GSA SUMMARY REPORT OF EQUALITY CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT OF EQUALITY IMPACT

Date of Assessment:	20 October 2015
School / Department:	Fine Art
Lead member of staff:	John Calcutt Programme Leader MLitt FAP
Location of impact assessment documentation (contact or web link):	Fine Art Academic Administrator j.quinn@gsa.ac.uk
Area of decision making / Title of policy, procedure or relevant practice:	**MLitt Fine Art Practice**

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):

Although this assessment was initiated by a programme change (the addition of a new pathway to the programme) this change had no impact whatsoever on the programme specifications - the new and re-titled pathways are all subject to the same specifications that govern the programme as a whole. Therefore the focus of this report shifted to an evaluation of the programme as a whole.

The approach taken in this Equality Impact Assessment Report leans heavily towards the discursive in order to identify how equality and the PSED are considered within this programme of study. It takes account of the ethical platform from which this programme has been developed and is delivered and considers all aspects of the programme.

Evidence used to make your assessment:

Consideration has been given to equality statistics at programme level for the last 3 years (see Appendix 2). Although numbers are relatively small, analysis of this data indicates the following trends:

i) Age:

The majority of students on the MLit programme during this period fall in the 25-29 age group which aligns with the overall GSA age profile at PG level. What is worthy of note is the representation of students aged 40+ on this programme which is significantly higher than the overall GSA profile. Comparing programme statistics with published equality data shows that in 2012/13 17% and in 2013/14 13% of students on the programme were 40+compared with 8.7% and 9% respectively for PG students overall.

ii) Domicile:

There are two points of note, being (a) the decreasing number of international students over the 3 year period (this should be monitored further over time) and (b) it is not possible to disaggregate EU from Home students

iii) Ethnicity:

It is noted that BAME students have a higher representation on this programme than the overall GSA representation at PG level. Comparing programme statistics with published equality data shows that in 2012/13 37.5% and in 2013/14 48% of students on the programme were from a BAME background compared with 9.1% and 4.3% respectively for PG students overall. Whilst this is positive it will be important to disaggregate these figures in order to identify whether this is due solely to international recruitment.

iv) Gender:
Although programme statistics show that there was a significant dip in the representation of male students on the programme, the trend for gender representation would appear to be moving towards 50:50.

v) Disability
It is noted that there is full disability disclosure on this programme. The statistics show a downward trend in the number of disabled students on the programme. This could be an indication that equality consideration is being mainstreamed at programme level.

It is recognised that statistics are helpful in anticipating and understanding the potential needs of students and any related gaps in programme level provision and a robust approach to statistical analysis should be taken wherever possible.

It is also recognised that collecting and analysing qualitative data through student feedback will need further attention in the future.

Outline any positive or negative impacts you have identified:

1. Programme documentation
The programme handbook sets out all programme documentation and guidelines which are readily available to all students and staff on the VLE. They are also distributed to students as and when they become 'active' at various points during the programme throughout the academic session. The benefit of this approach is to provide timely, accessible information which has positive impact for all students regardless of protected characteristic.

It is noted that international students, although competent speakers of English, may not yet have practiced their language skills to the extent that they are familiar or comfortable with academic terminology. This is not regarded as a situation which requires intervention from Student Support, rather as an opportunity for students to develop their language skills further through accessible and appropriate programme documentation. It is an approach which is anticipated will advance and mainstream equality and foster good relations.

2. Curriculum Design
Curriculum design is intended to facilitate the discussion and development of cultural and ethical perspectives and therefore supports the advancing of equality and fostering good relations for all protected characteristic groups.

2.1 Learning outcomes
With regard to learning outcomes equality consideration is implicit rather than explicit. As a result of the programme context which is fully explored in the equality assessment report, they promote an approach to the development of practice which fosters good relations between all students, regardless of protected characteristic. However it may be that a review of the language used to articulate their intention should be undertaken to further mainstream equality.

3. Learning and teaching approaches
Equality consideration is embedded through flexibility of delivery, use of the VLE, accessibility of materials and resources and timetabling which enables students to meet needs related to a protected characteristic, for example, family responsibilities or religious commitments.

3.1 Inclusive, flexible approach to learning and teaching
The construct of this programme, as described above and in the equality assessment report, supports a mainstream approach to equality in learning and teaching approaches. At programme

level this is demonstrated not only through its ethical academic framework but also its flexibility in delivery - different modes of delivery, presentation and assessment can and have been employed to accommodate need. IRFs are also delivered effectively, fostering good relations between staff and students. This provides positive impact and advances equality for disabled students.

