The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review 2018/19

Postgraduate Programme Review (PPR) Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) 7-8 March 2019

Final report

Section A-Introduction

Scope of the review

Range of provision considered by the review:

EMiLA	Landscape Architecture
MA	Art, Space and Nature
MA	Contemporary Art Practice
MA	Contemporary Art Theory
MA	Design for Change
MA	Design Informatics
MA	Film Directing
MA	Glass
MA	Graphic Design
MA	Illustration
MA	Interior Design
MA	Product Design

MArch	Architecture

MFA	Art	Space	and	Nature

MFA Animation

MFA Contemporary Art Practice

MFA Design Informatics

MFA Fashion
MFA Film Directing

MFA Glass

MFA Graphic Design
MFA Illustration
MFA Jewellery

MFA Performance Costume

MFA Textiles

MLA Landscape Architecture

MMus Musicology

MSc Acoustics and Music Technology
MSc Advanced Sustainable Design
MSc Architectural and Urban Design
MSc Architectural Conservation
MSc Architectural History and Theory

MSc Architectural Project Management (Online Learning)

MSc Art in the Global Middle Ages
MSc Composition for Screen
MSc Cultural Landscapes
MSc Design and Digital Media

MSc Digital Composition and Performance

MSc Digital Media Design

MSc History of Art, Theory and Display

MSc Landscape and Wellbeing

MSc Material Practice

MSc Modern and Contemporary Art

MSc Sound Design

MSc Urban Strategies and Design

MSc by Research Architecture

MSc by Research Collections and Curating Practices

MSc by Research Cultural Studies

MSc by Research Digital Media and Culture

MSc by Research History of Art

MSc by Research Interdisciplinary Creative Practices

MSc by Research Music

MSc by Research Reflective Design Practices

MSc by Research Sound Design

PhD/MPhil Architecture

PhD/MPhil Art
PhD/MPhil Design
PhD/MPhil History of Art

PhD/MPhil Landscape Architecture

PhD/MPhil Music

PhD Architecture by Design

PhD Cultural Studies

PhD Creative Music Practice
PhD Musical Composition

The PPR of ECA consisted of:

- The University's remit for internal review (listed in Appendix 1)
- The subject specific remit for the review (listed in Appendix 2)
- The Reflective Report and additional material provided in advance of the review (listed in Appendix 3)
- The visit by the review team including consideration of further material (also listed in Appendix 3)
- The final report produced by the review team
- Action by the Subject Area/School and others to whom recommendations were remitted following the review

Membership of review team:

Mrs Gill Aitken	Convenor	Edinburgh Medical School, University of Edinburgh
Dr Mel Dodd	External	Spatial Practices Programme, Central St Martins, University
		of the Arts London
Prof Alison	External	School of the Arts, English and Drama, Loughborough
Yarrington		University
Dr Daniel Clegg	Internal	School of Social and Political Science, University of
		Edinburgh
Ms Meg Moodie	Student	School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of
		Edinburgh
Dr Charlotte	Administrator	Academic Services, University of Edinburgh
Matheson		

Situate Subject Area/School within its College

ECA is one of twelve Schools which make up the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) within the University of Edinburgh.

ECA was formerly separate to the University of Edinburgh, although the University of Edinburgh previously validated ECA degrees. On 1 August 2011, ECA merged with the University of Edinburgh, and with the University's School of Arts, Culture and Environment, to form a new, enlarged Edinburgh College of Art within the University. ECA is now based within the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) and made up of five subject areas, referred to as 'Schools' within ECA: Architecture and Landscape Architecture (ESALA), School of Art, School of Design, History of Art and the Reid School of Music.

In order to avoid confusion, this document will refer to CAHSS (College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) and ECA (Edinburgh College of Art), avoiding the term 'College'.

Physical location and summary of facilities

ECA is situated in four locations in central Edinburgh: Lauriston Place, Minto House and Maltings, Alison House and Forrest Hill. Music is mainly located in Alison House in Bristo Square; History of Art in the Hunter Building in Lauriston Place; ESALA in Minto House (including the Maltings workshops which adjoin Minto House), the Lauriston Architecture Building and Hunter Building; and Art and Design in the ECA Main Building, Hunter Building and Evolution House, all part of the Lauriston Place campus. There is a large postgraduate student study space based within the Evolution House.

