

GSAfuture



The Glasgow School of Art and the Strategic Plan

Established in 1845 as the first Government School of Design outside London, The Glasgow School of Art's purpose was to support the industries of Glasgow and that commitment to the City remains as strong now as it was then.

As those industries have changed so has the School. Indeed its continued success is predicated on its ability and willingness to innovate in response to a rapidly changing environment. So the School today is very different from the way it was even 25 years ago.

Today, the School has nearly 1800 students in a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across Schools of Fine Art, Design and Architecture and The Digital Design Studio; a growing reputation in practice-led research with one of the largest communities of art and design researchers outside London; strong connections with the communities and businesses of the City and nation whilst becoming increasingly international in academic partnerships, curriculum and student body.

In developing this Plan we are not starting from scratch but building on the excellent work which has gone before. In the last four years alone we have achieved much.

We have been reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency and been placed in the top band of confidence in our management of educational quality. Our focus on the quality of the student experience has placed us in the top ten of UK Universities with the lowest drop out rates. We have been working hard to attract and retain students from underrepresented groups. We have introduced Common Academic Frameworks at postgraduate and undergraduate levels to widen student choice. We have enhanced work-related learning and enterprise within the curriculum. We have started to implement an ambitious strategy to increase our taught and research postgraduate provision to 20% of total. Our students and graduates continue to win awards and excel.

We have developed international partnerships, the most extensive being with The Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing where we deliver a Joint First Year Programme in Design with articulation to Level 2 in Glasgow. We have developed research centres of depth and significance, whilst increasing to 84% the academic staff that are research active. We have embedded career review and activity planning processes, validated programmes for academic staff in learning, teaching and supervision and enhanced overall staff development opportunities. We have embarked on the ambitious Mackintosh Conservation and Access Project to protect and make more publicly available our unique Mackintosh Building, archives and collections. We have reached agreement on the move of Digital Design Studio, our largest and most established research centre, to the Digital Media Quarter on Pacific Quay and we have secured an offer of Government funding for the first phase of the redevelopment of the main campus on Garnethill.

And we continue to provide programmes of exhibitions, live projects, continuing education classes, lectures and seminars which bind us to Glasgow and its people.

These are major achievements made possible only by the professionalism, creativity and commitment of our staff, the lively engagement of our student body and the support of our Board of Governors.

It goes without saying, then, that all three groups have been actively involved in the shaping of our Strategic Plan for the next four years.

GSAfuture 2008 to 2012

At The Glasgow School of Art we are justly proud of our place - in terms of our location, our heritage, our studio culture and our reputation. The vision, aims and objectives which follow are founded on that sense of place, and they are designed to reshape and carry us forward into the next decade of our history.

And at the GSA our understanding of place is dependent on a rich and meaningful engagement with, and contribution to, the world which surrounds us, in all its complexity, with all its multiple languages and with all its challenges. Therefore, the worldwide networks which inform, nourish and replenish our learning, teaching and research are vital to the lifeblood of the organisation.

Of course, it is people who create place and who enliven networks to cross boundaries and communicate with others in other locations. It is our people – our students, staff, alumni and partners – who remain central to the realisation of our aims.

So, one thing needs to be constant over the coming period: our ultimate goal to educate and inspire people through creativity so that they might meet futures of their own design, based on freedom of thought, and care for others.

Context

It is a cliché to say that we live in a world of unprecedented change but it is undeniably true. For that reason, in preparation for the plan, we spent time exploring and debating the main economic, social, educational and political drivers for change as we and our partners saw them; referencing our thinking against them and developing an approach adaptable enough to shape our many possible futures.

Although there were many drivers for change, a few proved to be particularly influential in shaping our thinking:-

- The world economy is changing rapidly, particularly with the rise of China and India: accompanied in those countries by unprecedented investment in higher education and growing interest in international educational partnerships.
- The Scottish economy is growing, albeit at a slower pace than other competitor countries, but Scotland in general, and Glasgow in particular, continue to have relatively high rates of poverty and unemployment with 1 in 9 young people not in employment, education or training.
- Creative industries are set to becoming an increasingly important sector worldwide producing a growing demand for creative graduates and increased competition between education providers globally.
- The knowledge economy and fast pace of change demand new skills and abilities: a premium is being placed on creativity, flexibility, adaptive capacity, the ability to work in complex teams using multiple languages. People will expect to change careers several times in their working life and re-enter education to support this.