3.2 Students with caring responsibilities

With regard to students who have caring responsibilities, students on the programme are not eligible for externally provided and targeted funding (SAAS, PTFL) and are consequently not eligible under the GSA Childcare scheme. This is mitigated by eligibility to apply for GSA scholarship funding which is also awarded on the basis of need. However, it is recognised that the lack of childcare support can place those students with children and attendant family commitments under undue pressure, pressure not experienced by students who are not in an equivalent situation, resulting in negative equality impact.

3.3 Student exhibitions

In those cases where a student's protected characteristic has become the subject of their work there always remains the possibility that the exhibition of such work (especially in the Graduate Degree Show) may result in negative equality impact. The student exhibitions strategy will inform practice in the exhibition of work in order to ensure that issues of display and access do not cause negative impact for any protected characteristic group.

Conversely, where the student exhibitions strategy is implemented effectively there is potential to provide positive impact, advance equality and foster good relations.

4. Learning and teaching pedagogy

The principle which underpins inclusive learning and teaching on this programme is that learning and teaching situations are dialogical sites of negotiation "that take account of the diverse needs, identities and experiences of students." This principle supports a learning and teaching situation in which the mainstreaming of equality is in evidence. The main teaching methods (i.e. modes of curriculum delivery) employed on the programme are the individual tutorial, the group critique, the seminar, and the lecture.

The following observations are made:
- The **group critique** provides an environment in which the complexities of equality, diversity and power can be explored in relation to students' work and its development. It therefore provides a learning and teaching situation in which the mainstreaming of equality is in evidence. It advances equality of opportunity by allowing the expression of identity and culture and situating this within an ethical and dialogic framework. It also provides a forum for fostering good relations between protected characteristic groups as, through critical discussion and debate, students are able to expand their knowledge and understanding of each other.
- The **seminar** recognises the positive contribution of others provides the fundamental principle underpinning the very concept of equality. It advances equality of opportunity by encouraging students to situate their own work in broader contexts and within an ethical framework. It also provides a forum for fostering good relations between protected characteristic groups as, through critical discussion and debate students are able to expand their knowledge and understanding of the broader external environment and their engagement with it.
- **Lectures** occur most often in the portfolio of PGT Core Research and Elective courses which has developed over the years in a largely ad hoc manner.   These do not provide a dialectical engagement between students and tutors. It may be that an examination of pedagogic practice here is required to ensure equality consideration is embedded.
- **Resources and materials and examples** are usually offered to each individual student on a bespoke basis as a consequence of the identification of the student's 'needs' arising from

discussion in tutorials, group critiques of seminars. This has the potential to both advance equality and foster good relations across and between all students – the approach is student focused, based on need, and enables students to access materials in relation to the work they are developing whilst presenting a range of cultural perspectives.

- **Additional activities**
  Additional activities play an important role in offering opportunities for staff and students to build effective working relationships over time. They include exhibitions, trips and residencies. These may be unevenly experienced by students on different pathways within the programme. Whilst no equality impact is identified here, it is suggested that careful consideration is given to the allocation of funds and resources to each of the pathways and structures put in place to ensure that any resulting differences in student learning and teaching experiences do not result in inequalities. This would include the equality impact assessment of such decisions.

5. Assessment
   Assessment is undertaken in line with GSA assessment code of practice which is undergoing impact assessment in 2015/16. With regard to formative assessment, whilst this occurs at regular points throughout the programme timetable, there is no information about this in the programme handbook. This has the potential to incur negative impact for students with protected characteristics where assessment processes are not clear and transparent and students are not informed about them in advance.

6. Student retention
   Retention and pass rates on MLittFAP are high and this is taken to be generally indicative of a lack of fundamental and serious problems relating to the pursuance and promotion of equality on the programme. However, student progression and pass rates will be monitored in relation to protected characteristics and student feedback collated in order confirm that this is the case.

7. Staffing

   7.1 Recruitment
   Although staffing statistics are not fully presented as part of this assessment report, evidence indicates that where MLittFAP is less successful is in terms of diversity among staff. As the programme now receives its own independent budget this offers the possibility of a less ad hoc arrangement in relation to the recruitment of VLs which could now be considered in the light of equality issues. However, this may have no significant effect upon the current staffing allocation to MLitt from the UG departments, which is an issue to be taken into account in staff recruitment generally.
   (Statistics available for 2014/15 show that 32% of staff (including VL's) are women and 99% are white).

