

GSA SUMMARY REPORT OF EQUALITY CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT OF EQUALITY IMPACT

Date of Assessment:	26 th November 2015	
School / Department:	School of Design Master of Design in Fashion and Textiles	
Lead member of staff:	Jimmy Stephen-Cran	
Location of impact assessment documentation (contact or web link):	Jimmy Stephen-Cran Head of Department and Programme Leader j.stephen-cran@gsa.ac.uk Ext. 4626	
Area of decision making / Title of policy, procedure or relevant practice:	Curriculum Design and Delivery Programme: Master of Design in Fashion and Textiles	
Please indicate if this is:	New:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Existing/Reviewed:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Revised/Updated:	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Summary of how equality, diversity and participation have been considered and due regard given to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):</p> <p>The three needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) are: eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations. With this as a context, the purpose of undertaking an equality impact assessment of the MDes Fashion and Textiles programme was to identify areas of existing good practice and to identify areas that might require further attention. The function was also to ensure that the needs of the PSED are being met and consideration is being given to equality in all aspects of the programme.</p> <p>As part of the process we impact assessed the programme in terms of curriculum design, curriculum delivery, assessment, feedback, student engagement and pre arrival. Under each of these headings we responded to specific questions with evidence of good practice where it existed and identified areas that required further action. We will assess the effectiveness of these actions through the feedback provided by the various student feedback mechanisms and report them through the Programme Monitoring and Annual Review process.</p>		
<p>Evidence used to make your assessment:</p> <p>Data relating to the previous three academic sessions was gathered from the PMAR statistics and was augmented with programme level data from 2014/15 and 2015/16. Statistics relating to postgraduates were also found in the Student Benchmark Report, these refer to ethnicity, disability and sexual identity. Religious belief and sexual orientation statistics were contained within the institutional Student Equality and Monitoring Report.</p> <p>Unsurprisingly the programme level and PMAR data reveals more female to male students compared to the Student Benchmark Report, this is not unusual for Fashion and Textile programmes nationally. Programme level data and PMAR data also reveals that there is essentially an equal split of white to BME students. This is in significant contrast to the data in the Student Benchmark Report, which shows 95.7% white to 4.3% BME students. This indicates that the programme welcomes a balanced and diverse cohort.</p> <p>The programme level data data reveals that students on the programme are more willing to specify their religious belief compared to the Equality Monitoring Report, this indicates that the programme promotes a culture where people feel free to express their religion and belief. The programme is consistent with the Equality Monitoring Report in terms of students who identify as Spiritual, Muslim, or another religion/belief.</p> <p>In line with the Equality Monitoring Report the programme has a similar percentage of heterosexual students. Unlike this report a higher percentage of Fashion and Textiles students identify as homosexual or bisexual.</p>		

Students were also more willing to specify their sexual orientation compared to the Equality Monitoring Report, this further indicates that the programme promotes a culture where people feel free to express their identity.

Of the core teaching staff associated with the programme the age range is as follows; 25% are 50+, 33% are 40+, 33% are 30+, 9% are 20+. With regards to gender 42% are Male and 58% are Female. All staff are either white Scottish or white English. 42% have children and the same percentage are married or in civil partnerships. 27% are homosexual. There are no disclosed disabilities or particular religious beliefs and none have undergone sex reassignment surgery or are in the process of transitioning.

Outline any positive or negative impacts you have identified:

The analysis under each of the following headings demonstrates how the content, practice and delivery in each aspect of this programme is advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. Not only do the examples given represent good practice for all students they highlight where there is equality impact for specific protected characteristic groups.