There is currently a library collection spread across two locations within ECA in Evolution House and Minto House and students also use University library facilities in the University's Main Library in George Square and elsewhere. Studios, workshops, teaching and study space are based across the campus. There is a cafe in the Hunter Building for staff and student use.

There is currently an estate development strategy in place for ECA, with plans to bring all subject areas together into a central space in the Lauriston campus.

Date of previous review

The previous ECA Postgraduate Programme Review was held in March 2013.

Reflective Report:

The reflective report was prepared by Dr Richard Anderson, Head of the Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (ESALA); ECA Director of Learning and Teaching (PG) [2017-19], with input from:

- Catriona Elder, Head of the ECA Postgraduate Office [2017-18];
- Olivia Eadie, Head of the ECA Postgraduate Office;
- Olwen Gorie, Head of ECA UG Teaching Organisation;
- Prof Neil Cox, ECA PGR Director;
- Dr Jill Burke, ECA Director of Quality.

An early draft of the reflective report was discussed at an ECA PGT Subcommittee Meeting, with student representatives present. A developed draft was circulated to the ECA Planning and Resources Committee; the ECA Director of Quality; Heads of UG and PG Teaching Organisations; and Student Representatives. The report was circulated for consultation to members of the ECA PG Board of Studies, the ECA PGT Subcommittee, and the ECA PG Executive Meetings. Student representatives attended and participated in these meetings.

The report was signed off by Stuart Bennett, Acting ECA Principal.

Section B - main report

1 Strategic overview

- 1.1The review panel recognises the significant progress that has been made by ECA since the last postgraduate programme review in terms of integrating into the University. Members of ECA management speak of ECA being at a 'turning point', but feel there is still work to do in aligning ECA within the wider University, in exploring ways to build stronger links between subject areas within ECA and in promoting interdisciplinarity across ECA. The panel note that change will continue with the new estates strategy and in-coming head of ECA but **recommend** that early consideration be given to enhancements to postgraduate provision, and enhancements carried out expeditiously, to allow curricular developments to inform decisions on physical estate.
- 1.2 The review panel **commends** ECA's progress in continuing to integrate into the wider University, and their positive relationship with CAHSS and the University as a whole. The management team has judged this progress to be extremely positive, whilst acknowledging that cultural issues around pedagogy have taken a long time to resolve following the merger of ECA with the University of Edinburgh in 2011. The ECA management team feel they have a strong voice within the University, and that intellectual, administrative and other links within CAHSS and the wider University are strong.
- 1.3 The panel **commends** the diversity and breadth of programmes and courses across ECA. There are currently plans in place to develop the ECA site to physically bring subjects into closer proximity to each other. The review team notes that both plans for the physical estate and links with the Edinburgh Futures Institute will provide exciting new opportunities for ECA in the future, but will also require ECA to place a strong focus on curricular developments to further strengthen the portfolio. Curriculum development should inform the design of spaces, an important factor in ensuring that these remain future-proof.
- 1.4 The panel also **commends** the positive steps being taken within ECA to gain a shared understanding of practice-based research, through subject-level and ECA-wide discussions about the meaning and purpose of practice-based research, and the terminology used to describe such research. The panel **recommends** consolidating emerging initiatives to develop a more distinctive and confident culture of practice-based research within ECA. The panel further **recommends** that the postgraduate strategy recommended in Section 1.5 take greater account of the specific challenges for students undertaking practice-based research.
- 1.5 The review team notes that many students and staff members do not feel themselves to be part of a wider ECA community, identifying most clearly with their subject area. The panel **recommends** that the ECA leadership team work with colleagues at all levels and across all subject areas to collectively articulate a shared vision and sense of purpose in terms of the culture and identity of ECA. The panel **further recommends** the articulation of a clear postgraduate strategy. **Sub-recommendations** for areas of focus within the postgraduate strategy are noted throughout this report, and summarised in Section C.
- 1.6 The review team note that PGR directors have established a constructive working relationship across ECA subject areas and articulated a considered developmental approach. The panel **commends** the positioning of student research within research groups, however note that some PGR students state they are unaware of the existence of these research groups. The panel **suggests** that the existence of research groups

should be advertised more widely to PGR students, and stronger student engagement with these groups should be encouraged by PGR directors.

