Enhancement-led Institutional Review of Glasgow School of Art

Re-review Report

June 2022

Contents

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 report of a Re-review conducted by QAA at Glasgow School of Art (GSA; the School) in June 2022. This Re-review is not a full review of GSA's arrangements for managing academic standards and the student experience; it is a partial review with the focus on the progress made by the GSA since its last full review which was undertaken during the ELIR 4 cycle in October 2020. The initial ELIR 4 found limited effectiveness in the arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience. This limited effectiveness judgement indicated there was 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.'[4]

At the same time as the original GSA ELIR 4, two submissions were submitted to QAA Scotland's [Scottish Concerns Scheme](#) (SCS). As part of its remit, QAA Scotland (QAAS) can investigate concerns about academic standards and quality raised by students, staff and other parties. Where such concerns indicate serious systemic or procedural problems, QAAS will conduct a detailed investigation. Following the initial enquiry and in discussion with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the decision was taken to proceed to a full investigation in order to examine both of these concern cases together at the same time as the ELIR was taking place. Details of the GSA ELIR 4 outcomes and of the reports from the concern investigations are published on the [QAA website](#). There is substantial overlap between the recommendations made by the ELIR 4 and from the two concerns investigations.

Shortly after the outcomes of the ELIR 4 and concern investigations were published, two new submissions (SCS 008 and SCS 010 - these reference numbers are assigned to each case by QAA Scotland, who maintain an internal register to log submissions to the SCS) were submitted to QAAS through the SCS which raised similar issues to those addressed in the ELIR 4 and concern investigations. These cases did not proceed to full investigation. QAA Scotland concluded that with the significant overlap between the issues raised in these two new cases, and the recommendations made by the ELIR 4 and SCS investigation teams, the majority of the issues raised in the new concern submissions would be appropriately addressed as GSA developed its ELIR 4 and SCS investigations response. Where QAA believed this would not be the case, a small number of additional and related recommendations were made to GSA. These related recommendations have also been

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[1] About ELIR:
www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/en/reviewing-higher-education-in-scotland/enhancement-led-institutional-review
[2] About QAA: www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland
[3] Brief Guide to ELIR: www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/reports/brief-guide-to-elir-method.pdf
[4] Enhancement-led Institutional Review: Glasgow School of Art, Technical Report, October 2020

considered as part of this Re-review. A summary of the nature of these concerns and QAAS's recommendation are provided in Appendix 1. This appendix also confirms which sections of this report consider each of these concerns, with this highlighted again in the relevant report section headings.

Following the ELIR 4 and concern investigations, meetings took place between QAAS, GSA and SFC to agree appropriate arrangements to monitor the implementation of GSA's action plan to address the recommendations arising from the ELIR 4 and concern investigations. It was agreed that QAAS would undertake a re-review of GSA, focused on the progress made by GSA on the recommendations from the previous review and the concern investigations, employing a team of peer reviewers approximately 18 months after the original ELIR 4 in 2020. This time period was agreed to by all three organisations, recognising that a large number of the recommendations are complex, interrelated and would require the establishment and subsequent operation of substantial change management projects by GSA. During the 18-month period between October 2020 and May 2022, quarterly update meetings were held between GSA's Deputy Director (Academic) and QAA's liaison officer for GSA. The purpose of these meetings was to monitor the School's progress against the action plans it developed to address the recommendations from the ELIR 4 and SCS investigations.

The Re-review took place as follows: Update Visit on 17 May 2022 and Review Visit from 14-16 June 2022. The Re-review was conducted by a team of four reviewers:

- Professor Hilary Grainger (Academic Reviewer)
- Dawn Martin (Coordinating Reviewer)
- James Lee Slimings (Student Reviewer)
- Professor Gillian Thomson (Academic Reviewer).

Three of the Re-review team members were drawn from the original ELIR 4 team, with this continuity viewed as being important to allow a decision to be made on whether GSA's revised arrangements for managing academic standards and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience, meet the ELIR 4 threshold judgement. One of the Re-review team was also a member of the peer team which investigated the SCS concerns which were subject to full investigation.

In advance of the Update and Review visits, GSA submitted a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and additional information, comprising a comprehensive range of materials about the School's arrangements for addressing the ELIR 4 and concern recommendations.

About this report

This report sets out the threshold judgement formed by the Re-review team on:

- the current and likely future effectiveness of the School's arrangements for managing academic standards and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience.

The threshold judgement can be found on page 4. This report does not follow the standard headers of an ELIR 4 Technical Report; instead, this report is structured to set out a summary of GSA's progress responding to the recommendations set from the ELIR 4 and SCS concern investigations.

At the end of each section, the report sets out the Re-review team's view, under each of the report headings of GSA's progress with each of the recommendations. The following criteria were used to determine the Re-review team's view on the extent to which GSA has addressed each recommendation:

- Fully addressed (The recommendation has been implemented and has led to improvement in the management of academic quality and standards)
- On track to address (Based on the evidence gathered by the Re-review team, it is confident, that the action planned and/or in progress and the approach to completion will address the recommendation once the timeline is complete)
- Partially addressed (Planned or completed activity/work has not (or will not) fully addressed the recommendation in the Re-review team's view)
- Not addressed (the recommendation has not been addressed fully or effectively).

The report sets out in detail a statement of the Re-review team's view in relation to each recommendation, accompanied by an indication of the main supporting evidence for that view. Some sections of the report, where the nature of the activities being undertaken by GSA involve significant organisation change projects, start by providing the broader context in the form of an outline of the work undertaken which extends beyond addressing the formal recommendations (paragraph 5). Given the complex and interrelated nature of the recommendations from the ELIR 4 and SCS investigations, plus the significant overlap in the content, where appropriate these recommendations have been combined and highlighted within headings of this report. These headings also draw on the mapping which was developed by GSA in order to support the School to develop its ELIR & QAA Concern Scheme Action Plan (paragraph 5). This mapping is located in Appendix 2.

Threshold judgement about Glasgow School of Art

Following the Re-review and having considered the overall progress made to address the recommendations, the Re-review team found Glasgow School of Art (GSA) has **effective** arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience.

This is a **positive** judgement, which means that GSA meets sector expectations in securing the academic standards of the awards it offers and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience it provides - currently and into the future. This judgement confirms there can be public confidence in the awards GSA offers and in the quality of the learning experience it provides for its students.

In addition, the Re-review team made the following commendations and recommendations.

Commendations

Glasgow School of Art (GSA) is commended for the following areas of good practice in response to the ELIR 4 and SCS investigation recommendations.

- **Culture** - in taking forward its response to ELIR 4 and the development of its strategic plan, GSA has, through engagement with its entire community, established a culture of openness, transparency and trust which prioritises learning and teaching and the wider student experience across the School.

- **Enabling structures** - in response to ELIR 4, a strong and effective senior leadership team has been established which, supported by changes to institutional committee structures, has created a cross-institutional leadership structure within which staff are encouraged and empowered to influence and take ownership of institutional priorities.

Recommendations

GSA is asked to address the following recommendations.

- **Data Strategy** - in support of work that is underway to review the extent and scope of current datasets, GSA should, by the end of academic year 2022-23, develop, implement and communicate an effective data strategy to facilitate the integration of data from diverse sources, and inform institutional decision-making and the development of policy and practice.

- **Communication** - while continuing to foster a culture of mutual respect, openness and information sharing, GSA should develop and implement, by the end of academic year 2022-23, its planned Communication Strategy in order to ensure that effective and accessible communication channels which are responsive to student comment and engagement are established and embedded across the School.

- **Managing student expectations** - ensure that prospective students are provided with clear information before entry which confirms the notional minimum levels of studio and workshop availability and access to resources that can be expected on each programme of study, and continue to evaluate this information to ensure student expectations are appropriately managed. In implementing the process for identifying and communicating additional programme costs, GSA should ensure that prospective and current students are provided with an accurate view of how much

they will be expected to spend above their tuition fees in each year, with a view to ensuring that no student is disadvantaged through an inability to afford material costs. Both of these changes should be in place to support students engaging with the 2022-23 application cycle.

- **Lead Representatives** - reflect on current arrangements and, where appropriate, further develop the induction and ongoing support available for Lead Representatives to ensure that these students are effectively equipped to carry out their roles, particularly in relation to working with Class Representatives and participating as committee members at all levels.

Table 1 summarises the Re-review team's conclusions on the progress that GSA has made to address its ELIR and SCS investigation recommendations. Recommendations from ELIR 4 are numbered by the paragraph number set out in the ELIR 4 Outcome Report. Recommendations from the SCS concern investigations are presented by recommendation number.

Table 1: Summary of the GSA's progress with the recommendations

Section header with recommendation referenced	Outcome
Institutional leadership, strategy and direction (ELIR 9)	Fully addressed
Student representation (ELIR 10)	Partially address
Partnership with students (ELIR 11)	On track to address
Communication and consultation (ELIR 12 & UG/PG concern 1)	Partially addressed
Studio space and workshop provision (ELIR 13)	Partially addressed
Support for additional programme costs (ELIR 14)	Partially addressed
Institutional progress with equality and diversity (ELIR 15)	Fully addressed
Assessment and feedback (ELIR 16)	On track to address
Assessment design (ELIR 17 & UG/PG concern 2)	On track to address
Assessment policy (ELIR 18 & UG/PG concern 3)	Fully addressed
Academic standards (ELIR 19 & UG/PG 4 concern)	Fully addressed
Using data to enhance the student experience (ELIR 20)	Partially addressed
Review of student-facing professional support services (ELIR 21)	Fully addressed
Responding to student feedback (ELIR 22)	Fully addressed
Independence in student-facing processes (ELIR 23)	Fully addressed
Awarding body oversight and approval (ELIR 24 & UG/PG concern 5)	On track to address
Guidance for digital and physical showcases (UG/PG concern 6)	Fully addressed
Matters linked to supporting accessibility for students with mobility requirements (SCS concern (008) post-ELIR 4 visit)	On track to address
Access to studio space and workshop provision (SCS concern (010) post-ELIR 4 visit)	Partially addressed

1 Introduction and strategic overview

1.1 Introduction

1 Glasgow School of Art (GSA) was founded in 1845 as one of the first Government Schools of Design, promoting good design for the manufacturing industries. It became the 'Glasgow School of Art' in 1869. GSA is an accredited institution of the University of Glasgow, which has validated GSA's programmes since 1992. GSA's purpose is to contribute to a 'better world, through creative practice, education and research'.

2 GSA comprises two campuses: the Garnethill campus in central Glasgow and the Highlands and Islands campus near Forres. At the time of the ELIR 4 in October 2020, GSA also offered courses at a third campus in Singapore - the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT). Subsequently, GSA has ended the partnership arrangements with SIT and all courses have closed, the final students having graduated from SIT in summer 2021.

3 GSA comprises five schools: the School of Fine Art; the School of Design; the Mackintosh School of Architecture; the Innovation School; and the School of Simulation and Visualisation.

1.2 Governance, oversight and implementation of the action plan

4 In response to the ELIR 4 judgement of limited effectiveness, and the outcomes from the Scottish Concerns Scheme (SCS) investigations, GSA embarked on a period of immediate and structured discussion and reflection across the whole institution. This provided the foundations for the subsequently-agreed approach to addressing the ELIR and SCS recommendations.

5 The Senior Leadership Group (SLG) and GSA Board of Governors assessed the recommendations from ELIR 4 and from the SCS investigations, and produced an action plan (GSA ELIR & QAA Concern Scheme Action Plan) comprising eight discrete but interrelated enhancement projects which, through their delivery, would address the weaknesses identified. This action plan was approved by GSA's Academic Council in May 2021. Having reviewed this action plan, the Re-review team is able to confirm that it is well structured with clear timelines, allocation of strategic and operational responsibilities and reporting arrangements. It also includes measures of success. The eight projects within the action plan were mapped onto five cross-cutting themes. These themes are:

- Strengthening leadership, governance and awarding body oversight
- Improving cultures and structures of partnerships with students
- Using student feedback and data to enhance learning, teaching and the student experience
- Securing academic standards and enhancing assessment practices
- Providing high quality and accessible learning environments and clear information to students.

6 The mapping of the themes to the actions (Appendix 2) was intended to ensure a coherent and structured approach to a complex and wide-ranging set of outcomes from ELIR and the SCS investigations. Sections 2 to 6 of this Re-review report examine each of the five themes, and the work undertaken to address the ELIR and SCS investigation recommendations.

7 The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) supplied by the School states that a key starting point for GSA was to strengthen its commitment to partnerships generally, and 'specifically

with the GSA Students' Association (GSASA)', and with the University of Glasgow (UofG) as GSA's awarding body, 'and sector bodies, including QAA Scotland, Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs) and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC)'. GSA recognise strengthening these relationships, while supporting the School to address its ELIR and SCS investigation recommendations, are also important for its future strategic development. In relation to external partnership working, the Re-review team understands that sparqs had contributed to the development of the success criteria within the Student Partnership Agreement (paragraphs 51, 67 and 68).

8   The Re-review team was able to confirm, from discussions during the visits, that there has been a notable strengthening of the relationship between GSA and the UofG. There are significantly improved communication channels on both senior and operational levels, through which there is timely dialogue and sharing of information to inform strategic decisions and the development of policies, procedures and regulations (paragraphs 40-48).

