

# THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

## PROGRAMME APPROVAL (VALIDATION) POLICY

### POLICY DETAILS:

Date of approval	6 December 2023
Approving body	Academic Council
Supersedes	Programme Approval (Validation) Policy, October 2023
Date of EIA	October 2017
Date of next review	<i>See departmental schedule</i>
Author	Academic Quality Office
Responsible Executive Group area	Registrar and Secretary
Related policies and documents	<b>Pro formas:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Statement of Intent/Business Case</li><li>• Programme Proposal</li><li>• Programme Information Document (including employer, student and external consultation pro formas)</li><li>• Financial Rationale (available from the Director of Finance)</li><li>• Programme Assessment template (available from the Head of Student Recruitment)</li><li>• Programme Specification</li><li>• Course Specification</li></ul>
Benchmarking	UK Quality Code for Higher Education University of Glasgow

**THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART**  
**PROGRAMME APPROVAL (VALIDATION) POLICY**

**1. GENERAL APPROACH**

- 1.1 Procedures for the approval of new programmes exist to ensure that academic standards are maintained.
- 1.2 From session 2017/18, the University of Glasgow, validating body for GSA's degree programmes, has delegated responsibility for programme approvals to GSA's Academic Council.
- 1.3 Programme proposals are adopted after careful consideration of their relevance and appeal to potential students, their compatibility with other programmes offered, and the strategic objectives of the School and GSA as a whole. Consideration shall be given to the availability of resources, the coherence and academic standard of constituent courses, the quality of the student learning experience and the standard and appropriateness of awards offered on completion of the proposed programme.
- 1.4 GSA and Schools shall demonstrate their commitment to diversity and promoting equality by ensuring that due regard is given to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in the implementation and application of this policy.
- 1.5 GSA believes that programme design should be initiated in Schools, where design concepts arise from the experience of specialist academics and their departments, and in relation to changes in their discipline and the employment trajectories and potential of those who study in these and other cognate subject areas. These concepts are informally and formally explored, before a specific design process takes place, within the structures of the particular School – in programme management teams, for example.
- 1.6 Programme proposers ensure that a varied cohort of students is involved in programme design. This engagement may be sought in a variety of ways including participation in Staff Student Consultative Committees, at which informal discussions relating to the development of a new programme or related course may take place.
- 1.7 Proposals for programmes which are collaborative in nature are required to undertake the additional requirement of the consideration and completion of pro formas which relate specifically to Collaborative Provision. The Academic Quality Office will advise proposers of the information, documentation and approval routes regarding their particular proposal.
- 1.8 In the case where the programme proposals include a collaborative or joint undertaking with the University of Glasgow, proposers shall contact the Academic Quality Office at an early stage to ensure that the correct process is followed. Where GSA is the administering institution, the GSA's Programme Approval (Validation) process would apply. Where the University of Glasgow is the administering institution, the University's Programme Approval process would apply. Programme Proposers should also refer to GSA's suite of Collaborative Provision policies available from the Academic Quality Office.

## **2. PRECEPTS**

- 2.1 Proposers shall, at an early stage, discuss their programme proposal with the Head of Programme Development. Following this initial discussion, the Head of Programme Development will advise Proposers to contact the Academic Quality Office.
- 2.2 The Academic Quality Office shall establish whether a standard or bespoke approach to programme approval is required and provide appropriate guidance to the proposer and will advise proposers of the information, documentation and approval routes regarding their particular proposal.
- 2.3 All new programme proposals shall be compatible with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Benchmark Statements, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Guidance and the academic standards of GSA and the University of Glasgow.
- 2.4 Programme proposers shall satisfy GSA's Senior Leadership Group Planning Subgroup that the academic rationale and the business case for the proposed programme is in keeping with GSA expectations and reputation.
- 2.5 Throughout the Programme Proposal and Programme Approval stages of the process, programme proposers shall inform the Director of Finance of any change to the financial position of the programme proposal.
- 2.6 Programme proposers shall satisfy Boards of Studies and Academic Council that the assurance and review of academic quality and standards is in keeping with GSA expectations and reputation.
- 2.7 Boards of Studies shall not approve or recommend new programme proposals without having been assured by the proposer that the proposal has been fully discussed with the Academic Quality Office and that the proposal has satisfied the guidance provided.
- 2.8 School Boards of Studies are responsible for the detailed scrutiny of Programme Approval documentation and for making recommendations to the Education Committee. It is to Education Committee that Academic Council has delegated responsibility for consideration on its behalf. Education Committee shall make approval recommendations to Academic Council.
- 2.9 Academic Council shall be responsible for approving new programme proposals in terms of academic matters. The Senior Leadership Group Planning Subgroup may require to be assured regarding academic and non-academic matters.
- 2.10 Approval in principle from the University of Glasgow of the programme proposal is necessary for programmes at degree level or above. Formal approval requests shall be submitted in consultation with the University of Glasgow's Academic Collaborations Office (ACO) via the GSA Academic Quality Office.
- 2.11 Programme proposers shall ensure that an external subject specialist(s) is consulted on programme proposals.
- 2.12 The Annual Report to the Senate of the University of Glasgow is considered by the Joint Liaison Committee and shall be appropriately utilised to inform and update the University regarding