- 1.7 The review team is impressed with ECA's strong commitment towards building a culture of interdisciplinarity within ECA, and **commends** several initiatives:
 - PGR scholarships offered by ECA which prioritise projects involving interdisciplinary work;
 - The strategy of allowing all subject areas access to technical workshops. This is an excellent way of encouraging interdisciplinarity and community;
 - The establishment of Interdisciplinary Supervision Protocol, providing clear guidelines on how to establish interdisciplinary supervision panels;
 - The MSc Research Collections and Curating Practices. The review team wish to highlight this as a good example of an interdisciplinary programme which crosses the whole of ECA, and makes the most of being physically situated in Edinburgh. The panel believe this programme would be a helpful model to be further explored by other areas, especially as it also builds on efforts to increase placements and advance the employability of its students.
- 1.8 The Review Panel notes that there was limited postgraduate Architecture representation within the review, especially in relation to the MArch professional accredited programme, and that this has restricted the recommendations and commendations that can be made in relation to the Architecture subject area and its relationship to ECA. This has also limited the extent to which the panel have been able to explore the how the uneven size of this subject area impacts upon the rest of ECA.

2. Enhancing the student experience

2.1 Supporting students in their learning

- 2.1.1 The review panel **commends** the work of the ECA PGT and PGR administration and student support team. Both staff and students report that administrative and pastoral support for postgraduate students within ECA is strong, and that the administration and support team are doing an excellent job despite limited resources. The review panel notes that the number of staff employed in administrative and student support roles is small for the size of ECA, and that staff turnover for PGT support roles within the Postgraduate Office (PGO) is high, due to limited opportunities for administrative staff to gain promotion within ECA. The panel **recommends** that ECA School management consider increasing resources within the PGO office to allow these issues to be addressed.
- 2.1.2 The panel **commends** the clear commitment to high-quality teaching and academic support within ECA. Postgraduate taught students report good relationships with their Programme Directors, and postgraduate research students report strong relationships with their PhD supervisors.

2.2. Listening to and responding to the Student Voice

- 2.2.1 Postgraduate research student involvement in the Student Staff Liaison Committee is clear, and PGR students take a proactive role in addressing any concerns that they have. However many postgraduate taught students are not aware of the existence of a Student Staff Liaison Committee, and as such are unclear about mechanisms for raising and resolving issues relating to their studies. Both PGR and PGT students express some doubts about how seriously their concerns are considered by staff.
- 2.2.2 Key concerns reported by PGR students are the quality, suitability and provision of working space, access to resources needed for their research and the fairness and transparency of processes for allocating resources such as desk space and research funding. PGR students highlighted the importance of there being a clear, open and consistent process for allocating resources such as desk space so that students did not feel unfairly disadvantaged.

- 2.2.3 The key concerns mentioned by PGT students are issues of overcrowding in workshops, difficulties in enrolling on their preferred courses due to oversubscription of PGT courses by undergraduate students, and issues relating to PGT programmes which attempt to act as both conversion and specialisation pathways. This speaks to some lack of clarity relating to PGT strategy.
- 2.2.4 Many students within ECA note that they do not feel part of an ECA-wide academic community, although do typically feel part of a smaller community within their respective programmes or research areas. There are few ECA-wide social events for students, and on the most part any such events need to be organised by students. There are currently no ECA-wide fora which allow students to present their work to other students and staff members within ECA. The panel note the particular importance of developing students' sense of being part of an ECA community and the positive effect this can have on the student experience. This applies to all students but is particularly important to the high numbers of EU and international students within ECA, many of whom are enrolled on one-year PGT programmes.
- 2.2.5 The panel **recommends** that future postgraduate strategies put together by ECA should incorporate opportunities for ECA students and staff members to socialise and share their research outside of their specific subject areas. Specifically, they **recommend** establishing an ECA-wide PGR forum to be attended by both students and staff members This should be an annual opportunity for all PGR students to present their work to a wider audience than their own supervisory team and subject area colleagues.
- 2.2.6 The panel also **recommends** that ECA identify and implement ways to better integrate research students into the research culture, noting that the lack of transparency and consistency of some existing processes, such as desk and funding allocation, is hindering students' engagement with their studies. Both of these recommendations support the subject-specific remit item on Community.
- 2.2.7 The relationships between postgraduate research students and their supervisors, and between postgraduate taught students and Programme Directors, were reported as being strong and constructive. The panel noted that the mentoring scheme for PGT students by PhD students was an area of good practice. PGR students considered themselves to be developing their autonomy as researchers, and were considered to be early career researchers by staff within ECA.

