Resilient Learning Communities

Institutional Plan for: Glasgow School of Art

This document will form your year 2 plan and should be around three to four sides of A4. You can find your year 1 plan through this web page.

Context
Provide any statements that might be helpful in explaining your institution's context and approach and how this plan supports the achievement of institutional priorities. Any context statement could draw on salient points from the previous year's learning/outcomes from Theme work and reflect any changes in the strategic direction of your institution.
At the heart of GSA's 2021-22 Educational Enhancement plan is a commitment to working in partnership with students and to fostering a culture of partnership working to enhance learning, teaching and the student experience. In working towards this strategic ambition, we have chosen to revise our approach to the Enhancement Themes, providing greater opportunities for staff and students to engage in partnership exploring and developing innovations and initiatives in response to the theme of belonging. As students return to campus after a period of disruption to their studies as a consequence of pandemic lockdowns, we believe this is a timely opportunity for students and staff to explore the new affordances that a combination of in-person and online learning brings and to help support students to re-connect with the GSA communities beyond their own courses and programmes. We believe it is important to provide students and staff opportunities to explore some of the complexities and opportunities that this new mode of working brings, and also to foster connections outside of their own programme of study.

Institutional team	
Please specify for each member whether staff or student and for staff, their role title. Where the Theme Leaders' Group (TLG) staff or student nominee is unable to attend meetings, an alternate can attend on their behalf.	
Institutional lead	Dr Maddy Sclater

TLG staff representative	Dr Maddy Sclater
TLG student representative	Rory O'Neil
Add additional rows for additional members	Alice Andrews
	Hannah Clark
	Dr Marianne Greated
	Robert Mantho
	Harriet Simms
	Dr Thea Stevens

Overall outcomes/activity

Are there any changes to your key priorities, outcomes and delivery activities that you identified at the start of the Theme?

Reflecting back on the 1st year where we engaged students in proposing a series of self-initiated projects in response to the theme 'resilient learning communities', we have identified enhancements to our existing plan that we would like to implement. Crucially, these enhancements arise from the need to connect much more closely with the current student engagement projects and the community engagement work that is already underway at GSA. Also, to use the enhancement themes work to link in more closely and amplify some of this activity. This year, we also wish to further refine the overarching project theme 'Resilient Learning Communities' to focus on the theme of 'belonging'. This has been identified through the above institutional projects as being worthy of further exploration. More specifically, we would like to initiate inquiry relating to what it means to be a GSA student, with a view to assisting students, in collaboration with staff, to positively re-connect with the wider School - given our return to campus with its blend of in-person and online teaching. We are at a pivotal moment to explore the re-engagement with our educational spaces, communities, and activities.

Our operational changes include:-

1) Involving academic, professional and support service staff more closely in each of the projects to act as partners and mentors - ensuring a good fit between project teams and member of staff with relevant expertise, to create a mutually supportive partnership. We will be aiming to achieve closer engagement of staff across all 5 schools through mechanisms such as developmental days and forums.
2) The Enhancement Team will, in partnership with students and the wider staff body, identify the focus of each project (up to 4). We will actively seek the views of GSA staff and students at relevant committees and fora in Oct 2021, to help identify the focus of each of each of the projects [In Year 1 the projects were open-ended and proposed by the students]. A call will then be put out to all students inviting them to respond to the projects that have been identified.

3) We aim to involve Academic Leads in each of the schools to support the Enhancement Themes work, such as review applications and attend meetings, and to sit on the Steering Group.
4) This year we wish to invite teams of students to work on a project (rather than individually), and these teams will work across the whole of GSA, i.e. they will be cross-disciplinary/cross-school.
5) We will schedule additional time in the run up to the application process. This will allow for student groups to discuss their project ideas informally with the Enhancement Themes team, and for the ET team to facilitate connections with other appropriate members of staff.
6) We aim to allow for a longer project time frame (1 full academic year) for the project work to be successfully carried out and concluded, with student applications being received, decisions made, and student projects initiated before the completion of Semester 1.
7) We aim to invite students who participated in Year 1 to showcase their work in a live online session as a way to raise awareness among GSA staff and students about the 1st year ET work and its remarkable achievements.
8) As part of the dissemination of the ET work, we hope to be able to facilitate students showcasing their work at relevant events such as the Graduate Show.
9) We no longer plan to host a series of talks and events as previously outlined in year 1, as we wish to direct the resources into the student-funded projects.

Year 2 outcomes/activity

In answering the following, identify what is continuing from year 1 and what is new:
What are your key priorities?
What outcomes do you want to achieve?
What activities will you deliver to achieve your key priorities?

What are out key priorities

Our key priorities are to ensure that the ET projects continue to be strategically significant and relevant to students, staff and to the institution. To this end, we have made some important operational changes to the project to ensure we are able to achieve our objectives - that is to ensure that the Enhancement Themes are sufficiently connected into other important work taking place within the institution (see overall outcomes/activity).

1. To support the continuing development of learning communities within GSA with a particular focus on the sub theme of 'belonging', and to enable the GSA staff and student communities to continue to develop their wellbeing and resilience as students and staff return to campus and participate in both in person and online teaching.

