

Enhancement-led Institutional Review of Glasgow School of Art

Outcome Report

October 2020



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About the Enhancement-led Institutional Review method

The QAA website explains the method for [Enhancement-led Institutional Review \(ELIR\)](#) and has links to the ELIR handbook and other informative documents.¹ You can also find out more about the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#).²

Further details about ELIR can be found in an accompanying [brief guide](#),³ including an overview of the review method, information about review teams, and explanations of follow-up action.

About this review

This is the Outcome Report of the ELIR conducted by QAA at Glasgow School of Art (GSA). The review took place as follows: Planning Visit on 4-5 March 2020 and Review Visit on 26-30 October 2020.

The Planning Visit was conducted by a team of six reviewers:

- Dr Steve Halfyard (Academic Reviewer) (Planning Visit only)
- Cecilie Broch Knudsen (International Reviewer) (Planning Visit only)
- Professor Oren Lieberman (Academic Reviewer)
- Paul Probyn (Coordinating Reviewer)
- James Lee Slimings (Student Reviewer)
- Professor Gillian Thomson (Academic Reviewer).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the review visit was postponed from 27 April-1 May 2020 to 26-30 October 2020. This postponement resulted in two changes to the review team which were agreed by GSA. The Review Visit was conducted by:

- Professor Hilary Grainger (Academic Reviewer) (Review Visit only)
- Professor Mark Hunt (Academic Reviewer) (Review Visit only)
- Professor Oren Lieberman (Academic Reviewer)
- Paul Probyn (Coordinating Reviewer)
- James Lee Slimings (Student Reviewer)
- Professor Gillian Thomson (Academic Reviewer).

This report sets out the threshold judgement formed by the ELIR team on 26 October 2020. The report was approved by the GSA on 26 October 2020.

Threshold judgement about Glasgow School of Art

Glasgow School of Art (GSA) has arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience which are of **limited effectiveness**. Limited effectiveness indicates there is evidence that GSA's arrangements for managing quality and securing academic standards are limited currently, such that the quality of the student learning experience and the academic standards of the awards it offers would continue to be placed at risk if GSA did not take action.

This judgement means GSA does not currently meet sector expectations in relation to the arrangements it has for securing the academic standards of the awards it offers and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience it provides. GSA is asked to take action in a number of areas to ensure that quality and academic standards are not put at risk in the future.

Commendations

- 1 The School is commended for the following areas of good practice.
- 2 **Widening access** - there is a strategic and sustained commitment, evidenced by a range of targeted activities, to promote widening access which supports students to enter GSA or other higher education institutions. GSA has established a variety of successful long-standing school and college partnerships, notably with Castlehead High School, which raise the aspirations and achievements of young people. The ongoing support provided by GSA to widening access students contributes to high retention rates.
- 3 **Support for articulating students** - GSA has effective support in place for students entering the School through an articulation route and has made significant progress in supporting students to successful completion. In particular, the Associate Student Scheme provides college students with valuable access to the library and virtual learning environment (VLE), as well as enabling students to benefit from a range of engagement opportunities at GSA.
- 4 **Student support services** - GSA provides a range of support services that are successful and responsive in meeting evolving student needs. These services have been particularly effective in supporting students with the move to online provision. It is positive that a number of staff have completed qualifications focused on the provision of counselling services in a digital environment.
- 5 **Decolonisation of the curriculum** -
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23 **Independence in student-facing processes** - to avoid potential conflicts of interest and aid transparency, GSA should undertake a review of the extent to which there is independence of decision-making in the complaints handling process, in the Good Cause procedure for summative assessments, including the Good Cause Board, and similar procedures.

24 **Awarding body oversight and approval** - complete the work undertaken to date on the revisions to the Memorandum o