2.3 Learning and Teaching

- 2.3.1 The review panel are impressed with the strong commitment to teaching articulated by the ECA senior leadership team. Programme directors appear to work well together, and demonstrate a commitment to finding ways to improve the interdisciplinary nature of programmes. The review team **commends** the new *Protocols for Interdisciplinary Supervision* document, which sets out clear guidelines for cross-subject supervision of PGR students.
- 2.3.2 PGT students report that in general they are satisfied with their learning experiences. However, some PGT students raised concerns that they have been forced to take undergraduate-level courses as part of their programme due to their preferred postgraduate choices being taken by undergraduate students. This has greatly reduced their ability to specialise in their preferred areas of study. PGT students who are converting from a different subject at undergraduate level state that they sometimes need to rely heavily on the help of their classmates to master skills required for their programme, and PGT students with a undergraduate background in the same subject they are studying at Masters level sometimes experience strong overlap between material covered at undergraduate level and material covered within the first few months of their PGT programme. The panel **recommends** that these issues are taken into account in the recommended Postgraduate Strategy, with a clear articulation of the ethos and distinctiveness of PGT study within ECA.

2.3.3 The panel note the positive relationship ECA have developed in the management of joint degree programmes such as the European Master in Landscape Architecture Programme (EMiLA) which is taught between ESALA, Leibniz University Hanover, Universität Politecnica de Catalunya, Amsterdam University of the Arts and Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Paysage Versailles.

2.4 Assessment and Feedback

- 2.4.1 Types of assessment vary greatly across ECA, given the wide range of subject areas and the mix of practical and theory-based learning. The review team note the mix of individual and collaborative, theory and practical-based assessment. At PGR level, options exist for students to undertake a thesis, practice-based research or a mix of both. Students undertaking practice-based research have a clear idea of how their research will be assessed.
- 2.4.2 Online students and international students report having initial difficulties adjusting to assessment requirements and adjusting to the marking schemes within their programmes. Marking within ECA is viewed by these students as 'harder' than some other, non-UK institutions. This makes it difficult for these students to understand how well they are doing. This is an issue experienced in other areas of the university relating to the common marking scheme and the differing expectations of those students used to a Grade Point Average (GPA) system. The panel **suggests** that course organisers direct all students towards information about the University's extended marking scheme prior to the submission of their first assessments and consider including this in any induction activities. The panel further suggests that course organisers consider the use of exemplar assignments to illustrate grading.

2.5 Accessibility, Inclusivity and Widening Participation

Gender diversity of supervision staff

2.5.1 The review panel is concerned by the gender imbalance in ECA leadership positions, as represented at the PPR sessions, given the importance of students being taught and supervised by a diverse staff population. However, statistics provided in the reflective report show that the number of female PGR supervisors within ECA is increasing. The review panel **commends** the increase in the number of female PGR supervisors within ECA, and looks forward to seeing how this will progress into a higher number of female academic staff within senior roles.

2.6 Learning environment (physical and virtual)

On-campus students

- 2.6.1 ECA had asked the review team to explore space provision for postgraduate students as part of the review. PGR students expressed specific concerns about the lack of desk space for first year, first semester students. Students are concerned the current lack of shared working space with other PGR students acts as a barrier to new students becoming part the postgraduate researcher community, and could lead to new students feeling isolated from their peers. PGR students have described that processes for assigning desk spaces can differ from what students had been told they would be, which has led to some students feeling that they have been unfairly treated and feelings of dissatisfaction.
- 2.6.2 PGR students with desks in the shared student space in Evolution house are concerned by the close proximity of the work spaces for practice- and theory-based students, given their different requirements. Practice-based students often need to employ sound when they are working, and it is therefore difficult for their working space to be situated directly next door to a space in which students need quiet in order to work. Students involved in physically creating large objects as part of their research are restricted in where they can work and often require more space than desk-based students, given the difficulties for them in moving their research materials around.
- 2.6.3 The review team notes a disparity in the quality and type of spaces provided for PGT students on different programmes. The team is impressed with the excellent project

