound for the Moving Image amendments be approved subject to the satisfaction of the conditions set out below.
- 3.2 In addition, the Approval Panel **agreed** that the Programme Team should also progress the recommendations set out below and report on these within one year.

Condition

Condition 1

- 4.1 A review of the weightings at Stage three is required for clarity, working methods and timing.

[Action: Programme Team and Head of School of Simulation and Visualisation]

Condition 2

- 4.2 Part-Time study options need to be reviewed with a discussion to take place between the Head of the School of Simulation and Visualisation and the Deputy Director (Academic). A decision would be forthcoming about whether or not these part time programmes would be suspended and the Head of School would be required to produce some impact studies based on this.

[Action: Programme Team and Head of School of Simulation and Visualisation]

Condition 3

- 4.3 A review of the implications for part-time study on any leave of absence applications or resits. An Equality Impact Assessment for this course of action would be required.

[Action: Programme Team and Head of School of Simulation and Visualisation]

Condition 4

- 4.4 It was requested that the Programme Team review the ratio of contact hours to credit weighting as per the discussion referenced in point 1.9.

[Action: Programme Team and Head of School of Simulation and Visualisation]

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

- 5.1 The Approval Panel recommended that the programme team review the language used for the ILOs:

- In terms of volume; there too many ILOs across the whole programme.
- The language of the ILOs need to reflect a suitability for SCQF level 11 qualifications

[Action: Programme Team]

Recommendation 2

- 5.2 The Approval Panel recommended that the Programme Leader should review the 'Audio for Games' aspect of the course as referenced by both the student and lead representative.

[Action: Programme Team]

Recommendation 3

- 5.3 It was requested that a review of the assessment timetable be undertaken to measure the effects of the sequence and timing on student learning experience.

[Action: Programme Team]

Recommendation 4

- 5.4 There was a need to review how the aggregate 'pass' mark was calculated and how this was stipulated.

[Action: Programme Team]

Recommendation 5

- 5.5 The Approval Panel asked that the Programme Leader review the programme content in terms of its specific relation and relevance to each pathway as well as the weighting of this.

[Action: Programme Leader]

Recommendation 6

- 5.6 There was a further request to clarify the assessment arrangements in terms of weighting and how pinch points of assessments for students may occur across the academic session.

[Action: Programme Team]

Satisfaction of Conditions

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

Dr Daniel LivingstoneDaniel Livingstone.....

Date4/4/18.....

Professor Ken Neil Ken Neil

Date 07/04/2018

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 (j.brown@gsa.ac.uk), by 4th of April 2018 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.*