Admissions:

Evidence:

1. Applicants to the programme are considered if they can demonstrate an academic qualification equivalent to an undergraduate Degree, prior experiential learning or a combination of professional qualifications and experiential learning. This includes;
 - mature applicants who have extensive industrial experience
 - applicants with a breadth of transferable skills
 - applicants who have had career breaks to raise a family

Curriculum Design:

Evidence:

1. The approach taken by the programme to the needs of disabled students is anticipatory. The needs of individual students are taken into account via an IRF (Individual Requirements Form) when reasonable adjustments are required. An example might be; providing specialist chairs for students with on going chronic back pain and by allowing rest periods throughout the day.
2. The Design Process Portfolio tutor currently undertakes the good practice of showing a broad range of visual examples of previous students' work as part of project briefings. This has received positive feedback from students, as it augments the written brief with visual catalysts and supports the notion of different learning styles. This is particularly beneficial for ESL, dyslexic, deaf students and any visual learners.
3. The presentation of visual examples at the outset of projects results in improved confidence amongst the students as it demonstrates to them how their individual identities and contexts can be explored within the programme, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. It is not unusual for example for students to explore issues of age, cultural appropriation or to challenge assumptions about gender and religious clothing within their fashion collections.
4. Learning outcomes and aims have been revised as part of Major Programme Amendments (MPA) in order to make them more explicit for *all* learners and to ensure the requirements of the programme are understood. Previously the stage learning outcomes were difficult to distinguish from the stage aims due to the generic nature of the language used. An example was: 'develop an awareness of their individual design hand writing and its potential for Fashion/ Textile application'. Following revalidation statements have been revised to include specific detail. For example the statement above has been split into three distinct points; 'apply knowledge gained through investigation, research and analysis to individual design practice'; 'research Fashion/ Textile ideas pertinent to individual interests and creative identity' and 'seek a contextual position for individual Fashion/ Textile interests.' In addition to ensuring that students understand the requirements of the programme this particular example also highlights the validity of the individual designer emerging from their particular context. This actively underpins the ethos of the programme and contributes to advancing equality and fostering good relations.
5. The programme promotes diversity of opinion, independent thought and peer learning. Intercultural perspectives are encouraged and this is evidenced by being clearly visible in student output. The diverse range of ethnicities that undertake the programme provides a platform to examine individual

cultural backgrounds and allows cross-cultural debate about the shared language of Fashion and Textiles in a global context. Project briefs provide a framework that assists students to develop personal responses and develop their own interests. Studio culture and a shared studio environment, including small group tutorials, encourages students to share ideas, and consider other viewpoints, experiences and perspectives.

6. The following example is evidence that the opportunities provided in the curriculum are having a positive equality impact, and fostering good relations. Ensuring a curriculum is not perceived, as being grounded in any one cultural perspective can be challenging in fashion programmes delivered in Europe and the UK. It is frequently the expectation of International students that they will be taught the European 'ways' of Fashion Design, they can be quick to dismiss their own cultural context and many come from cultures where ethnic norms of dress are being abandoned in favour of globalized western styles. For example, there have been Muslim students on the programme who have prompted discussion and debate about notions of modesty and lack-of-modesty in dress, particularly in the context of the (perceived) immodest popular culture of contemporary society. A highly successful project of particular note was undertaken by a Muslim student who challenged the pious norms of modest dress by reinterpreting, the Abayah, to make it relevant and desirable to cosmopolitan Muslim women anywhere in the world.

Curriculum Delivery

Evidence:

1. Significant emphasis in the Fashion and Textiles masters programme is placed on self-directed study, from project design, development and through to resolution. The self-directed nature of the programme allows students to plan their study time to suit their individual circumstances. For example study time may be scheduled around prayer times or childcare commitments. The structure of the programme also encourages autonomy; reflection upon personal learning and self directed project work within a collaborative environment.
2. An allocated studio space allows for a diverse group of students to interact with each other in a creative environment. Students reflect positively on learning within a diverse group in the reflective writing produced within the Design Process Portfolio course. Students present work to their peers and tutors through appropriate visual and verbal means. Although facilitated and guided by staff, critiques allow students to fully explore all aspects of practical submissions within a reflective discursive framework. Guidelines for critiques are provided prior to these sessions to allow students to prepare in a manner that suits their individual learning styles and preferences. The tutorial system is designed to provide academic support through individual appointments with staff. At these one-to-one appointments, individual projects and pieces of work are discussed and feedback is provided. Students arrange these appointments with staff and therefore a range of individual needs such as family circumstances, medical appointments, caring commitments or part time work can be accommodated. This supports the advancing of equality of opportunity. Students are encouraged to take notes during discussions with staff. Students who for a range of reasons may find notes difficult are encouraged to check these with the staff member towards the end of the discussion in order to ensure accuracy and understanding. Staff will also provide written feedback where this is required.
3. Workshops are practical classes and can range from IT sessions in which students are introduced to specialist software, to pattern cutting and construction classes where students learn to prototype garment ideas. Technical workshops can be adapted to a student's individual need, for example a specialist chair can be provided to students who are pregnant. The height of knitting machines can be adjusted to suit wheelchair users or for those who wish to sit as opposed to stand. This ensures they are able to fully participate and meet the work requirements.
4. Academic briefs use plain language that will benefit *all* learners. The briefs also clearly explain expectations, outcomes, accommodate individual learning styles and encourage students to examine their subject from a range of perspectives. This has a positive impact as it encourages engagement and individual responses to the brief. Varied teaching materials are utilised including a written brief alongside visual examples and interactive discussion to ensure the brief is understood. Face to face discussion through tutorials and group reviews monitors the progress of students.
5. Term dates are provided at the beginning of the academic year which includes religious festivals. A weekly programme of study is issued to students at the outset of each stage of the programme in order that study time be planned and used effectively. A suggested timetable is also included within

briefs. This assists students in managing their study time effectively. For example a student participating in Ramadan can accommodate this religious observance into their work plan.

6. Input from guest speakers enables Fashion and Textile students access to, and understanding of, relevant contemporary practice and theory, research and industry contexts. An example of this is the 'All Walks Beyond the Catwalk' initiative led by Caryn Franklin. Franklin promotes her desire to work with influential catwalk designers, industry creatives and fashion students to challenge the industry's dependence on unachievable, limited body and beauty ideals by respecting diversity. By highlighting the responsibility the fashion industry has to recognise the psychological impact of its messaging upon the minds of young women and men. All Walks Beyond the Catwalk calls for racial, age, size and body diversity in our imagery and design training that accommodates all bodies and gender. Fashion can be a powerful carrier of messages towards shaping personal identity and self esteem. Respecting difference and individual need is evermore important in the shared language of fashion.
7. The programme handbook is issued at the start of the academic year and includes links to GSA support services. This is currently revised annually for readability, user friendliness, accuracy of content and responds to student feedback and matters raised in the previous academic session. The handbook acts as a 'one stop shop' for everything programme related. This ensures that all learners have easy access to important information.
8. Additional support for studies is through the Library and Computer Centre where students will find books, journals, DVDs, videos, slides, theses and dissertations. At the outset of the programme all students undertake a library induction to ensure they are aware of and conversant with the resources and procedures of the GSA library. This enables all students to effectively utilise the library resources regardless of prior experience. For example students coming from a non-traditional route to postgraduate study, such as mature students who have industry rather than academic experience.
9. The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) or Blackboard also supports academic studies. By providing a platform for programme resources which students who may be unable to be on campus can access. This includes course briefs, timetables, technical information as well as communication from tutors. This is beneficial to students with ongoing disability needs who need to work from home on occasions or students who have caring commitments.
10. Programme level support is also available through a pastoral tutor. Students may contact her in relation to issues that may be affecting their academic progress. A recent example of this was a student who was experiencing difficulties in the programme as they were going through the process of coming out.

Assessment and Feedback

Evidence:

1. A range of assessment and feedback approaches are routinely used in order to maximise opportunities for students' learning and to illustrate that there is more than one-way for a student to demonstrate they have met learning outcomes or competence standards. This promotes equality of opportunity.
2. At the end of stages 1 and 2 verbal and written feedback is provided to the student. The conversation encourages a dialogue between tutor and student alongside their work and ensures students understand the feedback and the actions identified for future consideration.
3. The award of Masters is based on the results achieved in stage 3, rather than a culmination of grades across the stages as was the case previously. This is advantageous to students who have had acclimatisation issues during stage 1. Previously students who performed less well in stage 1, but exceptionally in stage 2 and/or 3, struggled to gain a distinction at the end of the programme due to the adverse impact of their performance at stage 1.
4. The stage 3 assessment process includes all programme teaching staff, internal moderation with School of Design Programme Leaders, external moderation with a specialist examiner and cross school moderation with a team of staff and external examiners from other programmes. This process ensures parity and provides an opportunity for student work to be examined and considered from a wide range of perspectives.