9   The Re-review team also heard evidence of the improved relationship between GSA and GSASA. Since the ELIR review, GSASA has undergone a staffing restructure, which has been instrumental in supporting partnership working with GSA. The Re-review team learned in meetings with GSASA that they work closely with the GSA Learning and Teaching team in relation to student representation. Examples were given of GSA and GSASA working jointly on ELIR 4 and SCS concern investigation enhancement projects. An example of this partnership working has involved GSASA and GSA co-creating the content for the student welcome and induction portal, to ensure students have a positive induction to both the social and academic aspects of student life.

10   An important underpinning principle of the GSA response, as articulated in the SER, was recognition, from the outset, that the whole GSA community would be required to engage with and support the work of the GSA ELIR 4 & QAA Concern Scheme Action Plan to deliver successful and lasting change. As set out in the SER, the objectives of the 'whole GSA approach' were to ensure 'that all staff (including board members) and students' were 'aware of the work; had meaningful opportunities to be involved and influence projects; and develop a shared commitment to cultural change sustained across a number of years'. Staff who met the Re-review team confirmed they had been actively involved in GSA's approach to developing its ELIR 4 and SCS investigations response.

11   Overall responsibility for monitoring the ELIR 4 & SCS Concern Scheme Action Plan rests with GSA's Academic Council. An ELIR Recovery Sub-Group (ERSG) was established, reporting to Academic Council, to operationalise the action plan across the five schools and two campuses. Academic Council reports to the GSA Board of Governors and has submitted for Board consideration, regular progress reports on the implementation of the action plan.

12   Importantly, the GSA ELIR 4 and SCS Concern Scheme Action Plan was developed in consultation with the University of Glasgow and also with QAA Scotland (QAAS). The University of Glasgow and GSA established an ELIR Joint Liaison Steering Group (JLSG) in July 2021 (paragraph 40).

13   GSA's ERSG is chaired by the Deputy Director (Academic), with each enhancement project designed to address the weaknesses identified from the ELIR 4 and SCS investigation recommendations, being represented on this Group by a strategic lead, along with members of the GSASA. A separate Estates project has also been established to address specific ELIR 4 and SCS investigation recommendations. The Estates project has its own governance structure with the Deputy Director (Academic) as a member of both groups to ensure alignment. The Re-review team learned that consideration was being given to the future remit of the ERSG, which GSA staff reported was likely to continue in the

longer-term to support enhancement activities linked to ELIR but also GSA's wider Annual Enhancement Planning. The Re-review team support and would encourage GSA to continue with its plans to operate the ERSG, because it plays an important role in ensuring GSA's actions remain to schedule.

14   The Re-review team is content that the themes and projects within the GSA ELIR & QAA Concern Scheme Action Plan are aligned with GSA's recently approved Strategic Plan, which was due to be launched formally at the end of June 2022, and are also consistent with GSA's values of ethical leadership, openness and trust. There is a careful prioritisation and balance within the action plan of immediate and longer-term actions - for example, immediate changes to assessment arrangements include standardisation of formative assessment arrangements which are balanced with the longer-term ambitions of the Code of Assessment (paragraphs 86-90).

15   The Re-review team concluded that GSA's overall approach to developing its ELIR 4 and SCS response, has been undertaken in a well-considered manner which fully recognised the complexity, scale and interconnectedness of the actions to be undertaken. The Re-review team is appreciative of the careful work that had been done to prioritise immediate and longer-term initiatives. The Re-review team was also impressed by the significant progress that had been made in achieving many of the short-term actions and the ongoing progress with more substantive matters. GSA had provided early evidence of impact within a comparatively short period of time of the re-review visits - for example, in relation to the work undertaken by the new senior appointments of Head of Programme Development and Academic Development Leads and resulting enhancements to practices and communication across the School (paragraph 25).

2   Strengthening leadership, governance and awarding body oversight

2.1   ELIR recommendation 9: Institutional leadership, strategy and direction

The ELIR 4 team recommended that GSA should*: 'ensure that oversight and responsibility for taking action on matters of strategic priority are invested effectively in the institutional committee structure, avoiding overreliance on individuals. GSA should also reflect on the balance between institutional and school responsibilities for managing and embedding change effectively, and establishing and implementing policy and practice. This would enable GSA to assure itself that institutional priorities can be delivered effectively within the devolved school structure and that students have parity of experience. Related to the above, GSA should monitor and review the effectiveness of the amended constitution of the Senior Leadership Group.'*

16   In response, GSA has made a number of changes to its committee structures. Membership of the GSA Board of Governors has been strengthened through the appointment of two lay governors with significant experience of higher education. The relationship between Academic Council and the Board of Governors has also been strengthened with one of these lay governors also attending Academic Council. The Re-review team learned from senior staff that both appointments were made with the intention of introducing a new level of academic challenge to enhance the delivery of learning and teaching at GSA.

17   GSA has revised, and where appropriate clarified, committee remits and constitutions and made a number of amendments to the sub-committee structures of its Academic Council. From the sample of remits and constitutions supplied, the Re-review team can confirm that these changes strengthen the focus on student experience and

student partnership and increase GSA's capacity to develop oversight and implement enhancement activity.

18   The Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee (UPC) has been renamed the Education Committee, to clarify its purpose and is chaired by the Deputy Director (Academic). The Learning & Teaching Committee has been renamed the Learning & Teaching Group and a new Student Partnership Group has been introduced (paragraph 52). GSA is progressing work to review and revise the Programme and Course Amendment and Approval Group to become the Validations and Modification Group and plans to introduce a new Collaborations & Partnership Group which shall report to and develop policy proposals for the Education Committee.

19   Senior staff, who met the Re-review team, welcomed these changes and spoke of a resulting wider understanding of the function of committees. They confirmed these new arrangements support more effective communication of committee decisions to the wider staff body. Academic staff also spoke positively about the effectiveness of the revised committee arrangements, confirming these provide clarity of reporting and improvements in communication which continue to be developed and refined. However, the Re-review team was not able to confirm these claims through documentation such as committee minutes.

20   The Re-review team can confirm that GSA has addressed the challenge raised as part of this recommendation around an overreliance on key individuals in a number of ways, including by widening the membership of committees and by establishing a broader, shared understanding of roles and responsibilities. From the documentation supplied, the Re-review team confirms there is evidence to demonstrate that GSA has reflected on and is working to balance institutional and school responsibilities.

21   The membership and remit of the Senior Leadership Group (SLG) was revised in 2021. This Group is convened by the GSA Director and its membership now includes the Deputy Director (Academic), the five Heads of Schools, together with the Registrar and Secretary, the Deputy Director (Research and Innovation) and the Directors of Development, Finance, Estates, Human Resources, Strategy and Marketing. SLG is also supported by the Planning Sub-Group (PSG) which is responsible for undertaking coordinated planning activities and recommends changes and developments to the academic portfolio.

22   Through its meetings with staff and students, the Re-review team was presented with evidence that the expanded membership of SLG is resulting in wider ownership of policies, projects and strategic ambitions across the School and supports the School to determine institutional and school responsibilities. All members of SLG contribute to the annual review of the remit and membership of the group. This review takes place at the beginning of each academic session to ensure the remit and membership continues to be reflective of the School's strategic needs and imperatives and enables the group to have effective oversight and management of GSA's operations to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan.

23   The Re-review team understands that GSA has also established a Senior Leadership Forum (SLF), which includes staff representatives from across the professional services areas and plans to introduce a Stage/Programme Leaders' Forum. Senior colleagues confirmed that the SLF has only met once but is intended to provide additional opportunities for cross-institutional discussion to enhance collaborative working and communication across the School. The Re-review team view these developments positively, believing, if implemented well, they provide opportunity for GSA to strengthen communication arrangements and develop shared responsibility of strategy, policy and enhancement activity.

24   Since ELIR 4, GSA has made a number of new senior staff appointments including the Deputy Director (Academic); Head of Learning and Teaching; Director of Estates; Head of Student Support and Executive Planning Manager; and established the newly-created post of Head of Programme Development to lead on the Common Academic Framework (paragraphs 91-98) and Courseware Review project (paragraphs 113-115), as part of the GSA ELIR & QAA Concern Scheme Action Plan (paragraph 5). To support the implementation of this action plan at academic school level, the role of Academic Development Lead (ADL) was created, and appointments made within GSA's three largest schools the: Mackintosh School of Architecture, School of Design and School of Fine Art. The Re-review team heard that the three ADLs, along with the Head of Learning and Teaching and Head of Programme Development, also work to support colleagues in the two smaller schools as required. The Re-review team understands that while ADLs were appointed initially for a two-year period, senior colleagues anticipate that these roles will be retained longer term.

25   The Re-review team is able to confirm through a combination of supporting documentation and meetings with staff, that the ADLs are a proactive group which has been instrumental in sustaining the momentum behind GSA's ELIR response. Staff from across the School spoke positively about the efficacy of these roles, describing these colleagues as being 'very visible and playing a unifying role'. Colleagues from across GSA stated that the ADLs are being particularly effective in communicating change and working with colleagues at school level on the implementation of the GSA ELIR & QAA Concern Scheme Action Plan. Specific examples of their contributions include support for the implementation of the Personal Tutor system (paragraphs 72 and 82) and support for schools in developing a strategy for calculating course costs (paragraphs 116-119).

26   The Re-review team learned from senior staff that, in response to the ELIR 4 and SCS recommendations, work had been undertaken to centralise some key activities across GSA. This includes key quality processes and workshop provision. At the same time, studio space access has been standardised around core opening hours and these spaces are managed by new Studio Managers and Studio Assistants to provide consistent support to students. Staff and students spoke positively about these changes. GSA acknowledges the value of working with external agencies in developing a number of its strategies and policies, with consultation undertaken, for example, in the creation of the Estates Strategy and the policies surrounding Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Additional Student Costs.

27   Underpinning these changes is a strong sense of improved staff and student collaboration, the development of a culture of transparency and trust, and an ambition to enhance leadership capacity. These changes were widely acknowledged by staff and students who met the Re-review team.

28   The Re-review team concluded that GSA has fully addressed this recommendation. GSA is commended for establishing, in a short period of time, a strong and effective senior leadership team which, supported by changes to institutional committee structures, has created a cross-institutional leadership structure within which staff are encouraged and empowered to influence and take ownership of institutional priorities. The Re-review team also commend the approach adopted by the School in taking forward its response to ELIR 4 and the development of its strategic plan. GSA has, through engagement with its entire community, established a culture of openness, transparency and trust which prioritises learning and teaching and the wider student experience across the School.

2.2   ELIR recommendation 15: Institutional progress with equality and diversity

The ELIR 4 team recommended that GSA should: *Progress with plans to develop and embed the institutional approach to equality and diversity, introducing an effective mechanism to oversee and monitor GSA-wide action including implementation of recommendations resulting from Equality Impact Assessments.*

29   Since ELIR 4, a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee has been established, which has both student and staff representation, with a broadened membership to ensure the needs of all staff and students are represented. Training has been provided for student representatives on the Committee. This Committee is responsible for the development of GSA's approach to Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). The Re-review team learned that Liberation Representatives are being introduced as part of changes to GSASA's Student Representation Council restructure. Once elected in autumn 2022, these Liberation Representatives will be GSA's student members on the EDI Committee. Staff spoke positively about the impact that the EDI Committee was already having, including the development of a corporate parenting plan. EDI is also a key feature within GSA's approach to the Common Academic Framework (paragraphs 91-98).

30   Following wide cross-institutional review and consultation, a new set of GSA Equality Outcomes and supporting action plans were published in April 2022. These set strategic goals to ensure GSA's curriculum is inclusively designed, its campus and learning environments are accessible to all learners, and data is used to support quality assurance and enhancement. In addition, an Equalities Officer has been appointed and EDI Champions established in each of the academic schools.

31   The Re-review team can confirm that the use of EqIA has been mainstreamed across the School and these assessments are routinely carried out in the review, development and implementation of strategic and operational decisions and initiatives, with GSA supplying a number of examples of EqIAs for the Re-review team to consider. Each EqIA is completed by a lead member of staff and signed off by the SLG member for their area. Each EqIA confirms how actions associated with the EqIA will be monitored and reported on, with the Re-review team able to confirm this from the sample supplied. EqIAs for academic programmes are monitored through Programme Monitoring and Annual Review (PMAR). The Re-review team heard from staff that GSA recognises the value of using EqIAs from the very start of policy development in order to shape the thinking and practice, and mitigate against possible negative impacts.

32   From the range of documentation provided by GSA - which included the EDI Committee remit and membership, and a range of EqIAs supplied with their associated strategy and policy documents, and through discussions with staff and students, the Re-review team concluded that this recommendation has been fully addressed.

2.3   ELIR recommendation 20: Using data to enhance the student experience

The ELIR 4 team recommended that GSA should: *Progress with the development of a Data Strategy to facilitate the integration of data from diverse sources, and inform institutional decision-making and the development of policy and practice for use across the entire School.*

33   Since the ELIR 4 in October 2020, GSA has established a set of institutional-level lead indicators which align to the Strategic Plan 2022-27, which are reported to the Board on an annual basis. Staff also receive lead indicator data appropriate to their area of

responsibility to support enhancement activities. The Director of Strategy and Marketing informed the Re-review team that GSA has 'around 15 lead indicators,' with work underway to develop aligned school and professional service team indicators. The Re-review team understands that these lead indicators continue to be refined, particularly at the local level. The Director of Strategy and Marketing also informed the Re-review team that staff are currently being supported to understand the relationship between their local data and the overall strategic priorities. Staff, with key roles in the ELIR 4 recovery plans, confirmed that the current principal focus of GSA's work is on staff accessing student data that is useful to them, with data currently being a tool rather than a reporting mechanism.

