

GSA SUMMARY REPORT OF EQUALITY CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT OF EQUALITY IMPACT

Date of Assessment:	January 2014	
School / Department:	School of Design	
Lead member of staff:	Irene Bell	
Location of impact assessment documentation (contact or web link):	i.bell@gsa.ac.uk	
Area of decision making / Title of policy, procedure or relevant practice:	Assessment process for Year 1 Design	
Please indicate if this is:	New:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Existing/Reviewed:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Revised/Updated:	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Summary of how equality, diversity and participation have been considered and due regard given to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):</p> <p>This impact assessment was approached as an evaluation of practice, giving due regard to the 3 needs of the PSED and considering equality impact for students with protected characteristics within the process of assessment in Year 1 of the undergraduate Design programme. Taking account of the three needs of the PSED and considering equality impact at school level means both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Examining assessment processes and criteria from a learning & teaching perspective. (This is set out in our annual enhancement plan and is the main focus of this impact assessment). ii) Ensuring that students are able to access the support they need as an integrated aspect of learning and teaching, and with referral to the student support services where appropriate. <p>Whilst the aim of the assessment is to minimise any negative impact and advance equality of opportunity for protected characteristic groups, its outcomes will also have a positive impact on the student body as a whole, including those with protected characteristics, through its quality enhancement approach.</p> <p>This assessment focuses initially on the process of assessment and is regarded as an initial step in the consideration of equality impact across all aspects of assessment and the broader learning and teaching / curriculum development practice in the undergraduate design programme. Whilst we have made significant changes to our processes over several years, this assessment has been an opportunity to enhance current practice and consider how students might better engage with the assessment systems we use. As well as making the assessment process more transparent, it provides an opportunity to engage with all students and to develop approaches to assessment that are appropriate and take account of equality perspectives. This is where the consideration of equality will extend to assessment criteria and their relationship with learning outcomes.</p> <p>The assessment has included consideration of a range of evidence, identifying gaps in our evidence base and examining the Year 1 assessment process stage by stage and with reference to the learning outcomes set.</p>		

Evidence used to make your assessment:

Evidence has included:

- Statistical analysis of 1st year cohort by protected characteristics for the academic session 12/13
- Analysis of students within that cohort identified as being 'at risk' of academic failure
- Tutor discussions
- Student feedback

As part of the process it was recognised that further research needs to be carried out in order to gain a better understanding of equality impact. Direct questions in feedback and focus groups/interviews with students will reveal more detailed and personal insights into the assessment process and its value in the learning journey. An ongoing study of assessment methods and how they align with learning outcomes and assessment criteria will be useful in identifying any mismatch across documentation.

These elements will form part of the next stage of the research process alongside the tracker document (see below), giving comparative analysis across the cohort and which will indicate the success or not of enhancements made, by analysing and documenting the evidence generated.

Outline any positive or negative impacts you have identified:

- Initial findings indicate that failure to progress is linked with disrupted study and inconsistent attendance and does not necessarily relate specifically or consistently to any protected characteristic group
- Positive impact can be identified in the formative assessment process where there is opportunity for all students, whatever their protected characteristic group, to seek support or raise issues with regard to their work / assessment. However there may be areas where further staff development is required in order to ensure that all staff understand and take account of difference across a diverse cohort of students. This also applied to students, particularly where group or peer assessment takes place.
- Potential negative impact has been identified related to the language / terminology used in assessment. This may impact particularly on international students.
- Potential negative impact has been identified for students, whatever their protected characteristic, where they are identified as 'at risk'. Ensuring that institutional processes are adhered to and that the support mechanisms that are put in place are sensitive to the needs of the student will mitigate this potential.
- It is not possible to ascertain at this stage whether any assessment methods or criteria have equality impact. This will be addressed as part of further research and ongoing review and development of practice.