5. There are no identifiable patterns to suggest that students with protected characteristics are more or less able to progress or achieve distinction. Tangible evidence however is required to substantiate this. The collation of programme level data relating to student performance will enable the identification of any trends. This is an action identified as a result of the equality impact assessment.

Student Engagement

Evidence:

1. Programme level QEQs (Quality Enhancement Questionnaires) are completed at the end of each stage and at the end of the programme. These provide anonymous responses and are an effective means of obtaining feedback. The form requests students age, gender and fee status and poses the question "Are there any aspects of studying on the programme where you have experienced difficulties as a result of: personal circumstances such as age, disability, gender, ethnicity, religious belief, family commitments and sexual identity?" Participation is high with feedback from all groups of students; however no identifiable trends, positive or negative, have emerged from this particular question. We will review the question with the view to generating further detail.
2. Feedback contained within the DPP (Design Process Portfolio) course submission is fruitful and promotes good relations, as the feedback is unsolicited: students can also reflect on aspects of the programme that staff may not have anticipated. This feedback occurs at the end of each stage and is discussed at staff programme meetings and action is taken accordingly. The implementation of focus groups with the students to discuss the feedback will contribute and support the development of an evidence base.
3. SSCC class representative attends three meetings per session and generally all students contribute through their representative to the feedback provided at this meeting. This removes barriers as it provides students with a clear voice and a mechanism to raise any concerns through a peer. The regular nature of these meetings ensures that contributions are timely and can often be responded to quickly. An example of this is students requesting specified weekly tutorial times so they could plan their workload and study commitments around caring commitments and health issues.
4. PTES is designed to be considered at an institutional level and contains no clear programme level statistical data or free text comments attributable to the MDes Fashion and Textiles programme. This is a feedback mechanism that GSA may wish to augment with other mechanisms in order to obtain more meaningful feedback from the Postgraduate community as a whole.

Summary of the actions you have taken or plan to take as a result:

Curriculum Design

Further Action:

Visual presentations are an established aspect of the Design Process Portfolio briefings, visual presentations are now to accompany Studio Practice briefings also. These presentations have received positive feedback in the DPP course as it augments the written brief with a visual explanation and acts as a visual catalyst. This is particularly beneficial for ESL and dyslexic students and any visual learners.

Students will attend an introductory tutorial with the staff team when they arrive to ascertain students' individual interests, expectations, prior skills experience, cultural and academic background, and study aspirations. It is intended that this tutorial will support students and give them confidence to disclose any protected characteristic, including dyslexia, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or disability, which may have a bearing on their studies.

Curriculum Delivery

Further Action:

In 2013/14 staff developed a resource to support ESL students to understand discipline specific terminology. This was useful for *all* students as the terminology is often unfamiliar to English speakers also. (For example the weaving terms such as pirn, heddle and dobbie lag.) As part of the Major Programme Amendment of the programme course specifications are now to include a bibliography of key texts for the various specialisms, these will also be included in briefs and in the programme handbook. This will direct students to publications that have proved useful to students in the past in terms of becoming familiar with subject terminology. This promotes inclusion and advances equality

of opportunity, as, in the past, some groups of students have felt frustrated and excluded when faced with specialist terminology they were unfamiliar with.

Briefs will continue to be reviewed to ensure they clearly explain expectations, outcomes and are open enough to accommodate individual learning styles, approaches and perspectives. A variety of teaching materials including a written brief alongside visual examples and interactive discussion will ensure the brief is understood.

