

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ARTS Equality Impact Assessment Form for Academic Programmes (EqIA)

As a public sector organisation, GSA has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to assess the impact all of its academic programmes may have on protected groups (as defined by the Act).

The purpose of this assessment is to use relevant evidence and critical thinking to identify any impact (positive, negative or neutral) the programme that is being assessed may have on the students and staff members it applies to.

The EqIA is a tool which helps mainstream equality into everything GSA does. It requires us to consider how we can mitigate or eliminate negative impact and, in turn, advance positive outcomes. Therefore, it must be undertaken during the development / review of the programme and not after it has been finalised. Ideally, EqIAs should be a team effort of relevant parties to ensure a variety of perspectives have been consulted. All finalised EqIAs must be signed off by a senior lead, the Education Committee, and either the Head of Student Support and Development or GSA's Equality Officer. Support from the Equality Officer is available at any stage of completion.

Further guidance on how to complete an EqIA can be found on GSA's website and the Equality and Diversity section on the staff intranet. If you have any additional questions, please contact equality@gsa.ac.uk.

Name of Equality Impact Assessment (E.g. Title of Programme)	BA (Hons) Communication Design
New or reviewed	New
Owner/Review Lead and role	Steve Rigley, Programme Leader
School	School of Design
Date of assessment	December 2023

1. Programme Outline and Characteristics	
Programme Outline (please provide a brief outline of the programme)	The BA (Hons) Communication Design programme provides a creative learning environment that aims to support students in becoming skilled and confident graduates. As students progress through the programme, they develop the knowledge and understanding to undertake sophisticated research, visual problem-solving, and the skills to contribute to the broader international context of communication design, sensitively responding to social and cultural implications of contemporary design practice. The programme promotes a culture that fosters teamwork, interdisciplinary peer-learning, and independence as essential elements in the effective practice of Communication Design.
Modes of Study	Full-Time

2. Evidence used when undertaking this assessment – please make a reference to your programme-specific EDI data and any other relevant evidence

- please **ensure all data is either presented in percentages only, or that any numbers smaller than five are presented as '<5'** to allow for adequate data analysis and trend review without breaching any Data Protection Regulations

Note: *provisions for protected groups must be made regardless of current numbers, however, data is still used to inform action and measure progress*

The updating of this EqIA is contextualised within Programme Monitoring Annual Reporting (PMAR) and our ongoing curriculum review and development relating to the Common Academic Framework (CAF), Major Programme Amendments, and new programme and course specification documents. We have drawn upon a range of data to inform the current reconceptualisation of the BA (Hons) Communication Design programme and this EqIA, focusing on key approaches towards positive impacts, as outlined in section 3, namely:

- PMAR equality data with broad trends from period of last 5 years circa (note: 2022-23 HESA data outstanding at time of writing)
- External examiner reports and consultation activities from 2022-23
- Student feedback and consultation activities, including extended student consultation during 2022-23, student surveys and SSCCs

We focus on actions emerging from the data to inform our thinking towards positive impacts that can be related to protected characteristics and learning methodologies and positive actions or mitigations to address direct or indirect negative impacts.

Protected Characteristic	PMAR Equality Data – broad trends
Age	Figures for the age ranges of students for Communication design are broadly consistent with the School of Design.
Gender	In 2021/22 and in line with previous years, the gender balance remains roughly 1/3 male, 2/3 female, consistent with other areas across the School of Design. Across the four previous year average, students in Communication Design identified as 75% Female, 23.8% Male, with 1.2% unknown, compared to the School of Design, where 79.6% female, 19.3% male and 1.1% unknown.
Domicile	Compared to the School of Design average, Communication Design has lower home students (41% to 49.9%) and OS (6.3% to 13.2%), but higher RUK (40.7% to 27.8%) and EU (12% to 9.1%)
Ethnicity	The most noticeable changes over 4-year period are: White: Down 22 (15% decrease) and Chinese: Up 12 (240% Increase). The figure for Chinese students is in line with the increase in OS Applications highlighted above, and consistent with numbers for both Interior Design and Fashion in the School of Design. There are no other significant changes within ethnicity profiles across the programme.