working spaces for Architecture students within the studio they visited, however are concerned by frustrations expressed by some PGT students on other programmes about their lack of access to any dedicated studio space. In at least one case, this has led to students renting their own studio space in order to have access to a suitable space to work. Students based in Alison House note that the student space provided to them is so cold that they find it difficult to work in there, even when wrapped in blankets. This issue has been raised by students before, but not yet resolved.

- 2.6.4 The panel is concerned by the level of dissatisfaction about student spaces, especially given the role that such spaces can play in making students feel part of an academic community. The panel recognise that there is a long-term estates strategy in ECA which may resolve some of the issues raised by students, but believe the issue of space needs to be considered more urgently. The panel **recommends** that ECA review all postgraduate taught and research student spaces to ensure:
 - Spaces are of sufficient quality, consistent, available and appropriate to student need:
 - Spaces are fairly distributed according to need;
 - The process of space allocation is made clear to students and is consistently applied;
 - All students have access to the space required to complete their studies.

Support for Online Students

- 2.6.5 There are approximately 90 online students within ECA, many of whom live outside of the UK. Of the two online students spoken to by the panel, both report being generally satisfied with the way in which their online programmes are taught, but have concerns about the length of time that it can sometimes take to get a response from lecturers to urgent questions relating to their coursework.
- 2.6.6 Online students report that they sometimes felt isolated from their peers and are strongly appreciative of efforts to link their learning more closely with that of on-campus students. The practice of live-streaming lectures with a representative present in person to ask questions on behalf of the online students is an example of good practice highlighted by the panel. Students report that having a representative present in lectures makes them feel like involved members of the class, rather than passive observers.
- 2.6.7 Despite the generally positive experiences reported by online students, the review team are concerned by the lack of pedagogical consideration of the specific needs of online learners on the online MSc Digital and Media Design programme, given student's reported experiences of the way in which material is structured and presented to online learners. The panel **recommends** that as part of a wider postgraduate strategy for ECA, further attention should be paid to curriculum delivery methods and student support for online students, with an evidence-based approach towards the design of online learning experiences that scaffold student learning (through strategies such as chunking and active learning). This should include more opportunities for online students to interact with course material, rather than the current focus of relying on virtual access to on-campus sessions for online learners.
- 2.6.8 The panel **recommends** that consideration should be given to the purpose and future of online learning as a whole within ECA as part of a wider ECA postgraduate strategy.

2.7 Development of Employability and Graduate Attributes

2.7.1 The review team met with a selection of ECA staff and a representative from the University Careers Service to consider "Skills Development and Employability" as a subject-specific remit item. In terms of relationships with potential employers and opportunities for placements, each subject area within ECA has a Director of Outreach,

responsible for strategic partnerships with external agencies. These roles are overseen by an ECA Director of Outreach. ECA has established formal relationships with specific galleries (such as the Fruit Market Gallery) and other institutions within Edinburgh.