   7.2 Staff development
   Whilst the diversity of the student body on the MLittFAP is a highly valued aspect of the student experience, such diversity can also present certain potential for negative impact in relation to equality. This is not peculiar to the programme but symptomatic of wider social, economic, political and historical forces. In order to mitigate any such negative impact it is important to ensure that staff are aware of and have a willingness to address these complexities as they arise. Evidence suggests that this is the case and the programme team should consider how this practice can be assured within the programme and shared more widely. This may be addressed through embedding such issues in staff recruitment and development activities including the PGCert.

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	Timeframe
Ensure that student briefings, guidelines and other communications are presented in plain English	Provide positive impact for all protected characteristic groups by providing clear and accessible programme information	Programme Leader	Session 15/16
Review of programme ILOs in order to make them more accessible to all students, and to accommodate more generously the differences between individual students' learning and developmental trajectories.	As above	Programme Leader with Pathway leaders	In line with the development of GSA's LTE strategy.
Work with Student Support to equality impact assess GSA childcare support. At a programme level continue to ensure flexibility and accessibility of provision in order to ensure that students with childcare commitments are not disadvantaged.	Mitigate negative impact for students with caring responsibilities	Programme leader with Student Support Manager	April 2016
Ensure that Student Exhibitions Strategy is implemented appropriately and consistently in order to ensure that content relating to protected characteristics is exhibited appropriately and is not subject to discrimination or negative equality impact for the maker or its audience.	Advancing equality and fostering good relations both internally to the programme for all protected characteristic groups.	Programme Leader with Pathway Leaders	January 2016
Develop robust systematic mechanisms for collecting and analysis of evidence both quantitative and qualitative evidence to include programme level statistics and student feedback	Ensure that equality impact can be monitored, understood and reported on for all protected characteristic groups in respect of access, progress, outcomes and experience	Head of School of Fine Art with Programme Leader	June 2016
Review student feedback mechanisms to ensure that these are effective. Use student feedback as an additional mechanism to monitor equality impact across the programme.	As above	Programme leader with Pathway leaders	Implement 15/16 with review and evaluation June 2016
Review portfolio of PGT core research and elective as part of the development of a new LTE strategy, explore areas raised in	Advancing equality and fostering good relations for all protected characteristic groups through the	Head of School of Fine Art with Programme	September 2016

this assessment and examine the thinking behind current pedagogies with a view to revision in light of equality consideration.	provision of inclusive learning and teaching	Leader in Liaison with Head of Learning and Teaching	
Modify student handbook to ensure that the nature and role of formative assessment are clarified.	Advancing equality and fostering good relations for all protected characteristic groups through the provision of inclusive learning and teaching	Programme leader	December 15
Liaise with pathway tutors to ensure that employment of visiting tutors is informed by equality considerations.	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	MLittFAP programme leader Head of School of Fine Art	Implement from January 2016
Explore where and how pedagogic practice which address the potential complexities of equality are/can be addressed and embed in staff recruitment and development activities including the PGCert	Maintain positive impact by ensuring that staff are confident in managing the potential complexity of equality consideration within pedagogy and practice.	Head of School of Fine Art	September 2016
Impact assess allocation of funds and resources to each of the pathways and ensure structures in place to ensure that equality implications of decision making is taken account of.	Advancing equality and fostering good relations across the programme for all protected characteristic groups.	Head of School of Fine Art	September 2016

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

- Improved monitoring of equality impact across the programme
- Maintaining the development of a discursive environment in which students and staff can engage in the exchange and development of ideas, opinions and knowledge in order to further advance equality and foster good relations.

All actions identified will form part of the programme enhancement plan 2015/16 and progress reported and tracked through academic enhancement mechanisms including PMAR.

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

- **Equality Outcome 1**, by ensuring that programme level practice continues to anticipates the needs of and supports students with hidden disabilities, including mental health issues.
- **Equality Outcome 3**, through ensuring that all staff are able to engage in appropriate CPD activities, including the opportunity to share their own approach to inclusive learning and

teaching
- **Equality Outcome 6**, through embedding equality consideration into the recruitment of visiting staff.
- **Equality Outcome 7**, through a curriculum that explicitly includes and encourages a diversity of perspectives and promotes shared understanding.

The outcome of your assessment:

No action – no potential adverse impact ☐

Amendments or changes to remove barriers / promote positive impact ✓

Proceed with awareness of adverse impact ☐

Sign-off, authorisation and publishing

Review Lead

Name	
Position	
Signature	
Date	

Executive Lead

Name	
Position	
Signature	
Date	

Equality Lead (Head of Student Support and Development)

Name	
Position	
Signature	
Date	