

**Project Assistant (0.2 FTE)
Quality Enhancement Themes Evidencing Enhancement
Creative Cluster
Fixed Term - 5 months**

The Glasgow School of Art

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) is one of Europe's leading independent university-level institutions for the visual creative disciplines. Our studio-based, specialist, practice-led learning and research draws talented individuals with a shared passion for visual culture and creative production from all over the world.

Originally founded in 1845, today we have 2150 students studying across architecture, design, digital, fine art and history and theory. As we develop new academic programmes and enhance our areas of expertise and inter-disciplinarity, our ambition towards 2018 is to continue to grow our student community in Glasgow to our 25% target, and continue to grow our research profile and campuses in Singapore and the Scottish Highlands and Islands. Our internationalisation strategy is embedded across our academic programmes and research, connecting the GSA with some of the world's leading universities and specialist higher education institutions.

Recognised by the Scottish Funding Council as an independent, specialist institution the GSA is an important and integral part of Scotland's higher education provision. Working in partnership with universities across Scotland and the UK, our degree programmes are validated by the University of Glasgow. The University of Glasgow has validated our programmes since 1992 and whilst the Senate of the University has ultimate responsibility for the awards, there is maximum delegation to the GSA for its own quality assurance procedures. The School, through its Academic Council, is also responsible for the development, monitoring, evaluation and updating of its academic framework.

Our 185 academic staff, 80% of which are research active, form a strong creative community united in the ambition to see GSA positioned as a global leader in studio based research and teaching, transforming thinking by developing creative approaches with new audiences, locally, nationally and internationally. As one of the UK's largest and most intensive research communities for the visual creative disciplines, GSA's research activity is clustered into the following interdisciplinary themes:

- Architecture, urbanism and the public sphere
- Contemporary art and curating
- Design innovation
- Digital visualisation
- Education in art, design and architecture
- Health and wellbeing
- Material culture
- Sustainability

Moving forward GSA has ambitious plans to develop its research profile further through internal collaboration and new partnerships with National and International Organisations. We recognise the distinctive contribution made by visual creative disciplines within the rapidly growing interdisciplinary research agenda and seek to position GSA as a global leader in this field. This will involve development and mentoring of GSA's own research talent, recruitment of the best new staff, the securing of higher levels of external research funding to support research projects and further growth in the scale and activity of GSA's PhD community.

While we are firmly rooted in Glasgow, one of Europe's leading creative cities, we are international in outlook with one of the UK's highest percentages of international students and one of Scotland's largest percentages of students from the rest of the UK. Over the last five years over £65 million has been invested in our estates including the recently opened Reid Building. Further investment is currently being planned which will create a cohesive creative campus with the iconic Mackintosh Building at its core.

We have a total income of over £30m, and our aim is to cultivate conditions in which the GSA can continue to achieve great things through what we do, with whom we do it and through creative approaches build on our existing strengths and distinctive assets, in order to:

- Achieve excellence and leadership in student-centred studio-based learning
- Engage with new audiences through inter-disciplinary research
- Extend our global reach and creative engagement
- Be a robust and efficient institution – maximising our resources and our potential

The Learning and Teaching Team

The Learning and Teaching Team is responsible for the strategic enhancement of teaching and learning throughout the Glasgow School of Art and is managed by the Head of Learning & Teaching at GSA. The Head of Learning and Teaching provides strategic oversight of learning, teaching, and assessment enhancement and works with the team to: deliver academic and professional development opportunities for staff, students and the wider community through credit bearing courses, CPD activities and engaging with local people and education providers through our work in widening participation. Coordination and enhancement of the Postgraduate Taught Elective programme sits within the team as well as our work to support schools in delivering learning and teaching enhancements. The team facilitates GSA's engagement with the national Enhancement Themes and undertakes research to support learning and teaching within GSA and the wider creative arts sector. Additionally, the team offers a MEd suite that includes a PGCert in Learning and Teaching, a PGCert in Supervision in Creative Practices, and an MEd in Creative Practices' Learning and Teaching.

The Role

Job Title	Project Assistant QET: Evidencing Enhancement (0.2 FTE)
Location	GSA Campus (Glasgow)
Reports to	Head of Learning and Teaching
Purpose	To support the Head of Learning and Teaching to deliver a QAA funded project examining how success in creative practices higher education is evidenced and used to improve teaching at across the Scottish creative arts programmes in higher education. A description of the project is given in Appendix 1.