34   GSA has also prioritised the development of a Student Experience Performance Indicator, which relates to GSA's institutional overall satisfaction score in the National Student Satisfaction Survey (NSS) and is one of the institutional lead indicators. It has also developed a 'Red, Amber, Green' (RAG) rating scheme which is used to compare individual programme overall satisfaction scores in the NSS (paragraph 79). Target satisfaction levels for the Student Experience Performance Indicator, at both institutional and programme level, have been agreed by Academic Council for the period up to 2025-26.

35   The Re-review team also learned that in support of its decision making, SLG is placing increased emphasis on data collection, interpretation and evaluation for support services and student feedback and records current data limitations and shortfalls in target setting processes, admissions monitoring and student number reporting.

36   GSA's SER states that the SLG Planning Subgroup (chaired by the Deputy Director (Academic)) has been tasked in session 2021-22 with the development of an institutional Data Strategy, as well as identifying enhancements to the internal systems used to provide management information and other key data sets and setting out expectations for data use and sharing within the School. An Executive Planning Manager was appointed in April 2021 to support the delivery of these plans and has supported the progression of a number of short-term actions. The Re-review team heard that the ambitions for a GSA Data Strategy will support 'the publication of data in a central location, including, but not restricted to, recruitment targets, student numbers, league table performance, SFC national measures, relevant output from the Equality & Diversity datasets, and the Learning and Teaching Team, the Graduate Outcomes and PGR experience surveys'.

37   The Re-review team understands that to support the development of an Institutional Data Strategy, a scoping exercise, which includes the use of focus groups and involving staff from both the academic schools and professional service areas, is currently underway to determine the types and levels of data available and explore how this data can be presented to staff and students in a more useful manner. This scoping exercise is being used to ensure the 'correct' data sets are developed and that these are presented consistently and in an interactive manner which will allow colleagues to interrogate and filter the data depending on their use of it. Staff with key roles in the ELIR 4 recovery plans confirmed that the ambition for this work is to ensure that data is readily accessible and is a useful tool for staff providing the ability to interrogate data sets to look at individual student groupings.

38   The Re-review team learned that GSA's Data Strategy is at the very early stages of its development. The Re-review team was unable to confirm when this Strategy will be approved and remains unclear about GSA's plans to enhance the internal systems it uses to provide management information. The Re-review team has concerns that not enough progress has been made to appropriately address the recommendation set by the ELIR 4 team.

39   The Re-review team concludes that this recommendation is partially addressed. Recognising the work that is underway to review the extent and scope of current datasets,

GSA should, by the end of academic year 2022-23, develop, implement and communicate an effective data strategy to facilitate the integration of data from diverse sources, and inform institutional decision-making and the development of policy and practice.

2.4 ELIR recommendation 24; UG/PG Concern recommendation 5: Awarding body oversight and approval

The ELIR 4 and SCS Concerns asked GSA to: *complete the work undertaken to date on the revisions to the Memorandum of Agreement with the University of Glasgow and ensure that the respective responsibilities of both parties are clear and well understood by key GSA staff. In addition, ensure that any significant changes to assessment practices, especially where these impact on student progression and/or degree awards and classification, are communicated and implemented following the agreed approval processes as detailed in GSA's Code of Assessment*

40   Documentation provided by both the University of Glasgow and GSA confirms that following report publication, an internal review of the ELIR 4 and SCS investigation recommendations was undertaken independently by the University of Glasgow (UofG). This review noted the breadth and scale of the recommendations and their significance in relation to standards and quality, identifying themes so these recommendations could be addressed in an integrated way. The UofG and GSA jointly agreed to establish the ELIR Joint Liaison Steering Group (JLSG) in July 2021, chaired by the University of Glasgow's Senior Vice Principal. The JLSG's membership is drawn from senior staff from both institutions, who have experience of institutional collaboration and academic quality and standards, and the GSA Student President. The JLSG continues to meet monthly.

41   The JLSG remit (approved by the University of Glasgow's Education Policy and Strategy Committee (EdPSC)) is 'to advise the University of Glasgow's EdPSC and GSA's Academic Council on the satisfactoriness of the content and progress of the GSA ELIR & QAA Concern Scheme Action Plan to respond to the ELIR 4 and SCS Concern recommendations. It also will receive, at an early stage, notification of any developments concerning academic processes at either institution with potential implications for the other and to advise each institution accordingly, with a view to ensuring that there is appropriate alignment between approaches'. The University of Glasgow's EdPSC has specific responsibility for strategy and policy in relation to the delivery of learning and teaching. Four members of the GSA ELIR Recovery Sub-Group are also members of the JLSG providing useful continuity between these groups (paragraph 11). The minutes of the JLSG are available to GSA staff through the intranet and are submitted to GSA's Academic Council.

42   The Re-review team was told that the JLSG will continue to operate beyond the immediate period of the ELIR 4 Re-review with both institutions viewing it as one of a number of the mechanisms in place to ensure UofG maintains oversight of GSA's academic provision. Senior colleagues from the UofG confirmed that the JLSG will play a critical role in transition from 'ELIR recovery' to 'effective management' of the relationship between the University and GSA. Longer term it has been agreed that this group will provide important oversight of the implementation of the new GSA Common Academic Framework (paragraphs 91-98). The Re-review team endorses this planned approach.

43   At the time of the ELIR 4, the Memorandum of Agreement between the University of Glasgow and GSA had been under review. A new suite of agreements was approved in October 2020. The agreement defines the responsibilities of each party in detail and covers the general terms and scope of the partnership, the validation relationship, and the basis on which the parties will work together to deliver a small number of joint degree programmes.

44   Recognising that the legal nature of memoranda often makes them difficult for staff and students to access, the UofG and GSA collaborated on the development of a relationship overview document which articulates the respective responsibilities of both parties. The Re-review team can confirm the document appropriately summarises the responsibilities of both UofG and GSA, and is written in a manner which should be accessible to staff and students. UofG staff confirmed that the principles and content are aligned with contractual obligations. Staff from both institutions confirmed that this relationship overview document is a mutually-beneficial tool. GSA is using it to enhance the understanding of both its students and staff regarding programme provision and access to University of Glasgow resources. The Re-review team also understands that a series of frequently asked questions (FAQs) will be published by GSA to help ensure that the principles of the relationship overview document are well understood by both staff and students. The Re-review team would encourage GSA to consider how the use of FAQs might be extended to help improve student engagement and understanding of some aspects of the University of Glasgow's academic regulations including the complaints procedures and eligibility for membership of societies.

45   Since the outcomes of the ELIR 4 and SCS investigations, GSA has carried out significant work to update its Code of Assessment (paragraphs 86-90). Having reviewed the documents associated with the revised Code, the Re-review team can confirm that GSA's Academic Council is responsible for approving any changes to this Code and ensuring that the UofG have also approved these. The Re-review team confirms that the Code of Assessment is clear and accessible for both staff and students. The Re-review team is also able to confirm that any changes to GSA regulations are approved by the Education Committee and ultimately by Academic Council. The Re-review team can confirm that the changes meet sector expectations and the requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education with regard to assessment practices.

46   A number of senior staff from UofG confirmed to the Re-review team that since the ELIR 4 and SCS investigations, a closer relationship between the two institutions has been established, stating explicitly that they have full confidence in the revised governance arrangements and refreshed culture as a vehicle for identifying and addressing any emerging issues. In addition to the improved arrangements for assuring awarding body oversight, the Re-review team learned that UofG and GSA are increasingly collaborating on enhancement activities to share practice and further strengthen the relationship. Examples include active and regular dialogues taking place between GSA's Registry team and University of Glasgow's Senate Office and Collaborations team and through future GSA staff participation in the UofG Learning and Teaching away day. The GSA's Registry team spoke positively about the fact that there is now effective consultation and collaborative working with UofG's Senate Office on key GSA policy developments including the Common Academic Framework, the new Code of Assessment, and the development of the Exceptional Circumstances Policy.

47   The Re-review team understands from senior University of Glasgow staff that its Code of Practice for Validated Provision (which applies to all of UofG's collaborative provision) is being reviewed to provide clearer guidance on communications and contacts. The Re-review team would encourage both institutions to work together to take forward any changes resulting from this review which are material to the relationship between GSA and the University of Glasgow.

48   From its consideration of the range of documents supplied by both GSA and UofG, and the updates provided by staff from both institutions, the Re-review team is content that this recommendation is on track to be addressed and confident that the action planned and in progress, along with the approach to completion, will address the recommendation once the timeline is complete.

3 Improving cultures and structures of partnership with students

3.1 Approach to student partnership

49   As outlined in the 'About this report' section of this document, the nature of the activities being undertaken by GSA in response to the ELIR 4 and SCS investigation recommendations involve significant organisation change projects. The Re-review team acknowledges that the approach currently being implemented by GSA aims not only to address the specific recommendations set by the ELIR 4 and SCS investigations but also takes forward GSA's longer-term strategic ambitions to improve the culture and structure of partnership working with its students. This section of the Re-review report starts by providing an outline of this broader context before specifically considering the ELIR 4 and SCS investigation recommendations mapped to this section of the Re-review report.

50   Since ELIR 4, GSA has, in conjunction with the GSASA, evaluated the effectiveness of student representation across all committees, groups and boards, developing a mapping of student representation. Key findings from this review include identifying an overreliance on the role of the Student President, a lack of diversity of student voices within the committee structures, and a lack of staff capacity within the Student Association to effectively meet the demands of the present GSA committee structure. This report was considered by Academic Council in August 2021. In response to this report, GSA and the GSASA expanded the pool of student representatives that support the new committee structure, allowing for more students to become formally involved in the enhancement activity being led through these committees.

51   The SER outlines that, as part of the culture shift at GSA, the School has articulated a desire to foster a culture of partnership working with students across all its enhancement and assurance activities. This culture includes a desire for student engagement and membership of project activity to be a 'baseline' expectation. An example of this improving culture of partnership working was outlined by senior GSA staff and the Student President, who spoke about how the launch of the new Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) (paragraph 67) had taken place at the GSA Learning and Teaching Conference held in early June 2022, through the conference keynote presentation which had been jointly delivered by the Student President and the Deputy Director (Academic).

52   The Re-review team saw evidence of work underway to both increase and diversify the student engagement across its academic schools and enhancement projects. The establishment of the Student Partnership Group, which is co-convened by the Deputy Director (Academic) and the GSASA President, provides a forum for developing a shared institutional view of GSA's approach to considering and responding to the Student Voice. It facilitates the sharing of good practice to the academic schools through its student representatives and the Academic Development Leads (paragraphs 24-25). This Group reports to the Education Committee and, as part of its remit, it will review the effectiveness of the SPA (paragraph 67).

53   The Re-review team heard that a new Relationship Agreement between GSASA and GSA was approved by the GSA Board of Governors in October 2021. The Re-review team can confirm that this document sets out the relationship between the two organisations in respect to expectations of financial reporting, the administration of the block grant to the Students' Association, administration of elections, and conflict resolution. The Re-review team view is that this Agreement, along with the SPA, will help to strengthen the relationship between GSASA and GSA. The Re-review team was informed that the document will be made available to students on both the GSASA and GSA websites, consistent with the statement in the Relationship Agreement.

54   Acknowledging the former overreliance on the role of the Student President, GSA has invested in staffing in the Students' Association, including the creation of the post of an Executive Manager of GSASA who manages the Association's commercial endeavours and is funded through an increase in the block grant provided by GSA. GSA has also established a new Enhancement and Student Partnership Coordinator role within the Learning and Teaching team to support student partnership working across the School. These appointments, along with the creation of a board of trustees for GSASA has assured the Re-review team that there is appropriate support in place for the Students' Association now, and also in the future, as GSASA reintroduces their commercial activity.

55   As part of its plans to develop a culture of student engagement, the Re-review team can confirm that GSA has developed appropriate mechanisms to ensure that students were consulted in the development of the GSA ELIR & QAA Concern Scheme Action plan (paragraph 5) and are represented on the ELIR Recovery Sub-Group (ERSG) (paragraph 11). Students who met the Re-review team were aware of the GSA ELIR & QAA Concern Scheme Action plan and how their contributions had helped to shape the projects being taken forward.

3.2   ELIR recommendation 10: Student representation

The ELIR 4 team's recommendation was that: '*building on positive progress made with the introduction of Lead Representatives, GSA should continue to embed effective arrangements for student representation. In particular, GSA should aim to promote a culture where student representatives are involved wherever possible, including in any groupings outside the formal committee structure, at all levels. GSA should also work with student representatives in a mutually-beneficial partnership to consider what tailored training and briefing would be most effective to allow them to contribute effectively to committees and groups, and ensure that representatives have the information they need to fulfil their roles with confidence.'*

Among a range of other matters (Appendix 1), SCS case 010 raised concerns around the effectiveness of GSA's ability to respond to student feedback and the effectiveness of the student representative system. While appreciating the updates provided by GSA regarding its plans to undertake a comprehensive review of communications, QAAS asked the School to prioritise making enhancements to its student voice system.