Assessment and Feedback

Further Action:

Make formative assessment points more explicit to students. Submission dates for summative assessment are included on all briefs with learning outcomes for assessment. Formative assessment points should be equally visible. Although tutors meet students typically weekly there is no explicit formative assessment point during each stage. These assessment points will be added to the stage timetables and briefs so students can receive formal feedback prior to the summative assessment. This will allow time for students to capitalise on strengths, address weaknesses and respond to advice on direction. At this point a 'Cause for Concern' can be issued to highlight performance concerns and/or risk of failure at summative assessment. A 'Cause for Concern' is issued when a student is not meeting work requirements or attending timetabled sessions. (This will be monitored by protected characteristic). Registry is notified if the issues or concerns are not rectified within a stated period of time. This enables students to have a heightened awareness of their progress, give them adequate time to address shortfalls and also supports the student to raise any circumstances that are affecting their ability to undertake their work.

QEQs (Quality Enhancement Questionnaires) are issued at the end of each stage and the end of the programme. These provide anonymous responses and continue to be an effective means of obtaining feedback, as participation is high. The current QEQ consists of a series of statements about the programme. The QEQ's invite students to score aspects of the programme from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. It would be useful to have further qualitative explanation in places. So if an area is marked 'strongly disagree' for example we can explore or address the issue raised. QEQ's will be reviewed to include questions that could generate further evidence of the health, or otherwise, of the programme.

Pre - Arrival

Further Action:

Students to be provided with information regarding programme changes that have been made as part of Major Programme Amendment, and have been subject to Impact Assessment. Local applicants were advised of these changes at the Postgraduate Open Day. To ensure all applicants are aware of the changes letters were also sent to those who have been offered places. The GSA Fashion and Textiles webpage has also been updated. This ensures that the necessary information reaches those required regardless of their location and individual circumstances.

New students will have the GSA email system and VLE demonstrated to them at the immediate outset of the programme. This has not happened previously and will ensure that all students are familiar with the GSA systems. This will ensure that all students are familiar with and can access briefs, timetables, technical information as well as communication from tutors in a timely manner. This will have a positive impact particularly for those who are new to the GSA education system, or have been out of education and are unfamiliar with virtual learning environments.

The Handbook will be distributed in advance of the programme starting and then be verbally explained soon after the programme commences. This will allow all students to understand the resources, structure, and academic practice of the programme. Verbally explaining the content will ensure that all students are aware of the information and that it is understood. This is particularly useful for dyslexic and ESL students who can benefit from information being communicated in a range of ways and over time.

STATISTICS RELATING TO PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS			
Further Action	Anticipated Output/ Impact	Timescale	By Whom
Scrutinise existing statistics more thoroughly and gather more detail where gaps exist relating to <i>protected characteristics</i> and include the data and analysis in PMAR	To ascertain if there is evidence of any inadvertent discrimination in relation to protected characteristics at application. To analyse the progression and degree classification patterns of students with protected characteristics. This will ensure that equality impact can be monitored, understood and reported on for all protected characteristic groups in respect of access, progress, outcomes and experience.	During Stage 1, 2015/16 and annually to ensure any trends over time can be identified.	Jimmy Stephen-Cran Julia Maclean
Consider the profile of visiting lecturers/ speakers (collate data on VL/speakers 14/15 and thereafter as evidence base)	Provide a broader range of role models and achieve a better balance of input. It is anticipated that this will provide positive impact, advance equality and foster good relations for all protected characteristic groups through promoting a diverse range of perspectives as an integral aspect of the programme.	2015/16-2016/17	F + T Staff Team
Students of different profiles to present their work to other students of different profiles. (collate data 14/15 and thereafter as evidence base)	Provide a broader range of role models and achieve a better balance of input. Advancing equality and fostering good relations as above.	2015/16-2016/17	F + T Staff Team
CURRICULUM DESIGN			
Visual presentations to accompany Studio Practice briefings.	Will benefit <i>all</i> students including disabled/dyslexic students or students whose first language is not English to understand and engage with the written brief. It is anticipated that this will provide positive impact, advance equality and foster good relations for protected characteristic groups, particularly race, gender and disability through the provision of clear and accessible learning materials and information.	2015/16	Alan Gallacher
New students to attend an introductory tutorial at the outset of the programme to ascertain students individual interests, expectations, prior skills experience,	Will identify any personal circumstances such as religious belief or disability needs, which may have a bearing on a student's studies. It is anticipated that this proactive approach will	2015/16	F+T Staff Team

