GSA SUMMARY REPORT OF EQUALITY CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT OF EQUALITY IMPACT

Date of Assessment:	14th August 2015
School / Department:	School of Fine Art/Curatorial Practice
Lead member of staff:	Mónica Núñez Laiseca Programme Leader, MLitt Curatorial Practice (Contemporary Art)
Location of impact assessment documentation (contact or web link):	Mónica Núñez Laiseca, Senior Lecturer in Curatorial Practice (Contemporary Art) Ext. 1320
Area of decision making / Title of policy, procedure or relevant practice:	Design and Delivery of curriculum
Please indicate if this is:	New: ☒ Existing/Reviewed: ☐ Revised/Updated: ☐

Summary of how equality, diversity and participation have been considered and due regard given to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):

The MLitt Curatorial Practice (Contemporary Art) programme (which I will refer to as 'MLittCP' throughout this report) is a 12-month postgraduate programme of study offered jointly by GSA and the University of Glasgow (GU), which was offered for the first time in 2014-15. It is the first academic course devoted to curating in Scotland, and as such has the potential to influence how the discipline is taught, researched and practiced in the country. Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment at this stage brings with it the opportunity of embedding GSA's Equality agenda into the running of the course right from the start and developing a robust pedagogical framework and set of related working practices.

The current Assessment has been led by Programme Leader, Mónica Núñez Laiseca, and has involved active gathering of feedback from students as well as consultation of colleagues across GSA and GU, including: Lesley Young (University Teacher, GU), who teaches in the programme; and Alistair Payne (Head of School of Fine Art, GSA) and Tina Fiske (Lecturer in Art History, GU), who co-wrote the MLittCP Programme Specification.

The Assessment tackles three key areas:
- Curriculum Design and Delivery and its equality implications, with a particular focus on how the three needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty: Equality Act 2010 (PSED) are being addressed.
- Student's experience, what it reveals about the programme and how we might improve it.
- Forward planning. How we will continue to promote good practice with regards to the PSED and what evidence is needed to monitor the effectiveness of our work and continue to refine the systems that we have in place.

Evidence used to make your assessment?

MLittCP is a new course and its first cohort has yet to graduate, so there is little useful quantitative evidence available at this stage. The current Assessment has drawn primarily from qualitative evidence gained through the experience of delivering the course and on-going conversations with the students. Whenever a potential issue has been identified, further evidence has been sought.

Feedback from students has been sourced via:

- SSCC (Staff Student Consultative Committee) meetings. In the School of Fine Art these are scheduled in stages 1 and 2, to fit with the UG study cycle. We have proposed that a third meeting is organised at the end of stage 3 for PG courses like ours running over a 12-month period.
- Informal feedback gathered at individual and group tutorials. We have been particularly proactive at requesting feedback from students on matters of organisation, infrastructure and delivery of the course.

For the purposes of this assessment, the representation of groups with protected characteristics in the current cohort of 10 students can be summarised as follows:

- 7 students fall within the 18-25 age group and 3 are mature students.
- 1 student has disclosed disability related needs.
- Information on gender reassignment has not been disclosed.
- 1 student is married and 1 is in a civil partnership.
- No caring responsibilities have been disclosed.
- All students in the cohort are white and have a Home/EU fee status.
- Information regarding religion or belief has not been disclosed.
- There are 9 women and 1 man.

Whilst no trends or significant conclusions can be inferred with regards to protected characteristics from the evidence available, examples of specific situations that we have encountered will allow for insightful discussions about our teaching and help us identify potential gaps in our equality provision.

Plans for undertaking additional collection of evidence, both qualitative and quantitative, in a systematic manner, are currently being planned /implemented. These include:

- Module Surveys, administered via Survey Monkey and undertaken anonymously by the students.
- A collective discussion involving the whole cohort at an appropriate point in term 2 or 3.
- QEQ (Quality Enhancement Questionnaire) at the end the programme.
- External Examiner's Report.
- PTES offers information that is relevant at an institutional level, although no statistical data specific to the MLittCP programme.
- Feedback from Joint Programme Board and Advisory Group. These groups are currently been constituted to support the MLittCP. The Joint Programme Board will oversee academic standards, recruitment and budget spending, and the Advisory Group will provide input on curriculum development and positioning, as well as widening of networks and opportunities. It is envisaged that both groups will contribute to the enhancement of our equality related practice.