Summary of the actions you have taken or plan to take as a result:**Evidence:**

- In order to identify patterns or trends with more accuracy the statistical data will need to be considered retrospectively across several years to establish a more robust evidence base. This will indicate whether or not there is equity in progression across different protected groups and whether focusing on the 'at risk' group is the right strategy.
- Maintain dialogue with programme staff with regard to equality in order to embed equality consideration in the development of assessment criteria and assessment processes

- There is scope to look at how we manage sporadic attendance within our current frameworks taking into account the range and nature of studio activity and current regulatory requirements: UKVI attendance monitoring, for example. Alternative modes of study such as part-time and distance learning, could address a range of equality related needs including those of some widening participation students.
- By compiling a table of specific stages of assessment in the academic timetable for Year 1 Design, with an associated tracker document we will evaluate the learning and assessment journey of each individual and determine whether there is any indication of disadvantage operating in the assessment process relating to protected groups. Evidence gathered will enhance the broader analysis of statistical evidence referred to above.
- Undertake case studies for a cross section of the cohort who have positive/negative assessment or progression experience in order to support learning and teaching enhancements at programme level
- Further qualitative research through interviews with students to consider student experience of assessment
- In depth consideration of equality against current assessment criteria

Quality enhancement:

Stage of Assessment	Enhancement/action
<p>Introduction to assessment <i>A brief overview of the terms and their meanings and the link to assessment regulations on the website.</i> <i>Introduction to Student Support services</i></p>	<p>Highlight the value of assessment as the recognition of individual progress and attainment rather than the measurement of academic status within a peer group. Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A visual representation of the different grade awards and a clearer, more accessible description of the why, what and how of assessment for students and staff. • Use as a tool for staff development
<p>Manifesto <i>A short one-page document submitted at the start of the year.</i></p>	<p>This could contribute to an evaluative piece of research gathering evidence on students' expectations and experience of assessment. Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear articulation of the purpose of this piece of work and its intended learning outcomes, eg personal development • Collect feedback on student experience of this piece of work and its value in relation to its intended learning outcomes / purpose • Use explicitly to gain information on the differential experience and experience of students from different protected groups.
<p>Cross School Course <i>A short 10 credit course with a summative assessment outcome.</i></p> <p>Undertaken as a group project</p>	<p>This course could be used to reinforce the inherent value of experience and the learning gained from collaborative engagement where grades acknowledge participation and contribution, more than academic prowess. Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear articulation of the purpose of this piece of work and its intended learning outcomes, as above • Review assessment criteria to ensure equality perspectives are taken into account in respect of both engagement with place and collaborative working • Use to gain information on differential experience of students from different protected groups.

<p>Continual formative feedback <i>The practice of formative feedback is conducted through tutorial and review. It is often a shared responsive experience and includes peer input.</i></p>	<p>Could be better explained in simple terms so that students recognize formative assessment, their role and responsibilities in relation to formative assessment opportunities, the value and function of formative assessment /feedback in their learning and how to use it.. Students should be encouraged to participate in dialogue if not in a group situation then in 1:1 tutorial to overcome negative impact.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearer articulation of purpose • CPD in respect of embedding an equality perspective into curriculum and delivery • Development, delivery and assessment of curriculum which includes development of diversity perspectives
<p>7X7 <i>A drawing project, shared across disciplines, which is staff and peer assessed.</i></p>	<p>Extend the formality of the peer assessment process, make our intentions clear on its value in understanding the assessment process and positioning students in the role of assessor, learning to evaluate the level of work being assessed, and it's value in increasing critical skills. <i>Developments were made to the peer assessment aspect of this course in this session to make the process more meaningful to students and to ensure that the assessment criteria were clear and related specifically to the subject specialism and required each student to evaluate the work against the assessment criteria.</i></p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submission of peer assessment was automated and delivered through the VLE. The insights related to equality are still to be extracted and analysed. This will form part of the ongoing research process. • Feedback from staff and students on the process will be sought (on an anonymous basis)
<p>Design Process blog <i>A reflective analysis of learning habits and traits through analysis of own work and the factors that influence personal learning processes, communicated in the form of a blog.</i></p>	<p>This develops critical writing skills and helps students identify and challenge patterns of behaviour in their design process. It references external influencing factors and has a reach beyond the individual. The value of this self and peer assessment could be made clearer. The emphasis on content not writing skill should be clear and the option to approach the task with more visual material than text based entries and the equitable value of each approach made clear.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear articulation of purpose as above • Negative impact can also be mitigated by ensuring that there are a range of cultural perspectives and work from different groups of Design practitioners represented in the curriculum. • Student feedback sought on impact of project on learning and development. Analysed in relation to protected characteristics <p><i>(A series of 5 practitioner talks will take place in January 2014)</i></p>