56   As a result of GSA's review of student representation, the Re-review team can confirm that the revised GSA committee structure, remits and memberships has increased the number of opportunities for student representatives within formal institutional structures (paragraph 50). However, GSA confirmed that some of the student representative positions on committees have remained vacant during academic session 2021-22, including those on GSA's Education Committee. GSA acknowledged it had proved difficult to effectively manage the challenge of increasing student representation opportunities in an institution with a relatively small total student population.

57   To address this, and in response to informal feedback from student representatives during session 2021-22, the Re-review team learned that GSA has reviewed and made changes to recruitment and training processes and induction dates, so student representatives will complete these activities ahead of attending first committee meetings of an academic session. GSA has also decided to promote student representative roles as part of its pre-induction materials for students, believing this will be particularly effective for supporting the recruitment of postgraduate taught (PGT) students who may only be studying at the School for one academic session. These changes will be implemented ahead of academic year 2022-23. GSA also plans to introduce a new Student Representative Survey

to monitor the effectiveness of the class representative system. The results will be used to make further enhancements to the induction and ongoing training of representatives, as well as ensuring appropriate timescales for induction and the scheduling of meetings.

58   Two major enhancement projects - the Common Academic Framework (paragraphs 91-98) and the Code of Assessment (paragraphs 86-90) - are being progressed as part of GSA's ELIR & QAA Concern Scheme Action Plan. Documents considered by the Re-review team confirm there has been appropriate student input to these projects mainly achieved through student representatives on GSA's committee structures, and also through the Student President who is heavily involved in supporting these.

59   However, some of the student representatives and other students who spoke with the Re-review team have little understanding of these projects. As these two major change projects move into their next phases of implementation, where the work will consider matters which have more direct impact on the whole student body, such as programme structures, learning outcomes and approaches to assessment, GSA is encouraged to ensure that its approach to communicating these key initiatives to students is effective and supports students to engage fully with the changes.

60   GSA uses a system of class and Lead Representatives to ensure appropriate student representation in its policy development and decision-making processes. Training for class and Lead Representatives is provided through a series of self-directed online modules, as well as in-person training delivered jointly by the GSASA and the GSA Learning and Teaching team. The Re-review team encourage GSA to evaluate its training for student representatives on a regular basis and, where appropriate, make enhancements in order to ensure that all student representatives are appropriately equipped to effectively represent the student voice.

61   Lead Representatives are remunerated posts, with individuals appointed to these roles rather than being elected by the wider student community. Student applicants complete a self-nomination application form, followed by a shortlisting and interview process involving staff from GSA's Learning and Teaching team, academic staff from the five academic schools and representatives of the GSASA. Lead Representatives support the class representative structure at school level, through attendance at Student Staff Consultative Committees (SSCCs) (which are held at an academic school-level) and through monthly meetings with the Deputy Director (Academic) and Students' Association President. Lead Representatives spoke of also using a range of informal approaches, such as social media channels, to gather feedback from and provide updates on actions taken by GSA to the wider student community.

62   The Re-review team can confirm that there is clear information on the Student Voice section of GSA's virtual learning environment (VLE) including guidance for staff at school and programme level regarding Lead Representative induction. However, some Lead Representatives spoke about being unclear regarding the responsibilities of the role prior to taking up their positions. These representatives also described how some staff members, were also unclear of the remit of Lead Representatives but had worked with them before the students embarked on their role. It is the Re-review team's view that greater clarity of the Lead Representative role would contribute to better student partnership working on the Common Academic Framework (paragraphs 91-98) and the Code of Assessment Projects (paragraphs 58 and 59). The Re-review team believes there would be benefit to GSA and all its Lead Representatives from evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of current induction arrangements, and recommend that consideration should be given to the timing of key meetings which require student representative attendance, and that the distribution of committee papers is timely to ensure that Lead Representatives are appropriately prepared to contribute to committee business.

63   The Re-review team can confirm that there is a well-constituted class representative system, with 128 representative positions and six vacancies. The Re-review team heard from students and staff that these Class Representatives provide feedback through programme committees, as well as sharing good practice across each academic school through Staff Student Consultative Committees (SSCC) and School Forums. The Re-review team understands that all students can attend School Forums. Staff spoke positively about student attendance levels and the fact that through these groups, students are now more effectively able to raise concerns, which can then be resolved locally and in a timely manner before they become larger scale issues or are raised as a student complaint. Senior colleagues stated that there was some early evidence that the effectiveness of these arrangements has led to a decrease in the number of stage one complaints that had been received by GSA this session. The Re-review team heard from Class Representatives that they use informal means of group communication, including social media, to both gather feedback from their peers and report back on institutional and school actions taken in response.

64   In the revised GSA committee structure, the Re-review team can confirm that postgraduate research (PGR) student representation is primarily achieved through PGR Reps in each of the five Academic Schools and an institutional PGR Lead Representative who is a member of GSA's Research Degrees Sub-Committee. The minutes of this committee are considered by the Research and Enterprise Committee (REC). PGR students confirmed that they felt these arrangements were effective, and that through their close working relationships with supervisors, feedback was acted on in a timely manner. PGR students stated that while they felt part of a research community particularly during their first year, this sense of community reduced as they embarked on their individual research projects.

65   Students and staff from the Forres campus spoke of an improving relationship with the GSASA, which had been achieved through activities such as, the Student President more regularly visiting the campus and, as part of these visits, running workshops with students. The Re-review team also learned that the Student President was providing more regular updates to key GSA committees on the experiences of students studying at the Forres campus. The Re-review team encourages GSA and GSASA to continue to develop their approaches in order to ensure that the specific needs of Forres campus students are appropriately represented within formal committee/group structures at both academic and institutional level and ensure that these students have the opportunity to engage with, and feel part of, the wider GSA community.

66   The Re-review team concluded that GSA has partially addressed these recommendations. The Re-review team is supportive of GSA's establishment of student Lead Representative roles as part of its broader approach to student representation but has reservations because many of the Lead Representatives they met, seemed to lack clarity about their roles and responsibilities. The Re-review team recommend that GSA reflects on current arrangements and, where appropriate, further develop the induction and ongoing support available for Lead Representatives to ensure that these students are effectively equipped to carry out their roles, particularly in relation to working with Class Representatives and participating as committee members at all levels.

3.3   ELIR recommendation 11: Partnership with students

The ELIR 4 team asked GSA: *'to work to establish a culture where students are seen as equal partners, engaged individually and collectively in the development and enhancement of their educational experience. This should include setting out an agreed approach which allows progress to be made on matters of mutual priority where GSA and its Students' Association work together to enhance the student experience - for example, making demonstrable progress in finalising the existing Relationship Agreement and developing a new Student Partnership Agreement which both codifies the ways of working and facilitates actions being taken.'*

67   In response, GSASA and GSA have co-created and launched a Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) which outlines joint priorities between the two organisations, as well as a statement of principles and ambitions for partnership. External advice on the production of the SPA was also provided by sparqs. The Re-review team heard that success indicators for the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) are being created by the Student Partnership Group (paragraphs 18 and 52) and the Learning and Teaching team which will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the SPA and support reporting to the Education Committee.

68   Through meetings with staff and students, the Re-review team was able to confirm that the SPA has been well received by both staff and students, and that a wide range of methods were employed to support both student engagement in its creation and establish a sense of ownership of the final agreement. GSA staff confirmed that it is the ambition of both GSASA and GSA that the SPA is used as a mechanism by staff and students to enhance student engagement across the School, and support greater collaboration as the strategic priorities set out in the SPA are addressed. During the Review Visit, staff described examples of how the SPA is providing a catalyst for student engagement. One included a student from the School of Fine Art who had used their representative role as a stimulus for a piece of curricular work, which has prompted staff in this School to consider how student engagement might become 'more formalised' within courses and programmes. Given its recent launch at GSA's Learning and Teaching Conference in June 2022, it is too early for the Re-review team to have a view on the impact of the SPA; it does, however, fulfil its purpose of highlighting strategic priorities for both GSA and GSASA in terms of working together and the team was impressed by the enthusiasm expressed by students and staff to take the work forward.

69   In addition to the SPA, GSA and the GSASA have undertaken a number of joint projects to strengthen partnership working with students. GSA has created the role of Student Consultant, to enable it to employ its students to work on enhancement projects. In session 2021-22, two Student Consultants are leading on the following projects: a project to develop GSA's teaching awards; and a project to make the documentation associated with GSA's new Code of Assessment (paragraphs 86-90) more accessible and engaging for staff and students. Senior GSA staff spoke very positively about the value of the work undertaken by these student consultants and confirmed that the School is currently considering how the role might be developed to support the future delivery of its enhancement activity. The Student Consultants themselves spoke positively about the projects they were working on and the opportunities these are providing to work with staff and students from across the School.

70   The GSA Teaching Awards Scheme ran for the first time in session 2021-22 with the awards ceremony held as part of the Learning and Teaching Conference in June. Staff and students spoke very positively about the Scheme, with students feeling that through their nominations, they were able to have a positive impact on staff morale. Staff welcomed the awards as an opportunity for the sharing of good practice across the School.

71   As part of GSA's pre-enrolment activities, students arriving for session 2022-23 will have access to training modules, inductions, the Student Voice VLE site and information regarding their programme, as part of GSA's approach to building a greater sense of community before students arrive on campus. In partnership with the GSASA, academic term dates have been fixed to ensure an aligned GSASA/GSA structure to week 0, week 1 and Freshers events. The Re-review team is also able to confirm that, as a result of the development and implementation of the Common Academic Framework enhancement project (paragraph 91-98), GSA has revised and approved semester dates for the next three academic years (paragraph 96).

72   Both students and staff commented on improvements in the style and tone of communications across GSA over the current academic session, including the use of videos by the Deputy Director (Academic) which both groups felt was supporting GSA's ambitions to create a sense of 'one GSA' community'. Students spoke particularly positively about the importance and effectiveness of communication from their programme tutors. Academic staff spoke about the importance of personal tutors, with this partnership between staff and students being important in supporting both student progression and the communication of course changes.

73   The Re-review team concluded that GSA is on track to address this recommendation. Based on the evidence considered, the Re-review team is confident that the actions planned and in progress, and the approach to completion will address the recommendation recognising that GSA and GSASA need time to take forward the ambitions for collaborative working outlined in the SPA.

4   Using student feedback and data to enhance learning and teaching and the student experience

4.1   ELIR recommendation 22: Responding to student feedback

The ELIR 4 team asked GSA: 'to continue to develop an effective and systematic approach to understanding and addressing student feedback, drawing on the National Student Survey and institutional surveys, which allows for the identification and resolution of issues in sufficient detail both at institutional and programme level, and which supports the effective sharing of good practice.'

74   Following the ELIR 4 and the SCS investigations, GSA undertook a review of all the student survey work across the School in order to streamline and consolidate its approach and established a Student Survey Policy and Framework project. The project aims to enhance GSA's use of surveys, including response rates, build awareness and confidence with staff in using survey data for enhancement, and improve mechanisms for closing the feedback loop with students. GSA decided to consolidate its internal surveys into a single Student Experience Survey (SES) for undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate taught (PGT) students, with a separate PGR survey being retained which is administered by the Research and Enterprise Office.

75   GSA has also developed a Student Surveys Policy which articulates its rationale for the use of student surveys, their purpose and function to gather student feedback, how this information is used to support its enhancement activities, expectations for the analysis of results and dissemination to students, and the engagement of students in outcomes and actions. This policy was approved by the Education Committee in November 2021, followed by the Academic Council in December 2021. The Student Surveys Policy also sets out GSA's ambition to achieve a 50% response rate for surveys during the first 'Survey Season' in spring 2022 (paragraph 76). A new site has also been established on the staff intranet to

provide all staff with access to student survey data as a response to feedback which suggested a lack of access to this data.

76   In order to improve participation in institutional surveys, GSA launched a cross-institution campaign, known as 'Survey Season' to communicate to students the purpose and outcomes of student experience surveys and to encourage students to participate. The Re-review team is able to confirm that this campaign has been taken forward on a cross-institutional basis involving the Student Partnership Group (paragraphs 18 and 52), Lead Representatives (paragraph 61), the Learning and Teaching team, and Marketing and Communications department. Staff briefings and a toolkit which included presentation slides which could be tailored to particular student cohorts, were provided to support staff engagement in the campaign. The resources outline the concept of 'Survey Season' and set out expectations for programme-level briefing and promotion, closing the feedback loop with students, and how student feedback information should be used to support enhancements to learning and teaching. All programme teams were asked to host a timetabled session to introduce the surveys, with academic school management teams asked to monitor the timetabling of sessions to ensure implementation. During the Re-review, the team heard from staff about how they had used this toolkit to engage students in discussions about the use of surveys to gather their feedback, as part of their studio tuition sessions, confirming they had found them to be a valuable resource.

77   GSA confirmed that response rates to the SES in spring 2022 were 32% for undergraduate and 41.1% for PGT students. While both of these results demonstrate improvements in student engagement on the previous year's performance, GSA senior staff expressed disappointment that it had not been possible to achieve their 50% target. GSA's data also shows an increase in overall student satisfaction scores for undergraduate students of 17% (70.5% overall) and postgraduate taught of 13% (77.99% overall). This information has been provided to programme teams and to students through SSCCs. While response rates have improved, the Re-review team note these are below the 50% target set, which the team viewed as ambitious.