Outline any positive or negative impacts you have identified:

Considerations about equality, diversity and participation have been central to the development of the course. The MLittCP programme is grounded in an understanding of the role of the curator as a mediator between art and its many possible audiences. This emphasis on outreach and the importance of finding ways to reduce barriers to engagement aligns itself with equality values. At the same time, the MLittCP programme presents curation as a profession reliant on dialogue and the capacity to collaborate with others in diverse group settings. As such, we consider the wide range of backgrounds, experiences and skills that students bring into the course a major asset and key to the identity of the course.

Our commitment to Equality is firmly articulated at the levels of Curriculum Design and Delivery. **Appropriate systems and flexible arrangements** are in place to ensure that the programme is accessible to the widest body of students possible and their needs are anticipated and catered for. These can be summarised under the following headings:

a. Learning outcomes. These have been set to allow for individual student's needs to be taken into account and therefore do not adversely impact upon or discriminate against protected characteristic groups. For example, one of the Intended Learning Outcomes of the Programme states that students will be able to 'Articulate their own developing curatorial role, agenda or interests, and situate those in relation to the wider field of contemporary curatorial practice'. The MLittCP programme thus accommodates and encourages a range of curatorial approaches and is designed to support students from diverse cultural and social backgrounds to develop their own individual practice, understanding that this process needs to be driven by their own interests and foci. At the same time, by helping students situate their work within a wider industry context the course advances equality of opportunity.

b. Competence standards. Students from a range of backgrounds are welcome into the course, the only requirement is that they have a basic understanding of contemporary art and applicants are made aware of this at interview. No adverse impacts are therefore anticipated for protected characteristic groups. With regards to age, the programme welcomes and anticipates the needs of mature students, including complying with APEL policies in order to be accessible to applicants who are not in possession of an undergraduate degree.

c. Teaching methods and learning contexts. Teaching is student learning centred, interactive and engages all students through a range of methods. We employ a range of learning and teaching approaches and combine collaborative coursework briefs with independent projects. This gives the class a core shared learning experience and ensures that good relationships between people from different groups are fostered whilst allowing students to pursue self-directed study tailored to their own individual interests and cultural perspectives.

Students in the MLittCP programme have the opportunity to undertake study and coursework tailored to their individual interests and thus develop their own learning pathways. This is helpful in meeting the needs of protected groups, including those of disabled students. For example in stage 3, students have the possibility to choose between undertaking a practical project and writing a dissertation. This provides a positive impact for a range of students, including those with a disability and those whose first language is not English.

d. Balanced assessment pattern and clear assessment criteria. Formative and summative assessment strategies are employed throughout the programme. Briefs for assignments are clear, detailed and given to students at the beginning of each term, along with a verbal briefing in class. Project briefs include suggested timetables to assist students in managing

their time effectively. Regular feedback is provided, verbally and in writing, to help students develop and improve their work. For every assignment, a marking sheet with clear mark descriptors is filled in to explain how the final mark was arrived at and what students can do to improve. All coursework is moderated, which ensures parity of standards and treatment. This is regarded as good practice for all students but can be identified as providing positive impact for students with a disability such as dyslexia, mature students returning to study and students whose first language is not English.

e. Degree classification. This is based upon the results achieved in stage 3, rather than being a weighted average of the results achieved over the course of the year. For students with acclimation issues this supports their transition and contributes to equality of outcome.

f. Curriculum content. The curriculum content is varied, informed by different social and cultural perspectives and builds on students' educational interests, experiences and aspirations, thus providing a positive impact for a range of groups. The materials, resources and examples provided in the programme reflect this diversity.