- 2.7.2 Some academic staff members within ECA have difficulties in identifying future employers for their graduates due to the diverse range of careers that graduates can move into and the fact that students may go on to become freelance workers, rather than having a single employer. Some students enter their programmes without a clear idea of what postgraduate study involves, whereas others (particularly within professionally accredited courses) see postgraduate study as a clear step towards a specific career.
- 2.7.3 ECA has been a key stakeholder in the development of the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI). ECA staff believe EFI will provide increased opportunities for working across disciplinary boundaries and rethinking curricular design. The review panel were impressed by the fact that many of the approaches which will be used within EFI relate to interdisciplinary work already pioneered by ECA in programmes such as Design and Digital Media, and **commend** ECA for this. The panel noted that this is an example that others can follow in aiming towards an interdisciplinary approach.
- 2.7.4 ECA staff noted that there is not always time within the PGT curriculum to allow for student placements, although there are some internships worth 20 or 40 credits that allow students to work on-site in certain areas. Within the Creative Informatics group, a Development Manager has been working to foster relationships with external agencies (e.g. Codebase). This does not necessarily involve internships for students, but provides opportunities for students to shadow company employees for a few days per semester.
- 2.7.5 ECA staff noted that it often takes time for a student internship to be of value to a business, but that placements are useful in terms of showing students the pace at which creative/design companies work. However, the fact that companies work at such a fast pace makes it difficult to arrange meaningful placements for students, or set up links with teaching, as projects move quickly and often occur on an ad hoc basis. ECA staff noted the difficulty of making the most of available opportunities, given the structure of the academic year and the need for forward planning. They expressed the need for courses that will work as "envelopes" to encompass placements, as a way of addressing some of these concerns. One example of good practice noted by the review team is the Projects Office established by Architecture. The Projects Office has set up residencies for the first time this year in order to make live projects coherent and visible. Typically these are micro-residencies, held over the summer, with student workshops run over a few days. The review team **commend** this approach and suggest that this model could be shared across other parts of ECA.
- 2.7.6 Review team members were surprised by the lack of ECA PGT dissertation projects involving placements, given that this is a common way to incorporate placements in PGT programmes in other Schools and institutions. Dissertation placements were previously commonplace in History of Art, and staff were currently investigating ways to bring these back. In theory, if students wanted to do a placement they could take a 10 credit undergraduate course to do so, however currently students were not actively encouraged to do this.
- 2.7.7 The Director of Outreach is responsible for championing the Edinburgh Award, used by the University to promote student activity outside of the curriculum. A Joint Enterprise Edinburgh Award was launched a few years ago through LaunchEd. LaunchEd itself, a University umbrella agency for supporting start-ups, provides opportunities for prospective students or graduate entrepreneurs to receive funding and/or mentoring. LaunchEd works with graduates up to three years after graduation, is involved in some ECA courses, and can be linked to the curriculum.

- 2.7.8 In the PGT student session, students articulated good examples of links between their programmes and employability, which had encouraged them to apply for their programmes in the first place. For instance, some Masters students applied for programmes in the knowledge that graduates from these programmes would be sought after by specific employers.
- 2.7.9 The MLA outreach course is another emerging example of good practice. Discussions with staff on PGT programmes reveal they are increasingly thinking about how to integrate outreach and placements within programmes to increase employability, but this is often being done at programme level. The panel **suggests** that, as School, ECA should take a more ambitious approach towards integrating placements and outreach opportunities within programmes to increase the employability of students.
- 2.7.10 The panel notes that there are pockets of good practice across the school regarding skills development and employability, but there is currently no single forum for pooling ideas and resources. Employability issues are strongly embedded in curriculum development, but there is potential for more strategic, integrated thinking about employability across the whole of ECA. The panel **recommends** that the recommended ECA-wide postgraduate strategy should include strategic consideration of skills development and employability for its postgraduate students.
- 2.7.11 The review team notes that there are obvious tensions between the dual purposes of PGT programmes as both specialisations and conversion courses for students without an undergraduate background in a specific area. These tensions were mentioned by both PGT students and staff members. The ambiguity over the purpose of certain programmes in turn has implications for the graduate attributes expected on such programmes, and the employability of graduates. In recognition of this issue, some programmes are moving away from being conversion courses, and are beginning to be more rigorous in their selection criteria.
- 2.7.12 Students have suggested the value of providing additional pre-programme short courses over the summer for conversion students entering programmes without an undergraduate degree or equivalent background knowledge of the area of study. Students also suggest that recruitment information should provide clearer information about the purpose of specific programmes (specialisation vs conversion) and the graduate attributes these programmes are expected to produce. The panel **suggests** that Programme Directors take these concerns into consideration as part of a wider ECA postgraduate strategy.
- 2.7.13 The panel was concerned by the practice of joint teaching across undergraduate and postgraduate levels within the same course (see Section 2.3.2). The panel **recommends** that in creating an ECA-wide Postgraduate Strategy, there should be a strong emphasis on the clear delineation between undergraduate and postgraduate level teaching. The strategy should specify which PGT programmes are intended as conversion programmes (programmes for students with no undergraduate background in a specific subject area) and which as specialisations (programmes allowing students with an undergraduate background in a specific subject area to further specialise within this area), and this information should be made clear to potential applicants.