- Higher education is increasingly seen as a major driver of the economy and this is shaping educational and research agendas with greater emphasis on, and opportunities for, employability, applied research, improved education-industry links and knowledge transfer.
- The sharp drop in 17 to 24 year olds and the sharp rise in people over 60 in the UK will change the nature of demand for higher education and, in response, what and how it delivers.
- Inward migration and growing international mobility will create increasingly culturally diverse student and staff communities, challenging cultural and educational assumptions and traditional support mechanisms.
- As technology creates the potential for global reach, dispersed communities and virtual objects and environments there is also evidence of a counter trend towards assigning increasing value to the face to face, the local and the real.
- As technology continues to 'democratise' knowledge, enabling it to be shaped by mass interventions and accessed more readily, the role of the professional and the expert continues to change.
- Creative and cultural consumption is becoming more and more customised and personalised: this demands a shift away from one size fits all services and creates opportunities for new and better relationships based on the principle of co-creation.
- With the growing acceptance of the global risk posed by climate change, environmental sustainability will drive education and design processes.

- The arts have grown significantly but with a tendency towards their instrumentalisation in serving economic and social ends in one respect and the dominance of a narrow art market in another.
- Place attractiveness is increasingly seen as an important part of the economic mix: cities attracting people to study, live, work and invest. Glasgow's growing reputation as a creative city is important to the economy and the GSA.
- The continuing development of post-Devolution government in Scotland, including the results of the 2007 election, reflect a new confidence in Scotland and its place in the world.

Vision

Our vision for the next ten years is to achieve international excellence in our teaching, in our research and in the contribution we can make:

- With an innovative, fresh, relevant teaching enriched by the seamless integration of research and practice enabling an increasingly diverse body of students to design their own futures.
- Drawing on our active, energetic, creative culture to generate and widely disseminate new knowledge.
- Designing influential new ways of engaging with the complex challenges of our world, locally, nationally and internationally.
- As an independent institution networked with partners of quality who can extend the boundaries of our knowledge, geographic reach, creative capacity and impact.

Values

Our vision is founded on shared values which guide GSA behaviour and decision-making:

- **Creativity**
Belief in the central role of creativity in shaping the future through enlightened learning, scholarship and research founded on creative specialism informed by, and informing, an expanded field within and outwith our institution and disciplines.
- **Difference**
Belief that the different contributions, perspectives and experiences offered by a diverse community, within an egalitarian ethos, give rise to and sustain a dynamic and creative environment.

- **Sustainability**
Responsibility to engage, academically and organisationally, with the challenges posed by economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability.
- **Responsibility**
Responsibility to advance the cultural, social and economic good of our city, region and nation.
- **Internationalism**
Belief in the importance of being networked internationally with an international and intercultural ethos underpinning how we work.
- **Pluralism**
A recognition that space for the co-existence of alternative and contradictory ideas and positions is fundamental to dynamic creative environments, production and to the process of invention and innovation.

Commitments

The School is committed to:

- Ensuring our education is of the highest quality, externally engaged and so remains current and relevant to students and graduates in a changing world.
- Creating an energetic and enterprising institution with a knowledge base which is socially purposeful and of international quality.
- Promoting rigour in excellent research through practice and theory which is generative and informed by scholarship.*
- Promoting studio culture as the basis for creative community: the meeting ground for diversity of opinion and position and learning from each other.
- Respecting our past: using it as inspiration and resource for contemporary practice.
- Having an organisational culture that values the individual for the varied contributions s/he can make to the collective/collegiate life of the School.
- Being adaptable, courageous and enterprising in the face of opportunity and challenge.
- Being realistic: concentrating on endeavours in which we can achieve excellence with the resources we can raise.

** Definition of scholarship: informed about intellectual foundation of own discipline in respect to others to properly inform research and learning and teaching*

Aims

Our aims for the next four years are:

1. To provide innovative, fresh, externally engaged and relevant learning and teaching.
2. To achieve international excellence and recognition in research and knowledge transfer/exchange in key areas of strength.
3. To create active and responsible engagement with communities, industry, professional sectors, policy makers and the City.
4. To increase the diversity of the School in order to engender a dynamic creative environment and to support an egalitarian ethos.
5. To embed an international and intercultural ethos in all aspects of the School's activities.
6. To be a transparent, responsive, courageous, confident and well resourced organisation able to change to achieve our objectives.

Aim 1

To provide innovative, fresh, externally engaged and relevant learning and teaching.

