



# OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

/ BY CATHERINE DOCHERTY /

The Design Innovation Studio worked closely with the Strategic Plan Steering Group to devise and deliver a creative, participative and inclusive process for strategic planning.

To meet our ambition for GSA 2025 it was vital to ensure a broad and well-informed perspective of the future looking both outwith and within the School. While ultimate responsibility for setting the strategic direction and priorities for GSA remained with the Board of Governors and the Senior Planning Group, the engagement of staff, students and external stakeholders was considered vital in shaping a meaningful strategic plan that offered a shared and inspiring vision.

We devised a programme of activities based around a structured creative approach with a range of facilitation tools: supporting divergent thinking for creative exploration and convergent thinking to focus on possible issues and solutions. Delivered over a six-month period, involved more than 200 participants including staff, students and external stakeholders from industry, academia and the public sector. The outputs from each interaction informed subsequent activities in an iterative, progressive process building on the rich contributions from all participants.

A series of six positioning papers explored present and future themes and challenges in education and the wider social and economic environment, providing the context for a series of 7 stakeholder workshops, as well as an initial Governors' workshop. Illustrated storyboards were used to capture feedback and visualise desired future scenarios for GSA. These, together with suggestions for the focus of activity, were distilled into a series of propositions for the Senior Planning Group and Governors to consider and develop further.

A Reference Group of staff from across academic and support areas presented their views on the draft vision as drawn up by the Senior Planning Group and Governors, helping to inform the high-level milestones, ambition, mission and values presented at the annual All Staff Event. Over 200 staff worked in facilitated groups to develop milestone actions that would help achieve the vision.

This strategic plan is a distillation of all of these activities and sets out the ambition, purpose and ethos of the School that underpin the vision for GSA 2025 and the first milestone plan. This shared vision will guide GSA activities with confidence and conviction during these uncertain times.

**Author of this position paper:**

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Catherine is a graduate of Glasgow Caledonian University and the University of Leeds and has worked as a consultant and researcher in the fields of design management and innovation for over 17 years and has extensive experience delivering national and international initiatives relating to design, innovation and sustainability. As Research Fellow in the Design Innovation Studio at Glasgow School of Art, she leads on a number of projects including: re-imagining public services including social services and the future of public libraries; supporting businesses to increase their competitiveness through the use of design; engaging communities in the climate change agenda; and facilitating organisational strategic planning.

She has worked for a range of clients including the BBC, the Scottish Government, the Design Council, Scottish Enterprise, NESTA, Strathclyde Police, Grampian Police, Standard Life, Nottingham University and Material Connexion (New York). Her previous academic posts have included Manchester School of Management and De Montfort University.

She is a member of the Creative Network, a not-for-profit organisation that generates innovative ideas and approaches for social benefit and a member of the Advisory Board for the Centre for Creative Industries at Adam Smith College, Fife.

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