78   GSA senior staff confirmed a commitment to continuing to look at approaches to improve response rates. The Re-review team is supportive of the work undertaken by GSA over the last academic session and encourage the School to continue with its plans. Students confirmed that their tutors had kept them well informed about the introduction of 'Survey Season' and acknowledged the usefulness of surveys as an opportunity to provide feedback. However, in the same meeting they also recognised that many students continue to experience survey fatigue. GSA's SER states that following this first Survey Season, it plans to identify key institutional enhancement activities from survey results and ensure clear communication of resulting projects. Both staff and students outlined a number of activities that have been introduced in the schools to disseminate the outcomes and actions resulting from the consideration of feedback. These include verbal updates through the Student Forums and written summaries on the VLE.

79   The Re-review team was also able to discuss with staff the introduction of a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating for programmes based on the responses received from the National Student Satisfaction Survey (NSS). This formalised approach to programme performance indicators and interventions was approved by Academic Council in October 2021. The indicators developed established clear targets for increases in NSS performance for sessions 2021-22 to 2025-26, with an ambition to achieve an institutional overall satisfaction score in excess of 80%. GSA's overall satisfaction score in the 2021 NSS was 52.73%, which both GSA and the Re-review team recognise as being low. Where a programme receives a red rating, these programmes are required to complete an NSS action plan and engage in support meetings with the Deputy Director (Academic) and the Head of Learning and Teaching. Action plans are agreed and monitored by the School

Senior Management Team, with progress reports being delivered to the Learning & Teaching Group. The Re-review team understands that GSA is currently considering embedding the RAG rating system into its Programme Monitoring Annual Review (PMAR) process.

80   Given the relatively recent introduction of the RAG rating system for programmes, it is too early for GSA to have carried out any meaningful reflection and evaluation of the impact of the introduction of NSS action plans for 'underperforming programmes'. Some early evidence was presented to the Re-review team which may indicate increases in satisfaction scores across a number of NSS items for programmes engaged in the process. The Re-review team views this as a positive development and encourages GSA to continue with its implementation.

81   Some students expressed concerns to the Re-review team around a perception that they feel some staff lack agency to make changes in their courses. Academic staff with responsibilities for programmes welcomed the introduction of the rating system, outlining that the approach has supported and empowered them to make structural changes to their programmes and develop business cases for additional resources and staff. Staff also welcomed the input provided by senior colleagues to support teams to progress changes.

82   The Re-review team can confirm that GSA's approach to responding to student feedback uses formal institutional committee structures, school representative structures including Class and Lead Representatives (paragraph 61) on SSCCs and Student Forums, as well as more informal communications through the personal tutoring system, programme leaders and studio working. During the Review visit, the team heard from students about a number of changes that have been taken in direct response to student feedback. These include increased opening hours of studios and workshops, and greater access to technical support. The latter has been facilitated by the appointment of Studio Assistants as part of the Technical Support Department (TSD) team. The team heard very positive feedback from both students and staff regarding the introduction of the Studio Assistant role which all felt had greatly increased the support available to students working in these areas.

83   GSA staff spoke enthusiastically that these enhanced communication mechanisms are already having a positive impact in supporting greater student understanding of assessment processes resulting in no questions being raised about degree show arrangements and fewer student complaints during this session. Staff highlighted that meetings with Class Representatives - both on a formal and informal basis - are helping to achieve quicker resolution to student concerns and that response times from the helpdesk had improved. The Re-review team concluded that this ELIR recommendation has been fully addressed.

5   Securing academic standards and enhancing assessment practices

84   As outlined in the 'About this report' section of this document, the nature of the activities being undertaken by GSA in response to the ELIR 4 and SCS investigation recommendations involve significant organisation change projects. The Re-review team acknowledges that the approach currently being implemented by GSA aims, not only to address the specific recommendations set by the ELIR 4 and SCS investigations, but also takes forward GSA's longer-term strategic ambitions to secure academic standards and enhance assessment practices. This section of the Re-review report starts by providing an outline of this broader context before specifically considering the ELIR 4 and SCS investigation recommendations mapped to this section of the Re-review report.

5.1   Approach to Assessment and Feedback Policy and Practice

85   The ELIR 4 and SCS Concern investigations included four recommendations to GSA linked to assuring and maintaining the standards of its assessment processes. In response, GSA established two multiphase projects - the Assessment and Feedback Policy and Practice project (paragraphs 86-90) and the Common Academic Framework (paragraphs 91-98). The Re-review team recognises that these are ambitious programmes of work, where the use of phased delivery timelines support GSA staff to deliver prompt actions, while also building appropriate foundations to enhance practice and review the effectiveness of the long-term changes required.

86   GSA's SER confirms that the Assessment and Feedback Policy and Practice project is being delivered over three phases: a series of immediate actions to address concerns relating to academic standards and assessment practice; consistent and accessible regulations relating to assessment and feedback; and the development of staff and student resources to support the implementation of a 'new code' in academic session 2022-23. As part of its timely response, GSA, following a review of the procedures it put in place to respond to UK national lockdown restrictions associated with the Covid pandemic in March 2020, agreed there would be no further use of the 'teaching intelligence' model. Instead, an Exceptional Circumstances Addendum to the GSA Code of Assessment was developed in consultation with the Senate Office of the University of Glasgow and approved by GSA's Academic Council in March 2021. The Addendum sets out the processes by which alternative assessments can be approved in the event of a further national lockdown or other unforeseen circumstances.

87   The SER confirms that the Addendum was used in March 2021, ahead of the end-of-year assessments in academic session 2020-21 because of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. GSA established a COVID-19 sub-group of Academic Council, with membership of this group including the GSASA Sabbatical Officers and a Chief External Examiner, to provide oversight of the implementation of the Addendum and also manage the production and use of Contingency Action pro forma by programme and course teams during session 2021-22. These pro formas were attached to programme specifications and used to outline to students, changes to the delivery of programmes as a result of the ongoing influence of the Covid pandemic on this academic session. From the sample of pro formas considered, the Re-review team concluded that programme teams had clearly articulated any changes required. The SER states that external examiners and students were consulted on these changes and cognisance was taken of the Public Sector Equality Duty; however, the Re-review team was not able to confirm this.

88   Following the implementation of the Exceptional Circumstances Addendum in spring 2021, the Re-review team understands that GSA reviewed and subsequently amended the Addendum to clarify requirements for PGR students and remove processes for 'collective good cause' which are duplicated within other GSA procedures. Having reviewed this Addendum, the Re-review team can confirm that it sets out appropriate processes by which alternative assessment methods may be proposed and approved by Academic Council should GSA, at some point in the future, experience exceptional circumstances which result in current assessment arrangements being unviable. It also confirms that external examiners would be consulted on proposed changes to assessment arrangements.

89   GSA has also undertaken a full review of its Code of Assessment, in relation to the ELIR and SCS Concern recommendations, including a gap analysis and benchmarking to other higher education providers. The work was led by the Head of Learning and Teaching, the Deputy Registrar and the Head of Academic Registry supported by a project group which includes the three academic school ADLs (paragraphs 24-25), the Head of Programme Development and the GSASA President. This work aimed to ensure that a clear and

accessible policy framework, explaining assessment and feedback expectation, was developed which was accessible and understood by students and staff. The review resulted in a series of recommended changes to the Code of Assessment, which were incorporated into the revised Code (paragraph 90). The SER states that a series of consultations took place with Heads of School, Lead Representatives (paragraph 61) and Programme Leaders and Boards of Studies to inform the revision process. Academic staff who met the Re-review team confirmed that a wide consultation had indeed been undertaken during the development of the Code. An Equality Impact Assessment (EAI) was also produced in January 2022 which commits GSA to an evaluation of the Code of Assessment in November 2023.

90   The Code of Assessment was approved by GSA's Academic Council on 4 May 2022 and was subsequently submitted to the University of Glasgow's Academic Standards Committee on 27 May 2022. The Academic Standards Committee requested some minor amendments, which were being progressed in partnership with the University of Glasgow's Senate Office and submitted for approval by the end of June 2022. While this delayed the formal launch of the new Code of Assessment by a month, the intention remained, at the time of this Re-review, for the new Code to be implemented from the start of academic session 2022-23.

5.2   Approach to the Common Academic Framework

91   The Common Academic Framework project aims to address strategic priorities relating to the development of GSA's academic provision and provide common principles, characteristics and structures for its undergraduate and PGT programmes. GSA states that the Framework will, in conjunction with the Assessment and Feedback Policy and Practice project, ensure academic standards are maintained and programme structures and the distribution of summative assessment points provide a 'safe, flexible and fair assessment of student learning'. GSA has appointed a Head of Programme Development to facilitate the development and implementation of the Common Academic Framework.

92   The Common Academic Framework was approved by GSA's Academic Council on 4 May 2022 and, subject to some minor amendments, by the Academic Standards Committee at the University of Glasgow on 27 May 2022. The framework is designed to:

- 'Set out the principles for the design of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes
- Establish a shared understanding of academic terminologies, internal and external regulations, and frameworks that underpin GSA academic programmes
- Ensure consistency of student experience through the design of programmes and courses
- Provide a framework and guidance for the design and development of new programmes and courses, encouraging ongoing enhancement of existing programmes and courses'.

93   The introduction of the Common Academic Framework requires programme and course teams to make changes to programme structures, credit volumes, levels and stages, assessment design, intended learning outcomes, contact and notional learning hours. The Re-review team recognises that this is a significant change project and is content that GSA has developed an appropriate approach and timeline to support its implementation.

94   The Common Academic Framework project has three strands of work:

- identify and establish principles of commonality relating to teaching, delivery and assessment diets

- programme structures and credit volumes
- graduate attributes.

95   GSA completed a mapping exercise of current programme structures, credit volumes, formative and summative assessments, and timings across the totality of its undergraduate and PGT provision in autumn 2021. This revealed significant variation in formative and summative assessment submission points across semesters in undergraduate provision, with minor variation in PGT courses. A series of semester models were developed and consulted on, and aimed to get agreement on matters such as contact weeks and assessment periods for each semester. As a result, cross-school principles for semesters, teaching and assessment weeks have been approved.

96   Semester dates are now set for the next three academic sessions, with phased implementation of this new semester design and formal programme amendments taking place between academic sessions 2021-22 and 2024-25. The Common Academic Framework has identified clear breaks in the academic year to allow periods of reflection for staff and students. These changes, once implemented in full, will ensure that acceptable minimum threshold standards for progression between stages, up to and including the final stage of GSA programmes, are in place. They also qualify the amount of credit being assessed for progression between stages and the minimum acceptable level of credit needed for the successful completion of each programme. Staff attested to the clarity of the new arrangements. An online Common Academic Framework site has been set up on the VLE to support staff in implementing the framework.

97   The Re-review team is satisfied that both GSA and UofG have acknowledged the significance of the workload involved in implementing the Common Academic Framework. The Re-review team is able to confirm that, having addressed the most critical matters around quality and standards, appropriate plans have been developed to move this change project into its next phase, which includes a review of assessment criteria, a whole institution approach to feedback and the development of a grading scheme.

98   The Re-review team can confirm that GSA has set out an appropriate timeline for revising programmes to align with the requirements set out in the Common Academic Framework, with major amendments being proposed and approved ahead of the start of academic session 2024-25. The SER states and the Re-review team was informed by staff, that work is underway to develop support arrangements for programme leaders and teams to undertake curricular review and the necessary programme and course revisions. GSA confirmed that, as part of the project, it has identified that students who commence programmes of study in session 2022-23 will require transition arrangements because of these changes. It plans to consult this student cohort regarding these arrangements. The Re-review team also learned that a range of student communications around the introduction of the Common Academic Framework are planned and would be produced with support from the ADLs and the Quality Office. These communications will begin from the start of autumn 2022.

5.3   ELIR recommendation 16: Assessment and feedback

The ELIR 4 team made the following recommendation to GSA: *'Ensure staff and students have a clear understanding of institutional expectations around grading criteria and practices. GSA should also ensure that there are clearer expectations for feedback practice which are implemented effectively across the institution, so that all students receive timely, relevant and high-quality formative feedback on their progress at key points during their programmes. Students should be supported to understand how their assessed work relates to learning outcomes, how assessment criteria are used to make judgements about the achievement of learning outcomes, and how feedback should help their understanding of why a particular grade has been awarded. Feedback on formative assessment - for example, at the existing Mid-Year Review - should be shared with students on all programmes.'*

99   As outlined in paragraphs 104 and 106, GSA reviewed and revised its Code of Assessment during academic session 2021-22. This was done to ensure that staff and students had a clear understanding of institutional expectations around grading criteria, feedback practice and the relationship between the achievement of learning outcomes and assessment criteria. In advance of the 2021-2022 academic year, programme and course leaders reviewed and updated where appropriate, their assessment arrangements and briefs.

100   Students who met with the Re-review team demonstrated a clear awareness of the distinction between formative and summative assessment and spoke positively about the support in place from academic staff to help them understand and engage with learning outcomes and assessment arrangements. The Re-review team was also assured that current students understand the range of methods of assessment used across their programmes. However, from the student meetings held, there was evidence of variations in the quality and accessibility of feedback received on assessments. The Re-review team, therefore, encourages GSA to continue with its plans, being taken forward as part of the implementation of the Common Academic Framework, to address the consistency of the quality of feedback and confirm the School's position in relation to feedback turnaround times.