Objectives

- 1.1** To ensure that learning and teaching is informed by advanced pedagogy and specialist subject research and practice.
- 1.2** To refresh the undergraduate portfolio of programmes, including:
 - enhancing progression routes from undergraduate and postgraduate study.
 - innovating at the interface between theory and practice.
 - developing new programmes in digital and new media.
 - realising the benefits of the common academic framework.
- 1.3** To accelerate the growth of the postgraduate taught and postgraduate research portfolio of programmes including new doctoral routes appropriate to the professional and commercial world.
- 1.4** To integrate technology in new and existing programmes and to enhance the learning environment.
- 1.5** To ensure the highest quality of student experience, including:
 - to ensure academic provision, student and learning support which is appropriate to an increasingly diverse student body and a growing number of international students.
 - to ensure quality assurance and enhancement processes deliver and maintain a high quality learning experience for all students.

1.6 To explore the use of cross-institutional themes to provide laboratories for experimentation outwith discipline parameters.

By 2012 the School will have:

- Ensured that research into creative pedagogy and our disciplines is explicitly informing and visibly enriching the curriculum.
- Embedded fully the Common Academic Framework and be actively exploring its potential to provide greater student choice through new shared programmes, courses and pathways.
- Validated and launched new undergraduate programmes and pathways including new programmes in the area of new media.
- Established a new relationship between theory and practice informed by the review of the Historical and Critical Studies Department.
- Reached 20% of our student community at postgraduate level through new taught and research provision including new professional doctorates.
- Visibly enhanced the curriculum and the learning environment by fully exploiting new technology.
- Increased the level of positive feedback from all students about the quality of their experience.
- Concluded a successful QAA Institutional Review and built on its outcomes to enhance further the quality of the student experience.
- Introduced the first cross-institutional theme.

Aim 2

To achieve international excellence and recognition in research, knowledge transfer and exchange in key areas of strength.

Objectives

- 2.1** To develop a new research and knowledge transfer/exchange strategy which identifies areas of strength, areas of potential growth and ways to support, develop and exploit them.
- 2.2** To form alliances with partners of quality beyond our disciplines and higher education sector, locally, nationally and internationally, to develop interdisciplinary and applied research.
- 2.3** To continue to embed and support the culture of research in the institution.
- 2.4** To build postgraduate volume and capacity around hubs of research to inform developments in the postgraduate and undergraduate curriculum.
- 2.5** To increase and diversify external research and knowledge transfer/exchange income.

By 2012 the School will have:

- Focused on and developed key areas of existing strength in research and knowledge transfer/exchange to enhance dynamic research centres and hubs around which postgraduate provision grows.
- Identified new areas of potential growth in research and knowledge transfer/exchange and agreed plans for their development including having secured funding for, and launched, with our partners, two new interdisciplinary research and knowledge transfer/exchange centres, *Glasgow Urban Lab* and *Design Innovation Scotland*.
- Increased by 50% the research and knowledge transfer/exchange income generated by the School including at least four Knowledge Transfer Partnerships or other Government innovation schemes.
- Reviewed the organisation of research within the School and improved infrastructure to support and develop staff and to produce high quality and sustainable research growth.
- Strengthened existing and developed new international research partnerships.

Aim 3

To create active and responsible engagement with communities, industry, professional sectors, policy makers and the City.

Objectives

- 3.1** To play a major part in the regeneration and renaissance of Glasgow.
- 3.2** To engage with policy makers in order to embed the central role of creativity in shaping the future.
- 3.3** To reflect the changing nature of work and practice within the curriculum in order to ensure that students are equipped with relevant skills: working in complex teams, using multiple languages, being flexible and adaptable.
- 3.4** To build and consolidate relationships with industry, employers and the professional sectors to inform curriculum, enhance employability, support research and knowledge transfer/exchange partnerships and increase our cultural engagement.
- 3.5** To continue to conserve, develop and provide access to the rich heritage of Mackintosh and of the School.

By 2012 the School will have:

- Supported the implementation of 'A Step Change for Glasgow', the City's joint economic strategy and the preparations for the Commonwealth Games in 2014.
- Through *Glasgow Urban Lab* to have made tangible improvements to the quality of urban life in Glasgow through design.
- Worked with policy makers to develop and implement a national strategy for creative industries in Scotland and, through *Design Innovation Scotland*, to promote the importance of design in driving innovation in business and civic Scotland.
- Developed and implemented a sustainable institutional framework for employability throughout the curriculum and explored the potential for enhancing work related learning in all programmes.
- Completed phase three of the Mackintosh Conservation and Access Project with targets for use of the new Archives and Collections Centre fully met and an exhibition programme using the newly conserved archives and collections underway.
- Secured funding and agreed plans for the final phase of the Mackintosh Conservation and Access Projects - the Interpretation Centre.
- Celebrated the 2009 centenary of the completion of the Mackintosh Building with a major exhibition and a programme of other events.
- Contributed significantly to the delivery of the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Heritage Group Five Year Plan 2008 - 2012.