Principal Accountabilities

The Project Assistant is accountable directly to the Principal Investigators (as line manager) on the project, in all matters that relate to the content of the research and the use of resources, for which the Co-Principal Investigators are ultimately responsible to the QAA Scotland as funders of the work. The Project Assistant's key tasks are as follows.

- To take instruction from the Principal Investigator on the direction of the project and jointly agree a plan for its execution.
- To contribute to the production of a project briefing .
- To organise day-to-day work and travel effectively to carry out the investigation within a limited time and budget.

- To carry out other similar directed research in the subject if required, for example to carry out bibliographic searches or to obtain information from secondary sources in libraries.
- To comply with all GSA policies and procedures including Research Data Management and the GSA Research Ethics Policy.
- To report regularly to the collaborative leadership group.
- To assist the Principal Investigator in providing updates to QAA Scotland as funder of the project.

Relationships

Internal Contacts:

- Principal Investigator
- Administrative Officer Learning and Teaching Team

External Contacts:

- Co-Lead, Jamie Mackay, Royal Conservatoire Scotland
- Collaborative Leadership Group of the Creative Cluster
- QAA Scotland Enhancement Themes Team
- Scottish Higher Education Institutions' QET representatives

Person Specification

The Project Assistant will have to manage a high workload with strict constraints on time and budget. Candidates for the post will therefore ideally possess the following qualities.

- An ability to manage a workload consisting of many varied tasks;
- An effective approach to planning and organising work;
- Initiative and independence in carrying out a plan of work with minimum supervision;
- An ability to assimilate information in a variety of formats – numerical, visual, qualitative etc.;
- Attention to detail;
- Good presentation skills for a range of audiences;
- Excellent communication skills in person, on the telephone and by email and letter;
- A high level of tact, politeness and respect in dealing sensitively with people and institutions.

Terms and Conditions

Contract: Fixed Term – 5 months

Probationary Period: 1 Month

It is recognised that there is an inevitable 'settling in' period in any post. The probationary period is therefore an opportunity for the employee to fit within the culture of the School. It should also be determined during this time whether the job is in line with expectations as expressed in pre-appointment discussions, interview and as set out in the Job Description.

Salary: Grade 4, £22,876 - £25,728 per annum, pro rata

Hours: 7 hours per week

Holidays: 30 days plus 11 statutory holidays pro rata

Pension: Option to join the Local Government Superannuation Scheme

Notice Period: 1 month

APPENDIX I

Context

In summer 2017, QAA Scotland, in collaboration with the Scottish Higher Education sector agreed that the next three-year enhancement theme would focus on how the sector evidences the enhancements it makes to learning and teaching. In part the initial conversation was drawn from concerns regarding readiness to use metrics data sets effectively in the face of growing alignment of their use in Scottish Outcome Agreements and the English-based Teaching Excellence Framework.

Given the specific nature of creative practice-based disciplines, concern has been raised that the conversation about evidence should not be overly dominated by metrics and learning analytics. Methods of practice-based activity generate a range of artefacts, not always ones that sit easily with typical definitions of evidence (reports or raw numerical data). Additionally, creative practitioners are increasingly finding themselves facing requests from funders for forms of evaluation that do involve surveys attempting to put numerical outcomes to the impact of a performance, exhibition, or artefact.

We, therefore, need an exploration of how we create *rich*- and *enriching*- evidence. In this creative arts higher education needs an evidence base that is recognised by students, staff, and within the broader creative ecology for its:

- Insights into how we provide, through our learning and teaching regimes, the conditions to support the growth of creative student-practitioners' practices;
- Capacity to converse with students about enhancements in their learning and teaching environments and the impact of enhancements that have been and will be made over time;
- Relevance to the creative arts disciplines in assuring and evaluating the development of creative people as well as a creative workforce;
- Potentially disruptive nature (ie doesn't always sit easily alongside government required data sets)

With this in mind, GSA and RCS have initiated a creative arts collaborative cluster project composed of the following initial collaborators:

Name (of co-lead institutions):	Contact Details:
Glasgow School of Art Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	Vicky Gunn, Head of Learning and Teaching and Professor, v.gunn@gsa.ac.uk Jamie Mackay, Head of Post Graduate Learning & Teaching Programmes and Academic Development, J.Mackay@rcs.ac.uk
Name (of collaborating institutions):	Contact Details:
Duncan of Jordanstone, University of Dundee	Shaleph O'Neill, Head of Communication Design s.j.oneill@dundee.ac.uk