Disability	Over the four-year average, Communication Design has had a slightly higher figure for students with disability: 28.2% compared to the School of Design average of 23.4%.
Religion	Communication Design has had a larger number of students declaring No Religion (73.6%) compared to the School of Design (67.4%), with the most noticeable shortfalls in Christian Catholic, Church of Scotland and Christian other. All other faiths are broadly consistent across the programme and school.
Sexual Orientation	The number of students identifying as bi-sexual is slightly higher in Communication Design than the rest of the Design School (17.7% to 13.4%), and also when comparing those who preferred not to disclose (19.3% to 15.7%)

3. a) Major changes introduced to the programme since the most recent EqIA (where applicable) – please provide an overview and make reference to how those changes have affected EDI issues (either positively or negatively)

- if the changes are substantive to the programme structure, please insert (or attach) two diagrams which illustrate:
 - i) the programme structure before amendment
 - and
 - ii) the programme structure after amendments

Since the most recent EqIA, and at the time of this review, BA (Hons) Communication Design and all BA (Hons) programmes in the School of Design are going through Major Programme Amendments within the process of implementing the Common Academic Framework (CAF). We are carrying out this work through the lens of the competencies and core themes informing the CAF student learning journey, such as GSA's cross-cutting Graduate Attributes, climate literacy, and EDI.

The proposed amendments in all School of Design BA (Hons) programmes recalibrate programme credit structures (see outline below). These credit structures ensure safe, flexible and fair assessment of student learning and banking of credits. CAF has also supported us in refreshing and streamlining programme aims and intended learning outcomes (ILOs), reducing them in number and ensuring student-friendly language. In the School of Design, we have aligned our programme ILOs to the Graduate Attributes and broader School of Design and GSA educational priorities to balance discipline-specific clarity with consistency across BA (Hons) programmes. We have also enacted substantive changes to course-level aims and ILOs to ensure alignment with programme aims and ILOs and the delivery of the Graduate Attributes within the Common Academic Framework. Throughout this process, we have endeavoured to implement a student-centred approach that strives to support inclusivity and clarity for the diverse needs of student learners.

Student consultations supported our drive to give further clarity to student learners regarding the curriculum's intents and expectations, particularly by streamlining and refreshing programme and course narratives, aims, and ILOs through the lens of inclusive learning methodologies. In 2022-23, a student consultant for curriculum enhancement worked in partnership with School of Design staff towards consultative conversations around proposed amendments. Our new programme and course specifications capitalise on this work and aim to deliver an explicit, clear, and accessible narrative that speaks to a growth mindset towards graduate attributes, opportunities for shared learning spaces to broaden perspectives, and the value of flexible, creative, and speculative approaches.

Structural Amendments

- In Stage 1, the existing Co-Lab 40-credit course across two semesters is reduced to one 20-credit GSA Shared Course, Co-Lab, in Semester 1. A new Year 1 shared School of Design course occupies 20-credits in Semester 2 and brings together studio and critical and contextual studies.
- In Stages 2 and 3, the existing Design Domain courses (each 20 credits across two semesters) is refreshed into two 10-credit blocks (Semester 1 and Semester 2) for all SoD BA Hons programmes.
- In Stages 2 and 3, the existing Design History & Theory courses (each 20 credits across two semesters) are recalibrated into two 10-credit blocks (Semester 1 and Semester 2)
- In Stages 1, 2, and 3, Studio Courses will be divided into Semester 1 and 2, resulting in a 40-credit Studio Course within each Semester.
- In Stage 4, a new 20-credit Semester 2 course, articulated as a complementary parallel to studio, rationalises credit structure and calibrates the curricular offering for students who are undertaking a DHT 20-credit mode of submission rather than a 40-credit DHT mode of submission.

Please see Appendix A for diagrams showing the programme structure before and after amendments.

Impacts

Our proposed major amendments root our programmes and courses within GSA's revised semester structure that defines contact teaching and assessment weeks across undergraduate and postgraduate taught provisions. The programme and course specifications have moved to new proformas introduced across GSA to make programme and course specifications more user-centred and accessible for students and staff.