The programme is delivered by two members of staff (Programme Leader and University Teacher) and a pool of visiting lecturers, many of whom are curators and artists practising in Scotland, and further afield. We have deliberately built a diverse pool of visiting staff, representing different genders, ethnicities and backgrounds, so different voices can be heard. At the same time, we encourage our students to attend public talks and other events that can contribute to broadening their understanding of curating as a subject and the many practices and perspectives that shape it, thus contributing to the fostering of good relations. As an example, this year we have organised a fieldtrip to the Venice Biennale with our students. This year's Biennale has been curated by Nigerian curator Okwui Enwezor, the first black man to be on the saddle of this mega-exhibition. Many of the works featured in the show explore the history of race relations.

g. Participation and opening up of knowledge. The programme promotes diversity of opinion, independent thought and peer learning and thus fosters good relations amongst different groups. Shared studio environment, seminars and group crits, are all pedagogical settings that encourage students to share ideas and engage with different perspectives and viewpoints.

h. Students are enabled and supported to take responsibility for their own learning. In line with other taught postgraduate programmes at GSA, significant emphasis is placed on self-directed study, and students are expected to take significant responsibility for the management of their learning. A weekly programme of study is issued to students at the beginning of stages 1 and 2 in order that study time can be planned by the student and used effectively. Protected characteristics groups can clearly benefit from this, as any arrangements that students may need to make to be able to attend the course can be organised well in advance. This would apply, for example, to a mother or a student with caring responsibilities.

i. Tightly organised timetable. Teaching commitments are clustered over 3 days in order to build some flexibility into the schedule and give students time to pursue desk-based study, placements, study trips and other forms of independently-led learning, as well as paid employment, which many of them rely on to support themselves through their studies. During the current recruitment cycle, we discussed the MLitt CP timetable with a prospective applicant, who is the mother of a 7-year old boy. She gave us very positive feedback, as the clustering of teaching meant that she could organise childcare easily and balance being a parent and a student.

j. Crits, tutorials and contact time. Group crits are arranged at key points during the term with the whole group as well as individual tutorials to ensure that students receive feedback on their work regularly. Students can also schedule additional progress meetings as and when they need them. In addition, Programme Tutors have a weekly drop-in office hour, which means students can easily access them and seek guidance on a range of issues in a timely manner.

k. In-built flexibility. Staff offer flexibility in curriculum delivery to enable all students to participate. The course is organised in such a way that reasonable adjustments can be accommodated. Students with a disclosed disability are invited for an initial meeting with the Programme Leader to discuss their requirements. At this meeting they are allocated an advisor who maintains communication with the student to ensure that any emerging needs are addressed throughout the year.

l. Clear course information. All students receive a syllabus at the beginning of every term with detailed information about the content of every session and how to prepare for it. Aims and level learning outcomes are made clear and assessment criteria are explained in relation to specified aims. In anticipation of the learning and teaching support needs of ESL students and dyslexic students, all course materials, including the syllabi, are written in plain language.

m. Access to course materials. Set readings to support lecture content are available in the course's VLE in PDF format from the start of term, and slides from lectures are uploaded on the day of the lecture to ensure accessibility and the opportunity to revisit the material. Audio recording of sessions can be arranged at the students' request if necessary.

n. Access to professional networks. The visiting lecturers programme brings students in close contact with a wide range of professionals, thus providing valuable opportunities for networking within the arts industry. Each student is also allocated a professional mentor, external to GSA, who supports the development of his or her practice throughout the year. This is a way of advancing equality of opportunity and ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, have the possibility of accessing a professional network.

In addition to the above, we are currently working with SCAN (the Scottish Contemporary Art Network) to set up a young curators' network operating across Scotland. The network will be open to recent graduates from curating courses and curators at the very early stages of their career and its main function is to help students retain a peer group after graduation and give them visibility as a group so they can advocate for opportunities, including residencies, which are at present very scarce. Our collaboration with SCAN further reinstates our commitment towards advancing equality of opportunity and ties in with our understanding of the student body as a *community*, which we aim to continue to activate and expand after our students leave GSA.