new and proposed programme provision. Furthermore, the Academic Quality Office will keep the ACO updated throughout the year.

2.13 Schools and departments shall assist the Academic Quality Office in establishing a current, transparent and accessible archive of programme and course specifications.

2.14 The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring that the final version of the approved Programme and Course Specifications are submitted to the Academic Quality Office.

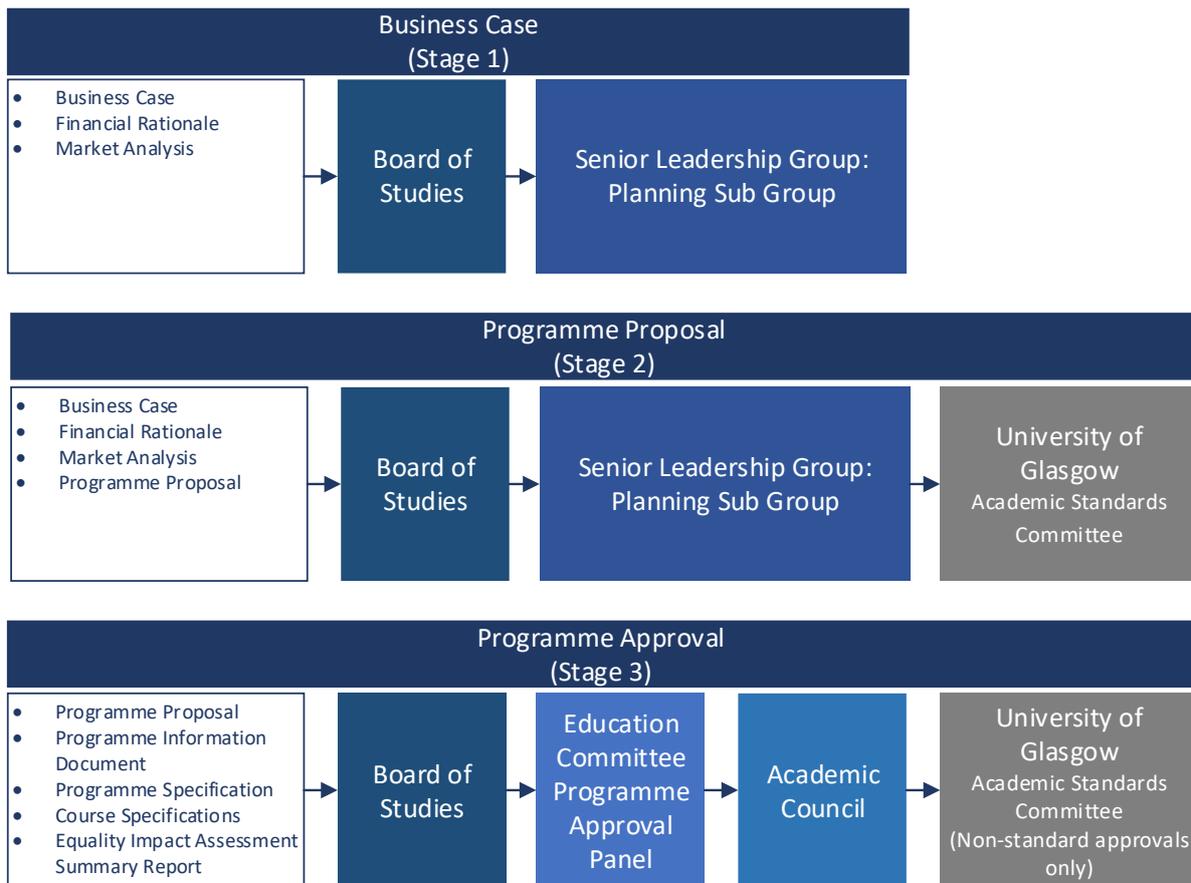
2.15 Please note: there are specific policies and pro formas for course approval. Pathway introduction is considered as part of the specific programme/course changes pro forma.