Like all programmes in the School of Design BA (Hons) portfolio, the BA (Hons) Communication Design programme, its Studio courses and its shared cross-programme courses use a range of learning and teaching methods to support students' learning and development. While the proposed amendments streamline credit blocks and enhance the clarity of the learning experience, they do not alter the overall teaching approach. Furthermore, the impact of changes on students should be minimal outside of the positive refreshing of modes of assessment and curriculum, with all students benefiting from the clarity of the curricular provision towards graduate attributes and outcomes.

Accordingly, the negative impacts of changes should be minimal, although we make value of how the major amendments process necessitates iterative consideration and review. At the programme level, we also consider our progress in attaining previous EqIA goals as connected to the continuous evaluation within the PMAR process, and we will continue to use PMAR as a lens through which to review our curriculum development work, including advancing the intended positive impacts from and within the CAF implementation process.

3. b) Please outline how you have advanced/are advancing the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and how you have addressed any EDI-related issues within the following:

Student Recruitment

The programme's promotion materials (including Graduate Showcase digital portal) and interviews with applicants can include EDI themes. GSA's Pre-Enrolment Gateway, which is regularly updated and contains programme-based information, provides support and accessible guidance for offer holders and reaches diverse audiences, framing and supporting transitions into study.

<p>Programme Academic Induction</p>	<p>The programme’s academic induction includes verbal, text-based and visual content communicating to students their educational journey (e.g., timetables, staff introduction, personal tutor scheme, a brief overview of courses, nature of engagement in studio-based learning, and assessment briefings). During the programme’s induction, the academic activities aim to create a sense of community in the cohort and introduce the students to foundational aspects of the programme using an inclusive mix of in-person, digital, individual and group activities. A School-wide Welcome event also fosters community and supports transitions in. GSA Welcome and Induction and the GSA Student Handbook support transitions in and onwards learner journeys via resources and consistently sign-posted help and support on Canvas. The GSA Student Handbook also contains EDI-themed Inclusive Communities Courses for Students (sexual consent, wellbeing, mental health, bystander intervention, gender-based violence, and anti-racism).</p>
<p>Curriculum (contents, diversification and decolonisation)</p>	<p>The programme and its courses explore contemporary issues of diversification and decolonisation through a renewed focus on curriculum through the lens of equality, diversity and inclusion, with enhancements in this area central to the curriculum development involved in implementing the Common Academic Framework. In the School of Design and at programme level, we have advanced and will continue to develop the diversity of voices delivered into the programme through invited and visiting speakers, including via teaching and talks (e.g., subtitled Design Domain talks accessible to staff and students across the School of Design).</p>
<p>Learning and Teaching Approaches (activities and practices)</p>	<p>Learning activities and media utilised within the programme are designed to be inclusive and accessible and can be provided in alternate formats as reasonable adjustments require. The programme and its courses use various learning and teaching methods to support students in engaging in an explorative and individual approach to learning. Guided activities and digital online learning resources available on Canvas help foster, develop, and support independent learning skills. The programme employs a variety of teaching and learning approaches, including in-person, blended, and online synchronous and asynchronous learning activities and delivery, to support student engagement with the curriculum and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.</p>
<p>Assessment and Feedback Methods</p>	<p>The GSA Student Handbook contains student-facing guides to Studio Learning, Artificial Intelligence, and Assessment and Feedback, which support clear and accessible information and insights into learning and teaching while remaining agile to GSA-wide and School-based enhancements. The programme conducts assessment and feedback briefings for students at the beginning of each academic session. Using Canvas and project briefs aids clarity in setting out assessment tasks. A range of activities with staff and peers, such as workshops, reviews and tutorials, support students' learning and offer ongoing formative feedback as they progress through the course. The programme uses an appropriate range of assessment methods to enable students to develop assessment-</p>