101   While recognising that the timeline associated with development of the Code of Assessment means current students will not yet be aware of its existence, both the Student President and academic staff confirmed that the Code has been considered through GSA's committee structure. Perhaps disappointingly, given their role within GSA, Lead Student Representatives who spoke with the team had very little awareness of the Code of Assessment.

102   The Re-review team concluded that GSA is on track to address this recommendation. Based on the evidence considered, the Re-review team is confident that the actions planned and in progress, and the approach to completion will address the recommendation once the Assessment and Feedback Policy and Practice project timeline is complete.

5.4   ELIR recommendation 17; UG/PG Concern recommendation 2: Assessment design

As a result of the ELIR and the SCS Concern investigations, GSA was asked to address the following recommendation*: '…in view of the ongoing pandemic, continue to develop an approach to delivering alternative assessments, in particular for studio-based courses, that can be used online if necessary, and ensure students are able to demonstrate attainment of intended learning outcomes and achieve minimum threshold academic standards for their programmes. GSA should also consider its programme structure, including whether the distribution of formative and summative assessment allows adequate flexibility to assess student attainment fairly.'

103   Having considered in detail the new Exceptional Circumstances Addendum (paragraph 86-88) to the Code of Assessment which replaces GSA's 'teaching intelligence model, the Re-review team was able to confirm that this Addendum establishes appropriate arrangements which would be operationalised in the event of a major incident, to ensure that the quality and academic standards of the awards which GSA delivers would be assured. It also outlines GSA's approach to delivering alternative assessments for online studio-based courses.

104   Having reviewed the revised Code of Assessment, the Re-review team is satisfied that it articulates clearly to staff and students information to support students to demonstrate attainment of intended learning outcomes and the achievement of minimum threshold academic standards for their programmes. The revised Code also sets out expectations for formative assessment points, with specific requirements for courses delivered across two semesters, to include a mid-point formative assessment. The Re-review team concluded that the Common Academic Framework is detailed and meets the requirements of the UK Quality Code and meets sector expectations. The Re-review team is content that implementation of GSA's Common Academic Framework will result in greater consistency of programme structures and allow programme teams to better consider the distribution of formative and summative assessment in order to assess student attainment fairly.

105   The Re-review team concluded that GSA is on track to address this recommendation. Based on the evidence considered, the Re-review team is confident that the planned action currently underway and the approach to completing the implementation of the Common Academic Framework will enable GSA to appropriately address the recommendation.

5.5   ELIR recommendation 18; UG/PG Concern recommendation 3: Assessment policy

As a result of ELIR 4 and the SCS Concern Scheme investigations, GSA was asked to address the following recommendation: 'Ensure that the planned changes to assessment policy are clearly outlined in addenda to the GSA Code of Assessment and communicated to students in consultation with student representatives. Particular attention should be paid to how to communicate arrangements to staff and students to ensure that they fully understand what they are required to do and by when.'

106   Having reviewed all of the documentation that GSA supplied on the revisions made to its Code of Assessment (paragraphs 86-90), the Exceptional Circumstances Addendum (paragraphs 86-88) and development of the Common Academic Framework (paragraphs 91-98), it is the Re-review team's view that the Code of Assessment has been designed in such a way as to improve the clarity, consistency and communication of assessment requirements and regulations. The Code of Assessment also includes changes to the Good

Cause procedure, which appropriately addresses concerns raised originally linked to potential conflict of interest, with decisions regarding Good Cause applications from students being made by staff members who are independent.

107   The Re-review team learned that GSA has appointed a Student Consultant (paragraph 69), who is working with staff and students, to produce an online Student Guide to Assessment and Feedback as part of the Student Handbook on the VLE. The guide aims to support students in their understanding of assessment arrangements (as set out in the Code of Assessment) and GSA's regulations - in an interactive way - and to support staff-led assessment inductions in programmes. The guide is expected to be published at the start of the 2022-23 academic session. The Re-review team encourages GSA to continue to progress its planned approach to the communication of future changes associated with the Code of Assessment to students and staff. Having reviewed the comprehensive set of documents provided by GSA, and following the opportunity to discuss the Code of Assessment, Exceptional Circumstances Addendum and the Common Academic Framework with staff and students, the Re-review team concluded that this recommendation has been fully addressed.

5.6   ELIR recommendation 19; UG/PG Concern recommendation 4: Academic standards

GSA was asked, through the ELIR and SCS Concern investigations, to address the following recommendation: *'In view of the continuing pandemic, implement the plan to establish acceptable minimum threshold standards for progression between stages, up to and including the final stage of GSA programmes. GSA should be clear about the amount of credit being assessed for progression between stages and the minimum acceptable level of credit needed for the successful completion of each programme. The procedures developed should also demonstrate how external examiners will be involved in endorsing any future use of the 'Teaching Intelligence' model to ensure that assessment decisions are robust, valid and reliable. GSA should also ensure that external examiners are consulted in sufficient detail on any changes.'*

108   Following a review of the procedures GSA put in place to respond to UK national lockdown restrictions associated with the Covid pandemic in March 2020, the School agreed there would be no further use of the 'Teaching Intelligence' model. Instead, an Exceptional Circumstances Addendum to the GSA Code of Assessment was developed setting out the processes by which alternative assessments can be approved in the event of a further national lockdown or other unforeseen circumstances (paragraphs 86-88).

109   In addition, GSA has, and continues to, progress two major projects linked to assuring and maintaining the standards of its assessment processes, the revisions to the Code of Assessment (paragraphs 86-90) and the development and implementation of the Common Academic Framework (paragraphs 91-98). The Re-review team, having considered the Common Academic Framework, is able to confirm that it sets out appropriate minimum threshold standards for progression between stages, up to and including the final stage of GSA programmes. The Framework also specifies the amount of credit being assessed for progression between stages and the minimum level of credit needed for successful completion of each programme. The minimum requirements for progression are articulated in the Code of Assessment, where students are referred to a link to the programme regulations which define the number of credits and grades required for progression to the next stage of study.

110   Staff confirmed to the Re-review team that current and new external examiners would be briefed in August 2022 on the revised Code of Assessment and the development

and implementation of the Common Academic Framework. The Re-review team is also content that the Exceptional Circumstances Addendum to the Code of Assessment appropriately qualifies the role of external examiners in the approval of any changes to assessments as a result of this Addendum having to be used. Based on the evidence considered, the Re-review team concluded that this recommendation had been fully addressed.

6 Providing high-quality and accessible learning environments and clear information for students

111 In developing its response to the ELIR 4 and SCS investigation recommendations related to its learning environment and resources, communications with students, and policies and guidance, GSA established a number of projects. These projects are:

- Courseware Review project (paragraphs 113-115)
- Student Communications Strategy (paragraphs 120-125)
- Review of student-facing services and policies (paragraphs 132-136)
- Estates Strategy Project (paragraphs 143-152).

112 As outlined in the 'About this report' section of this report, the nature of the activities being undertaken by GSA in response to the ELIR 4 and SCS investigation recommendations involve significant organisation change projects. The Re-review team acknowledges that the approach currently being implemented by GSA aims not only to address the specific recommendations set by the ELIR 4 and SCS investigation recommendations but also takes forward GSA's longer-term strategic ambitions to secure academic standards and enhance assessment practices. Section 6 of the Re-review report considers in turn, each of the four projects listed in paragraph 111. Broader context about each project is provided before confirmation of the Re-review's conclusion of progress with the recommendation(s) being addressed by that project.

6.1 Approach to the Courseware Review project

113 The Courseware Review project is running across three academic sessions from 2021-23 and focuses on enhancing programme and course information, with the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) stating that it links directly to GSA's Student Communication Strategy (paragraphs 120-125). As part of Phase 1 of the project, GSA defined 'Courseware' as 'student-facing programme and course information authored by academic teams'. The variety of courseware included is wide ranging, from website welcome pages and student handbooks through to information on studio availability and additional costs of study.

114 Phase 1 of the project, launched in September 2021, focused on reviewing existing courseware and identifying enhancement priorities to be taken forward in 2022-23. This review involved a consultation with staff and students and a benchmarking exercise which engaged with a number of higher education institutions from the UK sector. A staff survey was carried out in October 2021. GSA reported that the response rate was lower than anticipated. However, the richness of content of responses was such that the survey provided valuable information to inform next steps. The survey identified several issues related to academic planning and timetabling; duplication of information; issues of clarity in induction and orientation information; and opportunities to streamline and enhance programme handbooks, and programme and course specifications. Student consultations were held across November 2021, with students reporting difficulties caused by duplicate information and with locating information on central services.

115 The mapping activities and consultations identified priorities for enhancement to courseware with GSA developing a plan to take this forward in summer 2022 and during

academic session 2022-23. These were consolidated into the Courseware Review action plan which was presented to the Learning & Teaching Group in January and March 2022. This action plan will be used to ensure that materials and processes developed as part of this project will enable GSA to achieve its strategic ambition to support equality, diversity and inclusion. Staff who spoke to the Re-review team indicated that the subsequent changes would provide improved clarity for both students and staff. An online Courseware Review site has been set up for staff on the VLE to share progress and examples of good practice.

6.2   ELIR recommendation 14: Support for additional programme costs

The ELIR 4 Review team asked GSA to: *'Develop a clear and effective process for identifying and communicating additional programme costs (building on the existing fees document) and an equitable institutional approach to support students in meeting these. In parallel, continue to promote creative means of achieving learning outcomes in sustainable alternative ways through options that are made available to all students.'*

116   GSA confirmed, as part of the Courseware Review project, a review of existing information and guidance provided to students on additional programme costs has been completed in order to ensure the accuracy and accessibility of this information. GSA acknowledge that consistency of information and dissemination practices are variable. Staff informed the Re-review team that this project to review additional programme costs had taken longer than anticipated because the consultation, which took place as part of Phase 1 of the wider Courseware Review project, had been extended to ensure staff from across GSA had appropriate opportunities to contribute. Under the direction of the Head of Programme Development and the Academic Development Leads, a revised strategy for calculating and communicating additional study costs has been agreed and will be progressed as part of the implementation of the Courseware Review action plan (paragraph 115).

117   GSA has now produced a pro forma and guidelines outlining additional programme costs for individual programmes and examples of populated draft pro formas were shared with the Re-review team. The Re-review team established that the ADLs (paragraphs 24 and 25) are supporting programme leaders in establishing these programme costs. An online site has also been set up to support the comparison of additional programme costs across the School, allowing outliers and variations in costings on similar programmes to be more readily identified. The Re-review team understands that the Learning & Teaching Group will annually review additional programme study cost information. The Re-review team was concerned that the delays associated with this project mean that additional programme cost information will not be available until after the start of the 2022-23 application cycle.

118   The Re-review team learned that GSA's Technical Support Department is actively helping students to identify sustainable materials which they can use for their studio practice and can confirm that a recycling area has been set up on campus where students can deposit and collect materials. The Re-review team view these developments positively and are confident that GSA will continue to expand on this work as it takes forward its strategic ambitions to achieve net zero in tackling the climate crisis.

119   Based on the evidence provided and discussions with staff, the Re-review team concluded that this recommendation is partially addressed. The Re-review team is concerned that the timetable for the production and publication of the programme costs pro formas does not meet the current admission cycle and this needs to be brought into alignment for new students. The Re-review team, therefore, recommends that GSA should ensure that prospective students are provided with clear information before entry which confirms the notional minimum levels of studio and workshop availability that can be

expected on each programme of study. In implementing the process for identifying and communicating additional programme costs, GSA should align publication of these additional costs with the application cycle. Both of these changes should be in place to support students engaging with the 2022-23 application cycle.

6.3   Approach to developing a Student Communications Strategy

120   The SER states that a project to develop a Student Communication Strategy, with the intention to enhance overall student communications, started in summer 2021. The project has four aims: 'review existing communication channels and approach; understand what 'effective communication' means to students; interrogate cultural and structural issues that are impeding effective communication; develop a Communications Strategy in partnership with students.'

121   Phase 1 of this project reviewed existing communication channels, through undertaking desk-based research and meetings with Lead Representatives (paragraph 61) and academic staff from across the schools. The resulting Phase 1 report made a series of recommendations and identified four areas of improvement to be taken forward in Phase 2: GSA communication channels; student feedback and experience; understanding and communicating decision-making; and staff development and support with communications.

122   Phase 2 of the project started in September 2021, with specific actions and projects identified to be delivered over 2022 set out within GSA's Student Communications Strategy action plan. Staff confirmed to the Re-review team that the development of this Strategy was still at an early stage and the Phase 2 project was behind schedule, with progress impacted by staff shortages. Despite expecting to see more progress, the Re-review team also accepts that there are ongoing challenges being faced by GSA as it manages a number of significant change projects simultaneously, as part of its ELIR response, and recognises and is able to confirm that the majority of these change projects are making good and timely progress.

123   The Re-review team learned of GSA's plans to develop a staff toolkit which will reinforce the use of various communication channels (VLE, intranet, email, internet, social media policy) and how they work in practice at different organisational levels across the School. The Re-review team also learned that work was planned to review the content on the GSA intranet and the funding had been secured for a new website.