2.8 Supporting and developing staff

- 2.8.1 The panel **commends** staff supporting postgraduate tutors and demonstrators and their acknowledgement of the valuable role tutors and demonstrators play in creating a link between the undergraduate and postgraduate student communities. The panel noted several examples of excellent tutor support at course level, including:
 - A centrally coordinated, transparent process for advertising tutor and demonstrator positions

- Induction sessions for new tutors and demonstrators;
- The standardised use of interviews for students applying for tutors and demonstrators positions;
- Regular group tutor and demonstrator meetings for courses
- Ability for mature students with relevant background to be able to contribute to teaching on PGT courses in some instances
- The requirement for supervisors to provide reference statements for tutors and demonstrators applications
- Tutors and demonstrators being given autonomy and encouraged to develop skills by trying out different approaches to their teaching
- Tutor and demonstrator handbooks which set out clear expectations about the role, provide links to sources of further information, etc.
- The practice (in some courses) of collating tutoring resources which can be used by new and existing tutors to help them plan their teaching
- Moderating/marking meetings with detailed feedback
- Peer observation (although this is not compulsory and the review team noted that the use of peer observation was inconsistent across different subjects)
- 2.8.2 Academic staff supporting tutors and demonstrators confirmed that postgraduates who want to gain teaching experience are put on limited hours teaching experience contracts and normally limited to working no more than 9 hours per week. Most PGR students do at least some tutoring during their PhD studies. Responsibility for monitoring tutor and demonstrator performance sits with Course Organisers, with broader issues dealt with by administrative staff and the Head of Subject.
- 2.8.3 The panel **suggests** greater sharing of good practice and school-level leadership of issues affecting tutors and demonstrators. The panel **suggests** that ECA set up a tutors' forum to allow issues to be raised by tutors and demonstrators. This will provide acknowledgement of the fact that tutors and demonstrators are a group with specific similarities and needs, and will promote cross-subject sharing of ideas and resources.
- 2.8.4 Tutors and demonstrators report that support from Course Organisers is very good. However, many feel that they needed further assistance in understanding how to use University systems (e.g. for recording marks), beyond the information provided at the initial induction session. The existing induction session is very HR-focused and includes new lecturers as well as tutors. This means that the information is not always specifically aimed at tutors and demonstrators.
- 2.8.5 The review team noted inconsistencies with the way tutors and demonstrators are paid across different subject areas, with some tutors receiving more paid preparation time than others, and only some subjects paying for tutors and demonstrators to hold office hours. A number of tutors and demonstrators expressed concerns that they find it difficult to prepare for tutorials without attending lectures, but that they are not provided with enough hours of paid preparation time to be able to attend lectures. Many tutors and demonstrators are unaware of opportunities to gain accreditation for their teaching work, or do not have the time to take these up. Students who have taken advantage of Institute for Academic Development (IAD) courses to improve their teaching report that these are useful, but not all tutors and demonstrators report being aware of these courses.
- 2.8.6 The review team are strongly concerned by reports about delays in tutors and demonstrators receiving contracts. In some cases, tutors and demonstrators have been expected to begin tutoring several weeks before viewing or signing their contracts. The Review Panel finds this practice unacceptable. Students placed in this position have been unable to gain access to University systems and information that they need in order to do their jobs during this time, and without a contract have no guarantee that they will be paid

for the work they have done. Students who raised this issue stated that they understood that delays in receiving contracts were due to HR staff being very busy at the start of the academic year, but questioned why jobs were not advertised earlier if this was a known problem. The review panel **strongly recommends** that ECA take immediate steps to ensure all tutors and demonstrators receive a contract of employment before they commence any teaching duties. Teaching planning and allocation deadlines should be created in consultation with HR and firmly adhered to so that there is sufficient time for HR to process contracts for tutors and demonstrators before they begin teaching.