In the first year of running the MLittCP programme we have also identified a number of **potential difficulties and areas for improvement**, which we are already working to address:

a. Theory vs practice. A major amendment has been made to the course's assessment pattern to balance written coursework commitments with practice-based work. This has been done in response to students' feedback, which revealed that the assessment pattern was experienced as restrictive and gave insufficient recognition to the practical work that the students were undertaking, which up to that point was considered either formative or extra-curricular. We anticipate that the revised assessment pattern will help students manage

their workload more effectively and engage a broader spectrum of learning styles, thus advancing equality of opportunity. In the next academic year we will monitor closely how this change is implemented and its impact.

b. Curatorial practice and communication. The way in which one of the learning outcomes has been phrased in the MLittCP Programme Specifications document may lead to confusion with regards to the importance given in the course to communicating through the *spoken word*, and therefore suggest that students with a hearing or speech impairment may be disadvantaged. What is key for the course is communication, broadly understood, and we aim to support our students to become proficient communicators in either verbal or written form, or both, depending on their individual capabilities. We will therefore make a minor change to the MLittCP Programme Specifications and revise this in 15/16.

c. Preparatory study. MLittCP is a programme open to applicants from a range of backgrounds and with varied experience of contemporary art practice. Students are encouraged to engage with curatorial practices through gallery visits and practical experience and asked to familiarise themselves with key concepts and debates pertinent to contemporary art practice prior to the start of the course. In order to support this preparation and ensure that all students are on the same playing field at the start of the course we will, starting this summer, provide applicants with a Reading List to work through ahead of the start of the course. This will also minimise the need for an unnecessarily long acclimation period for some students. As with other programme materials, a diverse range of perspectives will be presented, contributing to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations as an aspect of course induction and in professional practice.

d. Awareness of and responsiveness to students' individual needs. Every student is different and our teaching recognises that. Whilst individual interests and learning styles are respected and given due consideration in the planning of our teaching, it is our responsibility as tutors to continue to address and think creatively around challenges raised for example in relation to student educational backgrounds, domain knowledge, English language skills and learning styles. Our work with international students, for instance, reveals that even when their language proficiency is excellent many struggle to understand the basic terminology and key concepts of curating. In addition their writing can lack the economy of language and sharpness of argumentation that is expected within an academic context in English. For some of these students undertaking a dissertation (rather than a practical project) in stage 3 can be helpful, as this gives them the opportunity to develop their critical awareness of curating as a discipline and more confidently articulate their own practice. This will support students for whom English is not their first language to achieve parity of degree outcome.

e. Supervision of group projects. Practical work, especially if undertaken as part of a group, can be challenging for students if it is not effectively managed. Working with our first cohort of students we have learnt that structured briefs and significant tutorial support are essential to help students make healthy progress on their work. As well as this, it is important that students are able to organise themselves and feel empowered to respond to unexpected or challenging situations. We have found that running an interactive planning session with the students at the beginning of every project, in order to discuss group work demands and help them to produce a provisional timeline as well as to identify key roles and responsibilities, is extremely helpful in this regard. Again, this supports parity of experience and degree outcome for students from all protected characteristic groups and particularly students for whom English is not their first language, disabled and mature students.

f. Programme Handbook. A Programme Handbook for the course will be issued at the beginning of the next academic year to help students understand how the collaboration between GSA and GU operates in academic and practical terms, as this has been a source of confusion this year. The handbook will offer an overview of the matriculation process,

academic framework and relevant procedures at GSA and Glasgow University, as well as links to support services available at both organisations. Whilst this is regarded as good practice for all students, it will deliver positive impact for all protected characteristic groups by providing clear and accessible programme information.

g. Positioning of programme. The first MLittCP cohort was recruited in a very short period of time and this may have contributed to the limited diversity achieved in terms of the profile of the students, particularly with regards to ethnicity and sex. In the current recruitment cycle we have promoted the programme more widely and this has been reflected in the pool of applications that we have received, which is considerably more varied. The public facing activities undertaken by the students, such as exhibitions and events, have also been instrumental in promoting what we do to a wide range of audiences.