124   Senior staff recognised that, in the past, there had been 'too much communication' to both staff and students with an overreliance on the use of email. The Re-review team heard from both staff and students that the volume of email and messages had been excessive at times, making it difficult to identify important information and prioritise. Senior staff went on to state that, in their opinion, the work undertaken to deliver the GSA ELIR & QAA Concern Scheme Action Plan has resulted in a shift in culture, with staff now considering their views to be genuinely welcomed and listened to (paragraph 5). Staff from across the School concurred with this view, speaking positively about the change in the style and tone of communications, and a more open and inclusive approach from senior management. Staff also spoke positively about the use and development of 'bite size' video updates from the Director and Deputy Director (Academic) and the development of communications templates.

125   Students spoke about communications from GSA being perceived as 'too corporate' in nature, while recognised the challenges in establishing the correct balance and use of a more formal tone, especially when communicating key institutional messages. Students went on to add that they particularly valued the information and update videos that had featured the Deputy Director (Academic), saying they appreciated the style of these which

personalised the 'institutional voice', as well as improving the accessibility of information for those who find text-based media more difficult to engage with. Students spoke of a 'culture shift' in GSA's approach to communications since the ELIR 4 and SCS investigation reports were published, in terms of style and tone.

6.4 ELIR recommendation 12; UG/PG Concern recommendation 1: Communication and consultation

From ELIR 4 and the SCS investigations, GSA was asked to*: 'review (as planned), develop and implement a comprehensive and effective communications strategy, which includes all key stakeholders. In particular, in partnership with students, establish and embed effective and accessible communication channels which are responsive to student comment and engagement, and which foster a culture of mutual respect, openness and information sharing.'*

126   The Re-review team can confirm that GSA has introduced a number of measures which have improved its approach to consultation and communications with students. These include information for graduate showcases, improved induction arrangements, enhancements to the Pre-enrolment Gateway, and information videos to support return to campus. The Re-review team note that for session 2020-21, GSA had developed a compulsory online induction for students providing information on key professional services for students. This was shared with students through the VLE and used a range of text and video media, with students having to submit a survey noting they had completed the induction tasks. Following feedback from students and the reintroduction of on-campus induction activities in session 2021-22, GSA took the decision to continue to offer the induction site, but it is not compulsory for students to complete. For session 2022-23, this information and media is being updated and repurposed into an online induction and welcome site which shall support on-campus induction activities at institutional level and in schools and programmes. The Re-review team believe there would be benefit to both GSA and its students in reviewing the effectiveness of this change in order to ensure the new induction arrangements meet student expectations.

127   Currently, the student intranet is an important tool for communication with students; ongoing improvements to it continue including improved search functionality and the inclusion of new information from support departments such as Registry and Student Support Services. The Re-review team understands that a series of focus groups for students took place in December 2021 as part of GSA's plans to review the student intranet, but engagement was poor and the review has been delayed until spring 2022 (paragraph 122).

128   Students raised concerns with the Re-review team about the use of both the student intranet and the VLE to host key communications and student-facing policies and procedures. They stated this results in confusion across the student population about exactly where to find this information. Students confirmed that their preference is for this type of information to be on the VLE because this platform is used to support their learning and teaching. Many of them did not see the value of having a student intranet. They spoke positively about the work that had been undertaken by the Library service to improve the visibility of, and access to, key documents for students through the VLE. Staff confirmed they were aware of these student concerns and accept that work needs to be undertaken to qualify the use of both platforms so students can readily access important communications and student-facing policies. At the same time, work also needs to be completed to ensure the optimisation of sites for mobile browsers to improve accessibility.

129   The Re-review team also understands and accepts that other projects, such as the Courseware Review (paragraphs 113-115), will play a role in improving communications with

students in the longer term. While recognising that work is being taken forward to enhance communications for students, the Re-review team remains unclear as to GSA's overarching strategy and approach to this work.

130   The Re-review team concluded that GSA has partially address this recommendation and has concerns about the delays currently being experienced. GSA shares these concerns and accepts work needs to take place to re-develop its project plan so this work can progress in a timelier manner. Therefore, while continuing to foster a culture of mutual respect, openness and information sharing, the Re-review team recommends that GSA develops and implements, by the end of academic year 2022-23, its planned Communication Strategy in order to ensure that effective and accessible communication channels which are responsive to student comment and engagement are established and embedded across the School.

6.5   UG/PG Concern recommendation 6: Guidance for digital and physical showcases

One of the recommendations from the UG and PG SCS investigations asked GSA to: *'Provide clear written guidelines for 'digital and physical showcases' and make explicit the offer of support in place for past and current students.'*

131   As part of GSA's immediate response to the ELIR 4 and SCS Concern recommendations, it produced support and guidance for cohorts engaging with Graduate Showcase activities in late spring 2021. A toolkit was produced to set clear expectations for students around the nature and purpose of the Showcase, providing support and guidance on how to use the digital showcase platform and organise digital events. An additional range of supporting materials, workshops, contacts and services was offered and provided through the student intranet, the VLE and through update bulletins. Staff reported that there had been no questions raised about showcases this academic year. Students confirmed that they had been provided with information and a timetable to support them with their preparations for their showcase and that financial information was still to follow. The Re-review team concluded that this recommendation has been fully addressed.

6.6   Approach to reviewing student-facing services and policies

132   GSA fully accepts that a number of student-facing policies required updating and that its process for reviewing professional services required enhancing. In response, two strands of work were led by the Academic Quality Office and Academic Registry. These were the development of a professional service review policy and schedule, and a systematic review of student-facing policies.

133   Following GSA's review of student-facing policies, four policy documents were deemed to be in scope: Complaints Handling, Student Conduct Policy and Misconduct Procedure, Appeals and Good Cause, which were then reviewed and updated. The Re-review team has considered these documents and confirms they are comprehensive, accessible and meet sector expectations as outlined in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education linked to concerns, complaints and appeals. The Re-review team is also able to confirm that these revised policies will be reviewed within two years of their introduction, after which they will follow GSA's normal four-year policy review schedule.

6.7 ELIR recommendation 21: Review of student-facing professional support services

The ELIR 4 team recommended the following to GSA: *'Implement a systematic and effective mechanism for reviewing the contribution of the professional support services to the quality of the student experience, incorporating external specialist expertise and student engagement.'*

134   The Re-review team is able to confirm that, since ELIR 4, GSA has developed, approved and implemented a policy and process to enable it to undertake the cyclical review of its professional services. The approach adopted mirrors GSA's Periodic Review policy for its academic provision and ensures appropriate student involvement and external professional service expertise. The Re-review team can also confirm that a programme to undertake reviews of all professional service areas has been incorporated into GSA's wider programme of institutional review. The Re-review team can confirm that the new policy and process meets the requirements specified in SFC's guidance to higher education institutions on quality.

135   The Re-review team was supplied with documentation which confirms that the first review of professional services - the Enterprise Studio - took place in May 2022. From considering this documentation, the Re-review team was able to confirm that the policy has been followed and this professional services review event had included the use of appropriate external panel members.

136   The Re-review team heard from colleagues who had participated in this review that it had been a very positive experience - providing a useful opportunity to be self-reflective, particularly in the context of moving the Enterprise Studio services online as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff who met the review team confirmed that the learning from the move to online, combined with the recommendations from the professional services review process have provided the opportunity to consider future developments to the service. They went on to explain that the Enterprise Studio team is currently working on a Follow-up Report which will detail how the recommendations from the professional services review will be addressed. The Re-review team can, therefore, confirm that this recommendation has been fully addressed.

6.8 ELIR recommendation 23: Independence in student-facing processes

The ELIR 4 team, asked GSA: *'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.'*

Following its investigation of the concerns raised in cases 008 and 010, QAAS also asked GSA to review its complaints handling process (with appropriate student input) to ensure: this process remains fit-for-purpose; staff are appropriately trained in its use; and communications of outcomes have clear allocation of responsibilities and timelines for resulting actions. QAA suggested that there would be value in engaging with the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) who has provided development opportunities for staff involved in complaints handling processes. (Appendix 1)

137   As outlined in paragraph 133, Academic Registry, supported by the Quality Office, identified four student-facing policies which required updating in order to address this recommendation. The SER confirms that, following the review of its Complaints Handling Procedure, a revised process was approved by the Senior Leadership Group and

implemented from April 2021, which takes account of the requirement that higher education institutions in Scotland adopt the revised SPSO Model Complaints Handling Procedure.

138   The Re-review team can confirm that the revised Complaints Handling Procedure clarifies the use of, and requirement for, independence during each stage of the process. The Re-review team can also confirm that the revised procedure follows the Scottish SPSO Model Complaints Handling Procedure, the process is clearly articulated and there is a useful visual representation of the process in the appendix. The Re-review team also learned that in revising its complaints handling procedure GSA had decided that establishing indicative timelines for the completion of actions was not appropriate. Based on their experience of the sector, the Re-review team felt this decision was a little unusual but understands that GSA reached this position following a benchmarking exercise of complaints handling procedures published by other higher education providers. Instead, GSA has implemented a system for tracking and monitoring actions arising from complaints investigations and is adopting this to ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner. The Re-review team was content with this approach.

139   Senior staff confirmed that over 30 colleagues have been trained as Stage 2 complaints investigators using external SPSO trainers. The Re-review team learned that GSA has introduced a module on the process for considering Stage 1 complaints which is mandatory for all new staff. Staff confirmed that GSA now undertakes a quarterly review of complaints which has been effective in supporting the School to identify topics which are then aligned to GSA's NSS themes for analysis and action.

140   The Re-review team was informed that during the course of this academic session 2021-22, there had been a reduction in the number of matters being raised through the Complaints Handling Procedure. This was attributed to work being done by programme and course teams to increase opportunities for students to discuss any concerns with them in the first instance and/or raise matters through the class representative structure (paragraph 61). Staff stated that this early intervention is often resulting in resolution before the complaint escalates to Stage 1 of the Complaints Handling procedure.

141   The Re-review team considered GSA's Student Conduct Policy and Misconduct procedures and can confirm that it states explicitly that only staff who have no previous involvement in a misconduct case may take decisions linked to an investigation. GSA's work to increase its pool of trained Stage 2 complaints investigators (paragraph 139), will ensure that it can also resource this commitment.

142   The Re-review team can confirm that within the revised Code of Assessment (paragraphs 86-90), an appropriate degree of independence has been introduced for consideration of 'Good Cause' claims from students with extenuating circumstances. The Re-review team also confirms that 'Good Cause' claims from students are now considered prior to a GSA Final Examination Board. The Re-review team concluded ELIR 4 recommendation 13 has been fully addressed and the changes to GSA's Complaints Handling Procedure also fully address the specific recommendations made by QAA to enhance this procedure as part of SCS cases 008 and 010 (Appendix 1).

6.9   Estates Strategy

143   GSA has established an Estates Strategy project and a Project Development Board which is chaired by the new Director of Estates, who was appointed by GSA in December 2020. The composition of the Project Development Board is deliberately broad and includes academic and professional services staff and students. An external benchmarking exercise has been undertaken as part of the project. The Re-review team understands that this project also supports GSA's strategy to align the estate with its academic ambitions, its focus

on student and staff experience and wellbeing, and to achieve net zero in tackling the Climate Crisis.

144   The Re-review team learned that the Estates Strategy is due to be approved in June 2022. While the Re-review team has not seen a copy of the Estates Strategy, it did have the chance to review two documents which support its development. The Re-review team considered GSA's Inclusive Design approach (and, as part of this, its guidelines on what makes an inclusive and accessible campus) which has been developed to optimise campus accessibility and inclusivity, and raise awareness of this intent with staff and students. Secondly, the Re-review team considered an Overview of the Design Strategy document which the team can confirm is comprehensive - setting out a detailed timeline for developing the estate, the project team involved, how stakeholders will be engaged in the process, the key objectives of the Estates Strategy, benchmarking with peer institutions, and improvements to the student experience.

145   GSA acknowledges that physical access to its campuses is still a substantial challenge because of the geography of the campus and the age of some buildings. The Re-review team undertook a short campus tour to better appreciate the issues that the School is working to address. The Re-review team heard from senior staff that accessibility at GSA is considered in its broadest sense and not solely improvements to the physical access of buildings. As part of its Inclusive Design approach, GSA is considering how the campus can be more accessible to the public and local community - for example, to visit exhibitions - and is reflecting on all aspects of accessibility, including campus support for students from studio staff and receptionists, and the provision of social spaces.

146   In early 2021, an Access Review was undertaken with the Director of Estates commissioning access audits of all GSA buildings and a series of immediate actions were completed to address the priorities identified by these reviews ahead of academic session 2021-22. Changes included new studio spaces in the Barnes Building, the reopening of gallery space in the Reid Building to host exhibitions for graduates who had missed physical degree shows due to the pandemic, the relocation of academic school administrative staff to their home school, and the introduction of a mobile catering service at the Stow building. The Re-review team learned that, as part of the further development of the Stow Building, a permanent canteen will be introduced.

147   The SCS case 008 raised concerns around: the accessibility of GSA's campus buildings and challenges for students with disabilities moving both between and within campus buildings; the accessibility of student support services including the Library and some learning and social spaces; and the support provided to students with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. While recognising GSA's response to its ELIR 4 and SCS investigation reports recommendations would address these concerns, QAAS made three recommendations to GSA - one to review its complaints handling procedure (paragraphs 137, 138 and 142) and two recommendations to ensure that GSA's plans to improve the accessibility of the campus remained on track (Appendix 1).