### 3. PROCESS FOR APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES

3.1 The precepts detailed in 2.1 – 2.15 apply.

3.2 There are three stages to the Programme Approval process: Business Case, Programme Proposal, and Programme Approval.

3.3 The workflow for how the process is conducted is set out below. There is scope for this process to span two academic sessions.



#### **Business Case (Stage 1)**

3.4 Programme Proposers should complete a short Business Case, which outlines the business and academic rationale for the proposal for the consideration of the Senior Leadership Group

Planning Subgroup and provides the Financial Rationale and Market Analysis. The Senior Leadership Group Planning Subgroup are responsible for considering the strategic fit of the proposed programme. Following approval from the Senior Leadership Group Planning Subgroup, Programme Proposal documentation should be developed by the Programme Proposer.

- 3.5 The financial rationale must be submitted with the Business Case in order to enable the GSA Director of Finance to consider the resourcing and risk management of the proposal. The Statement of Intent cannot proceed until there is approval, in principle, from the Director of Finance. Programme Proposers should complete the Financial Rationale in conjunction with the Director of Finance. The Financial Rationale should be submitted to the Academic Quality Office by the Director and it is the responsibility of the Programme Proposer to ensure that this is undertaken in line with the timescales agreed.

### ***Programme Proposal (Stage 2)***

- 3.6 Board of Studies and the Senior Leadership Group Planning Subgroup is responsible for the consideration and approval of the Programme Proposal. Key considerations are the academic rationale and the business case, including an assessment of matters such as resource, recruitment and risk.
- 3.7 Following consideration and approval by the School Board of Studies, programme proposers should submit the completed documentation to the Academic Quality Office two weeks in advance of the Senior Leadership Group Planning Subgroup meeting.
- 3.8 The Academic Quality Office is responsible for reviewing the proposal and preparing an overview paper for consideration by the Senior Leadership Group Planning Subgroup.
- 3.9 The relevant Head of School is responsible for presenting the proposal at the Senior Leadership Group Planning Subgroup.
- 3.10 Following Senior Leadership Group Planning Subgroup approval, the Programme Proposal will be submitted to the University of Glasgow's Academic Standards Committee for consideration and approval. Programme Approvals cannot progress to the next stage until ASC approval is received.
- 3.11 Subsequent to in principle approval of the Programme Proposal by Academic Standards Committee, the new programme may be advertised as being "subject to validation". It is important to note that marketing literature and offers of admission must clearly state that the provision is subject to validation and the achievement of required student numbers.

### ***Programme Approval (Stage 3)***

- 3.12 Following the approval of Programme Proposals by the Senior Leadership Group Planning Subgroup, and in-principle approval from the University of Glasgow's Academic Standards Committee, Programme Approval documentation is developed by Programme Proposers, normally within one of the academic schools.
- 3.13 Programme proposers should be mindful of the requirement that the Programme Approval requires evidence of consultation with current and potential students at every stage of the process.

- 3.14 Subject to ‘in-principle approval’ of the proposal by the University of Glasgow’s Academic Standards Committee, GSA’s Academic Council is responsible for the approval of the new programme. Where the proposal may be non-standard, University of Glasgow’s Academic Standards Committee will be invited to consider and approve the Programme Approval documentation recommended by Academic Council following a validation event.
- 3.15 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of the proposed programme must be undertaken and a Summary Report completed. The EIA should be completed and submitted in tandem with the Programme Information Document.
- 3.16 External subject specialist representation is expected at Programme Approval stage. External subject specialist representation precludes persons who have been a member of staff or a student at GSA in the three years prior or if they are currently a GSA External Examiner or has acted as an External Examiner at GSA at any point in the previous three years.
- 3.17 Representation from the University of Glasgow is expected at Programme Approval stage. In cases where the programme being proposed is a joint collaboration with the University of Glasgow, two representatives from the University will be invited to attend.
- 3.18 Board of Studies consideration may be delegated to an extraordinary meeting of the Board of Studies (which shall be open to all members). Details regarding the membership and documentation required are outlined in the table below.

Boards of Studies		
Convenor	Membership/Input	Documentation
Head of School or Convenor of the Board of Studies	<p>To <b>attend</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Learning and Teaching</li> <li>• Senior Academic Fellow for Digital Learning (if appropriate)</li> </ul> <p>It shall also include <b>input</b> from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Critical Friend (from GSA but outwith that School)</li> <li>• External Subject Specialist (normally written)</li> <li>• Employer(s) (normally written)</li> <li>• Students (normally written and by representation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme Proposal</li> <li>• Programme Information Document</li> <li>• Programme Specification</li> <li>• Course Specifications</li> <li>• Equality Impact Assessment Summary Report</li> </ul>

- 3.19 Education Committee consideration is delegated to an Education Committee Programme Approval Panel. Details regarding the documentation and approval process are outlined in the table below. The membership is detailed in the Programme Approval Panel remit and membership.