	Jeanette Paul, Deputy Dean and Professor, j.m.paul@dundee.ac.uk
School of Creative Industries, Edinburgh Napier University	Pauline Miller Judd, Dean of Arts & Creative Industries, P.MillerJudd@napier.ac.uk
Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh	Stuart Bennett, Principal s.bennett@ed.ac.uk
Queen Margaret University	Anthony Schrag, Lecturer in Creative Industries and Cultural Management aschrag@gmu.ac.uk

The project is designed to achieve:

- *Building capacity* for the Visual and Performing Arts across Scotland to come to terms with the new metrics being used to judge the effectiveness of our learning and teaching at the same time as challenging dependence on them as 'evidence' by developing Arts centered forms of evaluation and evidence.
- *Finding sustainable ways to communicate* how we are improving student learning and experience in general to communities likely to employ or commission our graduates as well as those who regulate teaching quality/ excellence.
- *Trying to create new forms of evidence* that show how what we do is not easily defined as a mechanism but rather sits within a creative ecology and, therefore, that whilst we'll use metrics as required, what we really value is practice-based, creative evidence that adds value within an ecology and is also emergent from that ecology.

The Brief

As part of engagement in this theme, key questions that a creative arts cluster needs to address are:

- What methods / different types of evidence as relevant to the Creative Practices can we develop to mitigate the dependence on numerical data? Can we draw on emerging research practices within the creative arts to address the impact of how we improve our teaching? Might new technologies evolving from digital design play a role in this as well as practice-based research methods?
- How can we demonstrate that creative practice outcomes as evidence of teaching enhancement are reliable and valuable? How might alternative creative practices (from immersive and participatory workshops to simulated activities to physical artefacts as an outcome of learning a creative practice) be translated into evidence? How do these activities also provide a context for understanding the impact of our teaching activity in both technical / practical shifts in outcomes, as well as in terms of the soft power as cultural influencers that creative practice education aims to inculcate?
- How do we manage small numbers in the face of big data? How do we clarify why small numbers makes the metrics much less reliable to use for making decisions about changing practice? And how do we remind big HEIs and regulators that specialist HEIs can't rely on datasets in the manner a bigger institution might?

- How can we use data to inform Creative Industries and beyond about what we do in higher education now?

The collaborative leadership group recognize that this is just the beginning of a much larger conversation about how the creative arts are developing pedagogically and the role played in this by the interactions between learning and teaching regimes and the creative ecology and also staff with students. The initial imperative of this work (for year 1) is to clarify these interactions and the current evidence drawn on by the sector.

Year 1 Deliverables

1. Briefing paper on the relationship between teaching enhancements, evidence, and relationships with the Creative Ecologies in Scotland;
2. Plan of year 2 based on the needs identified in year 1.
3. Day long symposium on “communicating the evidence of our teaching enhancements to those who employ our graduates” and possibly invite Creative Industries Federation, NESTA, Creative Scotland, Saltire, Entrepreneurial Scotland, and CHEAD to have representation. (Ideally in June 2018 after main assessment periods).

The deliverables, particularly the briefing paper, need to set out clearly for teaching staff, students, and possible employers that a significant change is happening to how the Creative Arts are being held accountable by funders, especially government funders, and that this has implications for how we enhance learning and teaching in degree programmes (at all levels of the SCQF).

The project assistant's job would be to gather all the narratives around this together and help the project team develop a usable briefing. The intention here is that a student would be the project assistant. In effect, this would be a student-engagement and communication project assistant.

The symposium would have the briefing (which will be provocative as well as educative) as a starting point and be about finding better ways to have the conversation about:

- how evidence works forward to enable enhancing the creative students' learning and broader experience,
- how it also works 'backward' to determine what the fundamentals of a creative arts education in higher education needs to look like as we move forward in a time of linked data etc.

There is an appetite in the sector for this in the research arena under the rubric of creative ecologies. Because of the nature of the creative arts, this appetite needs to cross the boundaries of the research community and be part of the daily conversation in both teaching enhancement and awareness raising amongst small and medium sized employers of creative graduates. CHEAD will have a big Creative Ecologies and sustainable creative industries conference in Cardiff in April and the cluster should ideally have a showing at this (mainly researchers) in terms of: a Scottish holistic approach to creative ecologies as an evidence-based enhancement to learning and teaching that sits in the middle of the research-teaching nexus.