148   Firstly, GSA was asked to provide QAA with six-monthly updates on progress being made with the Access Review and associated actions (paragraph 146). The Re-review team can confirm that this has been undertaken as part of the quarterly update meetings that have been held between GSA's Deputy Director (Academic) and QAA's liaison officer. These update meetings have been set up following the outcomes of the ELIR 4 and SCS investigations in order to monitor the School's progress with the action plans it developed to address the ELIR 4 and SCS Investigation recommendations, at least until the Re-review process is complete (see 'About this report' section of this report). The Re-review team can confirm that this recommendation has been fully addressed.

149   Secondly, GSA was asked to monitor how well it is meeting the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Core practice to provide sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience for all students. GSA informed the Re-review team that its mapping to the Quality Code is currently under review as it progresses amendments to key policies such as the Code of Assessment (paragraphs 86-90) and the development of the Common Academic Framework (paragraphs 91-98). In terms of specifically considering this recommendation from SCS 008, GSA confirmed that it has continued to consider this through a range of its quality processes and pandemic response which is working to ensure that students have appropriate access to learning resources and services. Through its quality processes and monitoring of complaints and concerns raised by students, GSA believes that there is nothing significant that indicates it is not meeting the requirements of the Quality Code. The Re-review team was broadly content with this position and conclude that this recommendation is on track to be addressed.

150   The Estates team consulted on and has produced a 'Design Policy for an Accessible and Inclusive Campus' to support future capital and maintenance projects, which was approved by the Senior Leadership Group in November 2021. This policy forms part of new project management procedures to ensure equality and inclusion can be demonstrated at all stages of the ongoing development of the estate. The Re-review team is content that GSA has set out a clear plan in terms of prioritisation of estates-related projects.

151   Of particular significance is the decision to take forward the rebuilding of the Mackintosh building as an 'independent' project, separate to the work being undertaken to deliver the Estates Strategy. A Project Development Board has been established for the Mackintosh building project with senior academic sponsorship and membership which includes staff and students. Senior staff view this decision positively, allowing appropriate staffing, resources and funding to be more effectively assigned to the development of the rest of the estate.

152   GSA is also ensuring that processes align the demands of curricula and the resources available to support students, in achieving learning outcomes in an effective and equitable way. This is being addressed through the Common Academic Framework (paragraphs 91-98) and by the centralisation of studio and workshop provision (paragraphs 26, 82, 153 and 154).

6.10   ELIR recommendation 13: Studio space and workshop provision

The ELIR 4 team asked GSA to: *'Ensure that processes to align the demands of curricula and the resources available to support students in achieving learning outcomes are effective and equitable. In parallel, establish and make clear to students before entry, minimum levels of studio availability and technical support that can be expected on each programme of study to ensure consistency and equity of provision.'*

SCS concern case 010 raised concerns about the quality of the provision at GSA: a lack of and variability of access to workshop, studio space and tutors with the COVID-19 pandemic magnifying this situation; the poor quality of online teaching and learning arrangements; and a lack of appropriate degree show arrangements for graduating students (Appendix 1). GSA was asked to ensure that access arrangements for all cohorts, and particularly the graduating students (session 2020-21) were developed as a matter of priority, in conjunction with the student body and, subsequently, clearly communicated to students. QAAS encouraged GSA to benchmark its provision against other art and design schools/departments across the UK sector.

153   As part of GSA's immediate response to the ELIR 4 and SCS Concern recommendations, it produced support and guidance for cohorts engaging with Graduate Showcase activities in late spring 2021. A toolkit was produced to set clear expectations for students around the nature and purpose of the Showcase, providing support and guidance on how to use the digital showcase platform and organise digital events. An additional range of supporting materials, workshops, contacts and services was offered and provided through the student intranet, the VLE and update bulletins (paragraph 131). The Re-review team was informed that, in response to student feedback (particularly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic), GSA has centralised workshop provision and, at the same time, studio space access has been standardised around core opening hours with these spaces managed by new Studio Managers and Studio Assistants to provide consistent support to students across subject areas. While not all students who spoke with the Re-review team agreed this had been achieved, there is a general consensus that access is improving following the COVID-19 pandemic.

154   Staff and students spoke positively about the benefits of GSA's decision to centralise workshop space, which has supported increased opening hours and the introduction of new Studio Managers and Assistants. The Studio Managers and Assistants provide support and supervision to students who wish to work in a self-directed way on their own practice. The extended opening hours of studios and the increased staff presence provided by these new technical staff roles has supported GSA to reassure itself that appropriate health and safety compliance is in place at all times.

155   The Re-review team is broadly content that GSA is undertaking action to improve access for students to resources, studio and learning spaces. However, while GSA clearly states opening hours on their induction website for students, it is the team's view that how facilities are allocated to students to support the demands of curricula, and which resources are prioritised for which courses and programmes, could be clearer. It is the team's view that GSA still needs to make further improvements to the information available to ensure that students, before entry, have realistic expectations of the facilities that they will have access to and the minimum levels of studio availability and technical support that can be expected on each programme of study, ensuring consistency and equitability of provision (paragraphs 116-119).

156   The Re-review team concluded that the actions taken by GSA mean that it has partially addressed the ELIR 4 recommendation 13 and the SCS 010 recommendation. The Re-review team recommends that GSA should continue to evaluate the information that is provided to prospective students to ensure that expectations are managed with regard to availability and access to resources. GSA should also continue work on improving the quality of information provided to students to ensure they have an accurate view of how much they will be expected to spend above their tuition fees in each year, with a view to ensuring that no student is disadvantaged through an inability to afford material costs.

Conclusion and next steps

157   This Re-review team has concluded that, overall, Glasgow School of Art (GSA) has effective arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience. The focus of this Re-review has been on the progress being made by GSA on its ELIR 4 and SCS investigation recommendations and, given the nature and scale of a number of these, the Re-review team accepts that GSA will continue to need time to implement all of the projects set out in its ambitious and comprehensive GSA ELIR & QAA Concern Scheme Action Plan. The Re-review team is content with the progress that has been made by GSA on the recommendations over the 18 months since ELIR 4, which are summarised in Table 1 on page 5 of this report.

158   The Re-review team is confident that - with the alignment of its ELIR recovery plans to its new Strategic Plan, the detailed project planning undertaken and the enthusiasm and commitment expressed by the senior colleagues, staff and students - a shift in culture is underway which will ensure that those recommendations which were identified as being either 'on track' or 'partially addressed', will be completed appropriately.

159   However, the Re-review team consider that a number of significant recommendations are still in the process of being addressed. QAA Scotland will therefore continue to engage with GSA through the current quarterly liaison meeting arrangements until such time as action on all recommendations is satisfactorily embedded in institutional procedures or GSA is subject to its next full external institutional review. One year after publication of this Re-review report, GSA will be asked to provide a Follow-up Report to indicate how they are continuing to respond to the ELIR 4 and SCS investigations. The final version of the School's Follow-up Report will be published on the QAA website.

Appendix 1: Summary of Scottish Concerns Cases (SCS) 008 and 010

Shortly after the outcomes and recommendations of the ELIR 4 and Undergraduate and Postgraduate concern investigations were published, two new concerns were submitted to QAAS. QAAS investigated both cases (SCS 008 and SCS 010 - these reference numbers are assigned to each case by QAAS, who maintain an internal register to log submissions to the SCS). QAA Scotland concluded that there was significant overlap between the issues raised in these two new cases and the recommendations made by the ELIR 4 and SCS investigation teams, and that the majority of the issues raised in the new concern submissions would be appropriately addressed as GSA developed its ELIR 4 and SCS investigations' response. Where QAAS believed this would not be the case, a small number of additional and related recommendations were made to GSA. The following summarises the matters raised in each concern, along with the recommendations made by QAA.

1.   **SCS case 008:** raised concerns around: the accessibility of GSA's campus buildings and the challenges for students with disabilities moving both between and within campus buildings; the accessibility of student support services including the Library and some learning and social spaces; and the support provided to students with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. On investigation, QAAS concluded that there was significant overlap between the concerns raised in SCS case 008 and the recommendations that GSA was already progressing in response to its ELIR 4 and SCS investigation reports, which would address the majority of these matters (see 'About this review' section of this report). However, in investigating this case, QAAS ask GSA to consider three recommendations, summaries of which are:

- Provide QAAS with regular updates (once every six months) on the progress being made with the delivery of the Access Review and associated actions.

- Recognising the timescales associated with the Access Review, GSA should monitor how well it is meeting the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Core practice to provide sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience for all students.

- Amend its complaints handling procedure to ensure that, as well as complainants receiving information of any recommendations and actions, GSA provides indicative timelines for the completion of actions.

2.   **SCS case 010**: raised concerns around: the effectiveness of GSA's ability to respond to student feedback and the effectiveness of the student representative system; the quality of the provision at GSA; a lack of and variability of access to workshop, studio space and tutors with the COVID-19 pandemic magnifying this situation; the poor quality of online teaching and learning arrangements; poor communications with students; lack of transparency and student involvement in institutional decision-making linked to changes in learning and teaching; and a lack of appropriate degree show arrangements for graduating students. On investigation, again QAAS concluded that there was significant overlap between the concerns raised in SCS case 010 and the recommendations that GSA was already progressing in response to its ELIR 4 and SCS investigation reports, which would address the majority of these matters (see 'About this review' section of this report). However, in investigating this case, QAAS ask GSA to consider four recommendations, summaries of which are:

- In terms of access to studio space and workshop provision, QAAS had a concern that while GSA had, from March 2020, confirmed the access that would be provided to studio and workshop spaces recognising the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there still appeared to be a mismatch between the student experience and their expectations. Therefore, GSA was asked to ensure that access arrangements for all cohorts, and particularly the graduating students (session 2020-21) were developed as a matter of priority, in conjunction with the student body and, subsequently, clearly communicated to students. QAAS encouraged GSA to benchmark its provision against other art and design schools/departments across the UK sector.

- While appreciating the updates provided by GSA regarding its plans to undertake a comprehensive review of communications, the School was asked to prioritise making enhancements to its student voice system.

- GSA was asked to undertake a further review, with appropriate student input, of its Complaints Handling Procedure to further reassure itself that: this process remains fit-for-purpose; staff are appropriately trained in its use; and communications of the outcomes of each investigation have a clear allocation of responsibilities and timelines for resulting actions and students must clearly understand the terminology used within this process.

Appendix 2: GSA's mapping of ELIR and SCS recommendations to cross-cutting strategic institutional themes and enhancement projects.

GSA's Self-Evaluation report states that, given the wide ranging and evident interrelationship between the ELIR 4 and SCS concern investigations, their initial analysis led them to adopt a 'strategic and coherent approach to ensure that the actions developed to address the specific recommendations complemented one another and added up to something more than the sum of their parts'. This ELIR recovery work was an important foundation in GSA's future strategic development.

GSA identified a number of cross-cutting themes which it considers are vital cultural, as well as structural, change issues linked to the ELIR 4 and SCS concern investigations. Using these to formulate a plan composed of eight discrete and interrelated enhancement projects - often addressing more than one recommendation. The table below illustrates how these themes are linked to the eight enhancement projects and map to each of the recommendations from the ELIR 4 and SCS outcome reports.

Cross-cutting strategic theme	Enhancement project / activities	ELIR recommendations and SCS outcomes
Strengthening leadership, governance and awarding body oversight	Institutional leadership, strategy and direction	ELIR 9: Institutional leadership, strategy and direction
		ELIR 15: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
		ELIR 20: Using data to enhance the student experience
		ELIR 24: Awarding Body Oversight and Approval
		UG/PG SCS 5: Awarding Body Oversight and Approval
		GSA SCS 008: Accessibility
Improving cultures and structures of partnership with students	Student partnership	ELIR 10: Student Representation
		ELIR 11: Partnership Working
		ELIR 22: Responding to Feedback
Using student feedback and data to enhance learning and teaching, and the student experience	Student survey policy and framework	ELIR 20: Using data to enhance the student experience
		ELIR 22: Responding to Feedback
Securing academic standards and enhancing assessment practices	Assessment 7 feedback policy and practice	ELIR 16: Assessment and Feedback
		ELIR 17: Assessment Design
		ELIR 18: Assessment Policy
		ELIR 19: Academic Standards
		UG/PG SCS 2: Assessment Design
		UG/PG SCS 3: Assessment Policy
		UG/PG SCS 4: Academic Standards
	Common Academic Framework	ELIR 17: Assessment Design
		ELIR 19: Academic Standards
		UG/PG SCS 2: Assessment Design
		UG/ PG SCS 4: Academic Standards
	Courseware Review	ELIR 14: Support for Additional Costs
		GSA SCS 008: Accessibility

Providing high-quality and accessible learning environments and clear information for students	Student communications strategy	ELIR 12: Communication and Consultation
		UG/PG SCS 1: Communication and Consultation
		UG/PG SCS 6: Guidance for digital and physical showcases
	Reviewing student facing services and policies	ELIR 21: Review of student-facing professional support services
		ELIR 23: Independence in Student Facing Processes
		GSA SCS 008: Accessibility
		GSA SCS 010: Complaints Handling Procedures
	Estates Strategy	ELIR 13: Studio Workshop Provision
		GSA SCS 008: Accessibility
		GSA SCS 010: Access to Studio and Workshops

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