Education Committee: Programme Approval Meeting
<p><b>Documentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme Proposal</li> <li>• Programme Information Document</li> <li>• Programme Specification</li> <li>• Course Specifications</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality Impact Assessment Summary Report</li> </ul>
<p><b>Approval Process</b></p> <p>The <b>Education Committee Programme Approval Panel</b> shall recommend approval on the basis that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proposal is of an appropriate standard, or</li> <li>• recommendations are addressed (normally within the first year of implementation), and/or</li> <li>• conditions are addressed (normally prior to Academic Council consideration).</li> </ul>
<p>The <b>Education Committee Programme Approval Panel</b> report to Academic Council shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specify any recommendation or conditions</li> <li>• identify points of good practice</li> <li>• identify how account was taken of student feedback and students' views in general</li> <li>• recommend the date on which the delivery of the provision should commence (normally the next academic session)</li> <li>• the length of the approval period (normally six years).</li> </ul>
<p>The <b>Convenor of the Education Committee Programme Approval Panel</b>, supported by the Academic Quality Office, is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confirming to the next meeting of Academic Council that conditions have been appropriately satisfied.</li> <li>• confirming to the next meeting of the University of Glasgow's Academic Standards Committee that any outstanding conditions have been appropriately satisfied.</li> </ul>

3.20 Recruitment and admission to a new programme or pathway will take place in accordance with GSA standard regulations and practices, and should adhere to the minimum and maximum student numbers approved in the Programme Proposal. Responsibility for monitoring the level of recruitment rests with the relevant Head of School, in consultation with the Head of Student Recruitment and the Admissions Target Group. Where minimum numbers are not met, the relevant Head of School has primary responsibility for determining whether or not the provision will be offered in a given academic session using the agreed procedure. In such a situation the Directorate, and in all circumstances the Director of Finance, must be informed of the situation. The principle shall be that a programme should operate without incurring an overall deficit. However, the Directorate shall take into account the potential need for an element of underwriting for the initial years of a programme. Where maximum numbers are exceeded, the Head of School is responsible for confirming to the Director of Finance how the additional numbers will be accommodated and resourced.

#### 4. MARKETING

- 4.1 Marketing, target setting and recruitment requirements shall be addressed in consultation with the Head of Student Recruitment and the Director of Strategy and Marketing and evidenced in the Business Case (Stage 1) and Programme Proposal (Stage 2) in the form of:
- a. analysis of the potential market for the programme in the UK and internationally, prepared in consultation with the Head of Student Recruitment, which includes:
    - i. Analysis of enquirer data;

- ii. Analysis of data on market trends e.g. HESA data or UCAS data if the programme primarily aims to recruit recent graduate students;
- iii. Competitor analysis;
- iv. Research with existing students;
- v. Research with employers/potential funders showing evidence of industry demand;
- vi. Examples of career paths available to graduates;
- vii. Consultation with relevant professional bodies;
- viii. Evidence of an EU/non-EU market.

The role of Marketing and Communications in this process will not be to define whether or not there is a market for proposed postgraduate programmes but to review whether or not an appropriate level of market research has been undertaken and, on the basis of the evidence provided, to comment upon the likely demand for a programme and its probability of delivering the target number described.

- b. definition of an outline marketing strategy.
- c. definition of minimum and maximum student numbers and targets for the first five years of the programme.
- d. completion and submission of the Programme Assessment Template to the Head of Student Recruitment.

#### 4.2 After approval of the Programme Proposal:

- a. a target number of offers to be made for the first year of operation shall be agreed between Head of School and Head of Student Recruitment.
- b. a marketing strategy shall be agreed between Head of School and Director of Strategy and Marketing.
- c. applications shall be monitored twice monthly through the Admissions Target Group. The Head of School shall be responsible for maintaining oversight of progress towards targets. Registry shall routinely and regularly inform Schools of applicant numbers.
- d. if the admissions target has not been achieved by a specified date (determined by the Senior Leadership Group), the Head of School shall determine whether or not a programme will run taking into account the possibility of incurring a deficit or the need to have the programme underwritten by the Directorate.

#### **Pro Formas:**

- Programme Proposal (including the Programme Assessment Template pro forma which should be returned to the Head of Student Recruitment)

- Programme Information Document (including employer, student and external consultation pro formas)
- Programme Specification
- Course Specification