Aim 4

To increase the diversity of the School in order to engender a dynamic creative environment and to support an egalitarian ethos.

Objectives

- 4.1** To increase our recruitment and retention of students from underrepresented groups.
- 4.2** To develop different forms of provision and delivery in response to the changing student demographic.

By 2012 the School will have:

- Moved towards the Scottish HE sector average in terms of students from underrepresented groups by setting and achieving specific recruitment targets for each undergraduate programme.
- Targeted academic and other support to achieve convergence of the retention of students from lower socio-economic groups with the School's general retention rate.
- Agreed at least two articulation agreements with Further Education Colleges in Glasgow.
- Developed new forms of provision and delivery to shape and respond to the changing student demographic and within the context of the Common Academic Framework.

Aim 5

To embed an international and intercultural ethos in all aspects of the School's activities.

Objective

5.1 To implement the School's Internationalisation Strategy which:-

- Enhances curriculum and learning opportunities in ways that enable students and graduates to operate effectively in international and global contexts.
- Develops, refines and strengthens international collaborative educational partnerships in order to deepen transcultural understanding, promote opportunities for students and staff and enhance the international reputation of the School.
- Widens the scope of research to explore international currents in the School's discipline areas, enrich curriculum and make meaningful cultural, economic and social contributions.
- Continues to develop and provide appropriate support for an increasingly culturally diverse community of students and staff in order to enhance the educational experience of all students.

By 2012 the School will have:

- Integrated international and intercultural elements within the majority of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
- Strengthened the partnership with Central Academy for Fine Arts in Beijing, China with the launch of a four-year undergraduate programme, the outline design of a postgraduate collaboration and the development of the International Drawing Research Institute.
- Developed a partnership with the National Institute for Design in Ahmadabad, India through several joint educational and research workshops, staff and student exchange.
- Developed, with international partners, a number of specific research projects that investigate intercultural and culturally diverse themes.
- Put in place enhanced language, welfare and social support for international students and achieved increasingly positive feedback from them on the quality of their educational experience.

Aim 6

To be a transparent, responsive, courageous, confident and well-resourced organisation able to change to achieve our objectives.

Objectives

- 6.1** To identify new organisational models which enable us to focus more effectively on our priorities by shortening development cycles, speeding up decision making, working more collaboratively and delegating more efficiently.
- 6.2** To remain a small, specialist, independent institution by networking with partners of quality that can extend the boundaries of our knowledge, geographic reach, creative capacity and impact.
- 6.3** To recruit, develop, support and retain excellent academic and support staff.
- 6.4** To equip staff at all levels with the skills, time and confidence to meet the School's objectives, building collaborative teams and a strong sense of common purpose.
- 6.5** To redevelop our campus to provide a high quality learning, teaching and research environment and accommodate growth.
- 6.6** To provide a sophisticated technical infrastructure, equipment, resources and a range of virtual and interactive environments to support our learning, teaching and research.
- 6.7** To become more enterprising and generate increased and diversified income streams from commercial and public sources, tuition fees and philanthropic giving.
- 6.8** To develop our marketing, particularly to reflect areas of priority and to use the potential offered by new digital platforms.
- 6.9** To continue to improve corporate governance.

By 2012 the School will have:

- Established new organisational models which will make the School more adaptable, fleet of foot, collaborative and capable of focusing time and attention on development and on priorities.
- Established a number of high quality educational and research partnerships and networks locally, nationally and internationally.
- Embedded career review linked to staff development for all staff with positive feedback from staff at all levels.
- Enhanced staff capability with new technologies and seen the increased integration of new media applications within the curriculum across the School.
- Embedded activity planning for academic staff to focus staff time on priority areas of research and programme development.
- Completed the relocation of Digital Design Studio to customised premises in the Digital Media Quarter at Pacific Quay.
- Started the redevelopment of the Garnethill Campus, having secured the majority of funding, appointed and briefed the design team and decanted staff and students for the duration of the redevelopment.
- Agreed an academically led IT strategy and achieved a higher level of sophistication in the School's technical infrastructure to support learning, teaching and research with positive feedback from staff and students.
- Increased significantly our commercial, tuition fee, philanthropic and other non SFC income.

- Achieved higher marketing profile for the School's research and knowledge exchange activities.
- Reached our recruitment targets of 20% postgraduate and 19% overseas students.
- Consistently achieved best practice in corporate governance appropriately benchmarked.

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