cultural and academic background, and study aspirations (request feedback on efficacy of this from student perspective).	result in positive impact for students from protected characteristic groups by taking account of their needs at the outset of the programme.		
CURRICULUM DELIVERY			
Course specifications, briefs and programme handbook to include a bibliography of key texts for the various specialisms. (request feedback on efficacy of this from student perspective)	Will support ESL students in particular to understand discipline specific terminology. This will provide positive impact for all protected characteristic groups by providing clear and accessible programme information.	2015/16	F+T Staff Team
Briefs will be reviewed and developed further to ensure clarity and engagement from a range of perspectives.	Briefs will make clearer the expectations, outcomes and be open enough to accommodate individual learning styles and help ensure the brief is understood. It is anticipated that this will provide positive impact as per the point above. In addition the development of briefs have the potential to advance equality and foster good relations through the promotion and valuing the validity of a range of perspectives.	2015/16	F+T Staff Team
ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK			
Formative assessment points to be made explicit to students. (Request student feedback on efficacy)	Students will receive formal feedback prior to the summative assessment. This will allow time for students to capitalise on strengths, address weaknesses and respond to advice on direction prior to summative assessment. It is intended that it will provide positive equality impact for all protected characteristics, and particularly disabled students for those for whom English is a second language by ensuring that the process of assessment is clear and accessible.	2015/16	Alan Gallacher Juliet Dearden Julia Maclean
Investigate and monitor the most effective means of collecting qualitative and quantitative data specific to protected characteristics at	It is anticipated that this will facilitate effective equality monitoring and support an anticipatory approach to addressing student need. It will ensure that equality	Stage 3, 2014/15	Julia Maclean

programme level.	impact can be monitored, understood and reported on for all protected characteristic groups in respect of access, progress, outcomes and experience.		
PREARRIVAL			
Applicants to be informed of programme changes as part of the Major Programme Amendment through several mechanisms (i.e. open day, letter, and GSA website)	Will ensure that the necessary information reaches those required regardless of their location and individual circumstances. This will ensure accessibility to key information for all protected characteristic groups, advancing equality and fostering good relations.	Stage 3, 2014/15 15/16	F+T Staff Team
New students to have the GSA email system and VLE demonstrated to them as soon as possible on arrival.	Will have a positive impact for all new students but particularly for those who are new to the GSA education system, or have been out of education and are unfamiliar with virtual learning environments. This will advance equality across all protected characteristics and particularly in respect of disability, race and gender.	Stage 1, 2015/16	Julia Maclean
Handbook to be distributed at least a week in advance of a follow up verbal explanation	Will be useful for all students including dyslexic and ESL students who benefit from information being communicated in a range of methods. By making this information available in advance and supported by tutor input equality will be advanced particularly for disabled students, those whose first language is not English and for those who are returning to learning.	Stage 1, 2015/16	F+T Staff Team

Summary of what you anticipate will change as a result of your actions and where / when these will be reported and reviewed:

As per 'anticipated impact' above

We will assess the effectiveness of any actions through Programme Monitoring and Annual Review (PMAR) and through various student feedback mechanisms.

State how these changes will contribute to the delivery of GSA's equality outcomes:

We have endeavored to include all staff teaching on the MDes F+T programme to participate in the

development of this *Impact Assessment*. This is so they are all more acutely aware of their responsibilities when it comes to working with students and colleagues with protected characteristics.

We will consciously consider the age, gender, ethnic and cultural profile of visiting lecturers, speakers and External Examiners. This will provide a broader range of role models for students and achieve a greater balance of input when it comes to learning and teaching at GSA.

The outcome of your assessment:

No action – no potential adverse impact

Amendments or changes to remove barriers / promote positive impact X

Proceed with awareness of adverse impact

Sign-off, authorisation and publishing:

Review Lead

Name	Jimmy Stephen-Cran
Position	Head of the Department of Fashion and Textiles
Signature	Jimmy Stephen-Cran
Date	13.04.2016

Executive Lead

Name	Barbara Ridley
Position	Deputy Head of the School of Design
Signature	Barbara Ridley
Date	13.04.2016

Equality Lead (Head of Student Support and Development)

Name	
Signature	
Date	