	related skills and capabilities and demonstrate their learning and achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Within the CAF process, EDI considerations help inform the design of programme and course intended learning outcomes and assessment and feedback methods, with consistent and ongoing consideration and monitoring to identify and address potential barriers to participation.
Learning Resources	To support inclusive approaches at programme and course level, we build on and will further enhance our work in partnership with GSA Library to decolonise and diversify Key Links reading lists.
Support for Students (e.g., implementing the Student Pastoral Tutor Scheme; signposting to Student Support services, etc)	Since the most recent EqIA, implementing a GSA-wide Personal Tutor Scheme has supported students by offering an individual point of contact in teaching staff. Students receive guidance on ongoing support options through induction, one-to-one tutorials, meetings, and access to GSA-wide services. Enhanced Canvas resources such as the GSA Student Handbook support sign-posting of Student Support Services to students. A button on all Canvas homepages links directly to Student Support Services on the Student Intranet, including Report and Support.
Staff Development	Staff who teach on the programme are active participants in a range of communities of practice, ensuring currency in both knowledge and practice. Staff complete a variety of mandatory and optional staff development and training e-modules via LearnUpon on an ongoing basis, with themes covered, including unconscious bias, student mental health, safeguarding, and disability awareness. As part of recent and ongoing staff development, including in relation to CAF, staff have access to curriculum design resources and toolkits on Canvas. Programme Leaders have participated in PL Forums and Advance HE training that feature EDI themes, such as the inclusive curriculum, supporting graduate attributes and outcomes, inclusive and equitable assessment, and liberating the curriculum.
Any other relevant areas	There is no other relevant information.

4. How have you ensured the programme being assessed is advancing positive impact on the protected characteristics? – please address each protected characteristic individually	
Age	The programme does not negatively nor positively impact students as a result of this protected characteristic. We continue to advance inclusive practices in communication, including not excluding students of a particular age group in communication modes and supporting wellbeing aspects in a manner open to students of all ages.
Disability	In re-framing the programme and the teaching methods and assessment activities, the programme team has been cognisant of ensuring that methods are inclusive and do not create a barrier to participation and achievement. Learning activities, resources, assessment and media utilised within the programme are designed to be inclusive and accessible and can

	be provided in alternate formats as reasonable adjustments require, with a process in place for addressing reasonable adjustments via the RAR system.
Gender reassignment (covers Trans identities)	Students are able to change their pronouns on Canvas and there is a GSA-wide form for the purpose of changing name that maps to Registry records.
Marriage and Civil Partnership (only applicable to staff)	In lines with EDI in the workplace, this programme does not negatively or positively impact staff as a result of this protected characteristic.
Pregnancy and Maternity	The programme supports leave of absence for any student who requires appropriate reasonable adjustment in the event of pregnancy or maternity leave. Guidance is followed on the pregnancy and maternity policy to ensure appropriate measures are being taken to safeguard and signpost students or staff that this affects.
Race	Within its curriculum and teaching and learning methods this programme addresses the forging of an inclusive curriculum through the regular refreshment of its curriculum and resources. This includes staff development on the themes of decolonisation and diversification. At a smaller scale, the School of Design EDI group also lead on identifying and collating further resources, for example Padlets to support new students from diverse backgrounds at entry point into GSA and to celebrate Black History Month.
Religion or Belief	To support and advance positive impacts in relation to diversity of religion or belief, a 'diversity calendar and events' section available in the EDI section of the GSA staff intranet lists religious celebrations and festivals alongside other days, weeks, and months that recognise and raise awareness of EDI themes.
Sex	The Menospace support and advocacy group meets monthly and welcomes students and staff impacted by menstrual and menopausal health issues.
Sexual orientation	The programme does not negatively nor positively impact students as a result of this protected characteristic.
Any other groups (e.g., Care Experienced; Carers; Military Veterans; Low Socioeconomic Status (SES); Asylum Seekers; British Sign Language Users, etc)	If a student/prospective student needs to communicate through a BSL interpreter, accommodations provided align with our legislative responsibility to provide a BSL interpreter when requested. The Glasgow School of Art's Digital Inclusion Scheme is in place to offer the long-term loan of GSA laptops to students to enable them to study online, where they may be unable to access this equipment otherwise due to financial hardship, digital exclusion, or other relevant circumstances. The GSA Student Handbook and Canvas homepages signpost GSA Student Support Services, also linking to the Student Welfare intranet area for advice and support regarding the range of pressures students might experience concerning finances. Programmes support students in considering costs,