2. To build upon the momentum of the 1st year of the Enhancement Themes work to support students during the pandemic, and to use this important groundwork as a platform to further develop the GSA student and staff community.

3. To enable students to actively engage with informal extra-curricular activities in collaboration with GSA staff, to complement and develop their studio learning and professional practice.

4. To provide an accessible project framework that promotes student and staff partnership working in responding to a set of projects and undertaking 'mini projects' that also offer benefit to the wider GSA community.

5. To develop a closer partnership between The Glasgow School of Art and GSA's Students' Association to enable students to influence and shape the direction of the overall project in terms of activities and inputs.

6. To develop Inter-institutional links between GSA and the other art programmes/art schools in Scotland.

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

The outcomes we are aiming to achieve are a series of student/staff partnership projects (up to 4) that focus on topics connected to the theme of 'resilient learning communities' and more specifically the sub theme of 'belonging'. As with the first year ET projects, students will be asked to write up an evaluation of their own project and share artefacts resulting from this work. Additionally, they will be asked to present the outcomes of their work to the institution and wider GSA community at the end of the project. This work could possibly be showcased at the Graduate Show and the activity disseminated in time for the start of the 3rd Year of the Enhancement Theme work in the Autumn of 2022.

1. Ongoing evidence of a more resilient learning community at GSA
2. A functioning and effective steering group with evidence of productive dialogue between stakeholders overseen by Learning & Teaching Group
3. The establishment of an inter-institutional network for community development, supporting the exchange of ideas and practice
4. A thriving inter-institutional network for community development, supporting the exchange of ideas and practice
5. A set of resources that can be used institutionally and at 'sister' HEIs.

What activities will you deliver to achieve your key priorities?

1. The partnership projects will be identified from consultations (during Sept/Oct) with staff and students, and these identified topics/themes for projects will feature in the student call for participation.
2. Students will be encouraged to team up with other students across schools and disciplines to respond to the project call (Nov).
3. The Enhancement Themes team will facilitate connections with members of staff who will be identified as project mentors.
4. The ET will support project teams to help shape the development of their proposal and will continue to offer guidance to successful projects during the project phase.
5. Student groups will meet the ET team at periodic intervals throughout the year, including as a whole group, to exchange ideas and progress.
6. A summing up event for projects will be held at the end, for teams to present their work to one another, and to enable the exchange of learning experiences. This will serve as valuable preparatory support for student project leads to write up their evaluation reports.

Title of project/activity
'Belonging'

What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
This year's theme, linked to the overarching theme of 'resilient learning communities', is the theme 'belonging'. As students return to campus after a period of disruption to their studies as a consequence of pandemic lockdowns, we believe this is a timely opportunity for students and staff to explore the new affordances that a combination of in-person and online learning brings and to help support students to re-connect with the GSA communities beyond their own courses and programmes. We believe it is important to provide students and staff with opportunities explore some of the complexities and affordances that this new mode of working brings, and also to foster connections outside of their own programme of study. The ET team will extend an invitation to staff from across the school to act as mentors and partners on a series of projects which will be determined through consultation in relevant committees, student and staff forums, groups and the Students Association during September/October. Therefore, rather than students responding to the overall theme of 'resilient communities' and putting out an open call as we did in the first year, we would like to propose and agree a set of projects which will be of interest to students and staff alike and which tie in closely with our existing partnership projects at GSA with a focus on belonging.

Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)
In the light of emergent priorities post lockdown, it is clearly evident that students' sense of belonging needs to be enhanced. GSA, as with many HEI providers, has seen decreases in satisfaction for sense of community and connection with peers due to online learning due to disruptions in session 2021-22. As we return to campus we wish to explore the impacts of this disruption and provide appropriate responses to support students sense of belonging and community.

What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change envisaged)
Positive sense of connectiveness to the academic community and beyond will be enhanced.

How will we know? (How the change is measured)
Evaluation methods will include feedback from staff as well as students' own evaluations of their projects using an evaluation template that mirrors the ET template. Evaluations will be distilled into an overarching project evaluative template. Other evidence that could be considered include examples of changes or plans made as a consequence of engagement, in the Enhancement Themes, changes in student behaviour, and institutional or course level data - where appropriate - and staff development activity. For example, evidence will be drawn from staff mentors and steering group members by asking them at a specially convened meeting: what have the progress and impacts been in your projects/area? In addition, a convenience sample of staff and students from the wider GSA community will be polled using a summative online questionnaire. Teaching staff will be asked to reflect on the impact they perceive of the Enhancement Themes project.

Dissemination of work
How will you promote and communicate your work internally and externally?
We plan to use all of GSA's available communication channels such as Marketing and Communications, GSA Student Association, GSA's CANVAS site 'Student Engage', and the GSA Communities Engagement Co-ordinator to disseminate the work of the projects internally and externally. We also plan to enable student project groups to possibly disseminate their work through the Graduate Show. Additionally, we plan to arrange a forum for student groups to present their work publicly to GSA staff and students.

Supporting staff and student engagement
How will you support your community to engage with planned activities?
We will ensure that the community is aware of key dates for planned activities in good time and to engage the School Academic Leads and class representatives in this work too.

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Date:	22 September 2021

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