<p>Pastoral/formative 1:1 Tutorials <i>Designed to bridge the gap between the start of the academic year and the first formal point of assessment in term 2</i></p>	<p>Approach varies for this across disciplines. Some subject areas feel that the formative feedback throughout the teaching process is sufficient to ensure that students are informed of their progress. If the formative process throughout projects is better articulated this might negate the need for additional 1:1's and the culture of dependency on grades as a measure of standard rather than of progress.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and articulate how L&T related contact is different to pastoral care. This is an area which can be looked at in detail as the research moves forward, investigating the variation in approach across subject areas. <p>(An open door policy is in place throughout the year to pick up on concerns or issues as they occur)</p>
<p>Formative assessment <i>Formal point of assessment and feedback, individual and 1:1</i></p>	<p>The difference between feedback in the studio during reviews and studio tutorials should be explicitly described from the formal point of formative assessment in term 2, so that staff and students are clear about what each delivers.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear articulation of difference between formal, formative assessment and studio feedback / tutorials • Positive and negative impact and the consideration of equality impact in assessment criteria will be investigated in further research through workshops with students that examine the alignment of assessment criteria with methods of assessment and student experience
<p>Student at risk feedback <i>Students who are identified as being 'at risk' of non-progression at summative assessment are given an additional tutorial.</i></p>	<p>This feedback tutorial should be done with the folio so that staff comments can be illustrated in the context of the student's work.. Students who struggle with language will be better able to grasp what is being referred to specifically from examples in their folio. This currently this happens in some of the specialisms and could be adopted across all areas. The focus at feedback tutorials should continue to offer useful skill based methodologies to address areas where development is needed.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the potential positive impact for all students of providing tutorial feedback along with the folio, illustrating comments through examples – do students who access this approach feel more able to learn from / see the relevance of the feedback? (capture student voice); do they achieve better results? (stats analysis through tracker)
<p>Summative assessment <i>Formal and final assessment where grades are awarded and pass / fail, progression and non-</i></p>	<p>Clear and transparent processes are essential to this stage in the assessment calendar.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate clearly why grading is used and what

<p><i>progression are decided.</i></p>	<p>grades mean to the individual student – examine how these are currently articulated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review time allowed for the presentation of work for assessment to ensure that this is reasonable and proportionate • Clear articulation at local level for students and staff of guidance about the application of mitigating circumstances and the timing of this process. Ensure that these are appropriate. • CPD for academic staff to ensure that, 1:1 feedback sessions are managed appropriately, that feedback is useful and that students are clear about what is being conveyed and given adequate opportunity to ask questions about how they have been assessed
<p>Progression <i>The progression from year one of study to year two.</i></p>	<p>More emphasis could be placed on the isolation of grades in each year of study. This would encourage students to experiment and take risks in their practice in the understanding that future grades will not be impacted negatively. Options for students who do not satisfy conditions of progression are made clear and are staff are available to discuss these options openly so that a student in this position can make an informed decision and that staff are able to assist with this.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation / review of approach to articulation of grades year by year • Review process for communicating options to ensure that all students are able to make the best, informed choices
<p>Moderation <i>The process of examining results across different areas and seeking parity and balance of assessed work</i></p>	<p>This is a staff activity and students may not be aware that each folio of work is assessed by a group of specialist staff and further moderated by staff from across different areas using benchmarks to ensure fairness in assessment.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear articulation of moderation process to students and staff including CPD / briefings for external staff to ensure they are aware of and adhere to GSA values and expectations in respect of equality consideration
<p>Summary of what you anticipate will change as a result of your actions and where / when these will be reported and reviewed:</p> <p>It is anticipated that students across all protected characteristics, including those identified as being ‘at risk’ will enjoy an learning experience which takes account of equality perspectives across all aspects of the programme in year 1 which will enable them to achieve and progress. This will be measured through both analysis of results and student feedback.</p> <p>In addition, through ongoing dialogue, programme development and CPD, staff will build their knowledge and understanding of equality and how this impacts on learning and teaching practice.</p> <p>Progress will be reported and reviewed annually through the PMAR process.</p>	

State how these changes will contribute to the delivery of GSA's equality outcomes:

The anticipated changes set out above will contribute to equality outcomes (1), (2), (3) and (7) through the development of curriculum and learning and teaching practice which incorporates an equality perspective, encourages students to engage creatively with equality and diversity issues. Through both dialogue and practice they will contribute to an organisation culture which builds the confidence of both staff and students to have the confidence to express their identity.

The outcome of your assessment:

- No action – no potential adverse impact
- Amendments or changes to remove barriers / promote positive impact
- Proceed with awareness of adverse impact

Sign-off, authorisation and publishing:

Review Lead

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Signature	Irene Bell
Date	April 2015

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Date	May 2015

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Name	Jill Hammond
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