	methods, materials, and sustainable approaches to developing work and achieving intended learning outcomes.
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5. Have you identified any negative impact on the protected groups? How have you mitigated it? – please address each protected characteristic individually, providing details of any undertaken actions <i>Section 5 negative impacts – have to be mitigated before programme comes into being</i>	
Age	The programme does not negatively impact students as a result of this protected characteristic.
Disability	The programme does not negatively impact students as a result of this protected characteristic.
Gender reassignment (covers Trans identities)	The programme does not negatively impact students as a result of this protected characteristic.
Marriage and Civil Partnership (only applicable to staff)	The programme does not negatively impact students as a result of this protected characteristic.
Pregnancy and Maternity	The programme does not negatively impact students as a result of this protected characteristic.
Race	The programme does not negatively impact students as a result of this protected characteristic.
Religion or Belief	The programme does not negatively impact students as a result of this protected characteristic.
Sex	The programme does not negatively impact students as a result of this protected characteristic.
Sexual orientation	The programme does not negatively impact students as a result of this protected characteristic.
Any other groups (e.g. Care Experienced; Carers; Military Veterans; Low Socioeconomic Status (SES); Asylum Seekers; British Sign Language Users, etc)	Whilst no negative impacts are anticipated for students based upon any of their protected characteristics, we recognise that as a result of the programme’s design and the learning, teaching and assessment methods employed, there may be unknown and unanticipated barriers to participation and success. As such, the programme will undertake a review of this EqIA annually within the PMAR process.

6. How does the outcome of this assessment and the actions undertaken support GSA’s 2021 - 2025 Equality Outcomes
<p>This assessment and the actions undertaken evidence how the programme offers staff and students the opportunity to enhance and develop their awareness of EDI themes in relation to their experience of learning, teaching, and assessment.</p> <p>Our curriculum development and anticipated impacts will help us to further mainstream opportunities to discuss and enhance inclusive practices and to optimise potential for positive equality impacts in relation to the overarching themes of GSA’s Equality Outcomes such as culture and community, environment, and impact and value.</p>

This directly supports the following GSA Equality Outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Actively foster and support an organisational culture in which dignity and respect for self and others is understood and practiced, where confidence is encouraged and promoted, and where ignorance, prejudice and bias is challenged.
- Outcome 2: Continue to evaluate our physical and digital environment, aiming to optimise accessibility and inclusivity by acknowledging and providing for the needs of our students, staff and stakeholders.

7. How does the outcome of this assessment and the actions undertaken support the three main duties GSA has under the Equality Act 2010 [Equality Act 2010](#) to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity;
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not?

Please see response to Question 6.

8. Action plan for positive impact on protected groups – please provide details on any outstanding actions for advancing EDI within your programme, which resulted from the above analysis

- please name an action owner and a timescale for completion
- please keep any completed actions from older versions of the EqIA and provide updates on any actions that have not yet been completed

Action	Equality Impact / Protected Group	Person Responsible	Time frame	Updates/ Completion
Programme Monitoring and Evaluation	Given the proposed amendments to the programme, ongoing review will be undertaken to identify and mitigate any inadvertent negative equality impacts.	Programme Leader	Annually	November 2024 through PMAR process to ensure currency and relevancy, then annually.

Next review date – please consider any outstanding actions outlined above;

- the whole EqIA form would need to be revised at Periodic Reviews, when there is a major change introduced to the programme, or at intervals of no more than three years (whichever comes first)
- nevertheless, EqIAs must also be considered as part of the Programme Monitoring Annual Review (PMAR)

In developing this EqIA we recognise the need for regular review in order that any unanticipated barriers to participation and/or success be identified and responded to as we move to deliver the amended programme from September 2024. This will be built into our review processes through PMAR annually as identified within section 8 above.

process to ensure they are still relevant and the action plan is updated yearly	
Signed off by Owner/Review Lead - Steve Rigley Programme Leader BA (Hons) Communication Design	15.12.23
Signed off by Senior Lead – Professor Stephen Bottomley, Head of School of Design	11.01.24
Signed off by Equality Lead – Svetoslava Sergieva, Equality Officer	20.12.23
Signed off by Education Committee Rachel Dickson, Deputy Director Academic	10.04.24