Summary of the actions you have taken or plan to take as a result:
(Please attach your action plan)

Activity/task	Equality Impact	Person responsible	Due
Compile summer Reading List and email to forthcoming students	Provide positive impact, advance equality and foster good relations for protected characteristic groups, particularly race, gender and disability through: • promoting diverse range of perspectives as an aspect of course induction and in professional practice • providing clear and accessible programme information	Programme Leader	July 2015
Write Programme Handbook (and impact assess in relation to PSED in development process)	Provide positive impact for all protected characteristic groups by providing clear and accessible programme information	Programme Team	September 2015
Confirm composition of Joint Programme Board and Advisory Group and schedule first meeting. Circulate Equality Impact Assessment report to the members of the Joint Programme Board and include equality consideration as part of remit.	Mainstream equality consideration and the PSED into the governance and management of the programme	Programme Leader	October 2015
Develop robust mechanisms for collecting evidence about the course, both quantitative and qualitative, in a systematic manner	Ensure that equality impact can be monitored, understood and reported on for all protected	Programme Leader	October 2015

	characteristic groups in respect of access, progress, outcomes and experience		
First PMAR	Monitor equality impact and develop practice	Programme Leader	October 2015
Apply to make a minor change to MLittCP Programme Specifications document. Rewrite learning outcome referring to the spoken word.	Positive impact for disabled students and specifically those with speech or hearing impairment	Programme Leader	December 2015
Revise marketing strategy to ensure balanced positioning of programme to encourage application from diverse communities and groups	Ensure accessibility for all protected characteristic groups, advancing equality and fostering good relations	Programme Leader	December 2015
Monitor closely implementation of new assessment pattern and collect feedback from students at various points to determine effectiveness and impact on student experience and needs	Including an equality perspective in the monitoring of assessment will ensure that the needs of students from different protected characteristic groups are taken account of	Programme Team	March 2016
Continue to expand and diversify our pool of visiting lecturers to represent a broader range of cultural perspectives and experience	Provide positive impact, advance equality and foster good relations for protected characteristic groups, particularly race, gender and disability through promoting diverse range of perspectives in professional practice	Programme Leader	September 2016
Continue to develop activities and resources that support personalised learning and represent people from diverse groups and backgrounds	Positive impact for students from protected characteristic groups by taking account of their needs as part of the development and delivery of the programme, for example students with a disability, students from different ethnic backgrounds	Programme Team	September 2016
Continue to develop projects briefs and supervision strategies for working on practical projects with students which promote good relations and equality competencies	Advancing equality and fostering good relations both internally to the programme and in professional practice, as pointed above.	Programme Team	September 2016

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

The above actions will ensure that the MLittCP caters for the widest body of students possible and continues to adapt its Curriculum and infrastructure in order to advance equality. A periodic review of our teaching and how we enable learning, including our work with protected characteristic groups, will be undertaken annually in our **PMAR** (Programme Monitoring Annual Report), where data and qualitative evidence collected throughout the year will be examined.

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

The above changes will ensure full adherence to GSA's Equality strategy whilst contributing in particular to the delivery of:

- **Equality Outcome 1**, by further developing and mainstreaming programme level practice that anticipates the needs of and supports students with hidden disabilities, including mental health issues.
- **Equality Outcome 3**, as all staff working in the MLittCP programme have been involved in the current consultation and will be delivering the actions identified above.
- **Equality Outcome 6**, as we are working to address current imbalances with regards to gender, age, ethnicity and disability in the composition of the MLittCP Programme Team by developing a diverse pool of visiting staff.
- **Equality Outcome 7**, through a curriculum that explicitly includes and encourages a diversity of perspectives and promotes shared understanding.

The systematic collection of evidence and reflection on our work will contribute to an understanding of how Equality can be mainstreamed at programme level.

The outcome of your assessment:

No action – no potential adverse impact ☐

Amendments or changes to remove barriers ☒

Proceed with awareness of adverse impact ☐

Abandon ☐

Sign-off, authorisation and publishing

Review Lead

Name	Mónica Núñez Laiseca
Position	Senior Lecturer in Curatorial Practice (Contemporary Art)
Signature	
Date	28 / 08 / 15

Executive Lead

Name	Dr Alistair Payne

Position	Head of School, School of Fine Art
Signature	*Alistair Payne*
Date	28/08/15

Equality Lead (Head of Student Support and Development)

Name	Jill Hammond
Signature	*Jill Hammond*
Date	28th August '15.