- 2.8.7 Some tutors and demonstrators also noted concerns about the lack of transparency in the way in which they are paid, with their pay slips failing to provide a breakdown of hours for which they have been paid, despite being paid on an hourly basis. Where pay varies across different months, this makes it very difficult to ensure they are being paid correctly. The panel **suggests** that all ECA tutors and demonstrators are provided with details of an ECA HR contact to assist them with any HR issues they may encounter, including information about the specific hours of work for which they have been paid.
- 2.8.8 Tutors and demonstrators also raised concerns about their ability to provide support to students with learning profiles from the Disability Service, noting that the only way to currently access this information is for it to be passed on to them by Course Organisers. This leads to the risk of tutors and demonstrators being unaware of additional learning needs of the students in their classes or additional considerations that need to be made when marking students' essays (although students are unaware of this having led to any problems so far). The panel **suggests** the creation and implementation of an ECA-wide process to ensure that tutors and demonstrators are reliably informed about the specific learning needs of their students in a timely fashion.

3. Assurance and Enhancement of provision

3.1 Setting and maintaining academic standards

- 3.1.1 The ECA Senior Management team noted that they made use of the opportunity to think about how to engage in meaningful quality assurance practices when the new Quality Assurance Director was appointed in 2016. They are committed to making Quality Assurance (QA) useful and ensuring it works well, and aim for any changes that are made on the basis of QA to be evidence-based. A QA working group of around 6-7 people meet twice a year. They receive data from student surveys, and are able to analyse this to understand the areas where further work needs to be carried out. The size of the group makes it easy for decisions to be made, and for liaison with Heads of Subject.
- 3.1.2 The Panel **commends** the nascent but strong developing QA processes, in particular the work of the current Director of Quality, and the encouraging focus in ECA on QA being used for enhancement purposes. The use of an annual theme for quality enhancement purposes is an example of good practice, and the Board of Studies is an important vehicle for strategic cross-subject discussions.
- 3.1.3 The panel notes that more work could be done by ECA in terms of using real-time evidence to inform a postgraduate admissions and recruitment strategy. In terms of Postgraduate Taught students, analysis of existing statistics has shown a significant decline in student numbers, especially in practice-based programmes where staff are concerned that potential students may not have access to the resources or space that they require. Although ECA staff have access to recruitment and admissions data from the University, there is no central University analysis of these numbers, leaving ECA to carry out this analysis themselves. There is currently an Intake Tracker dashboard, but this is only available at certain points throughout the academic cycle, and thus cannot be used as a year-round tool to show student admissions and recruitment statistics against targets in real time. The panel **recommends** that an admissions and recruitment strategy should form part of the recommended wider ECA postgraduate strategy.

3.2 Key themes and actions taken

3.2.1 The panel notes that there is evidence of a good system of analysis and response to external examiner comments across ECA. Documentation included as part of the review demonstrates that responses to examiner comments often outline specific actions which have been taken. The QA reports included as part of the review documentation show evidence of further reflections on a range of data metrics including PTES feedback, and of strategic overview toward areas requiring attention. It is clear that student survey feedback is taken seriously, with lowered PTES Scores (17/18 lowered 76%-68%) forming a subject and theme for action.

3.2.2 Expanding student numbers in courses, and corresponding demands on staff is a theme across ECA, and is reflected in the 2017 Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Validation Report for ESALA.

Section C - Review conclusions

Confidence statement

The review team found that ECA has effective management of the quality of the student learning experience, academic standards, and enhancement and good practice

Key Strengths and Areas of Positive Practice for sharing more widely across the institution

No	Commendation	Section in report
1	The review panel commends ECA's progress in continuing to integrate into the wider University, and their positive relationship with CAHSS and the University as a whole. The management team has judged this progress to be extremely positive, whilst acknowledging that cultural issues around pedagogy have taken a long time to resolve following the merger of ECA with the University of Edinburgh in 2011. The ECA management team feel they have a strong voice within the University, and that intellectual, administrative and other links within CAHSS and the wider University are strong.	1.2
2	The panel commends the diversity and breadth of programmes and courses across ECA.	1.3
3	 The review team is impressed with ECA's strong commitment towards building a culture of interdisciplinarity within ECA, and commends several initiatives: PGR scholarships offered by ECA which prioritise projects involving interdisciplinary work; The strategy of allowing all subject areas access to technical workshops. This is an excellent way of encouraging interdisciplinarity and community; The establishment of Interdisciplinary Supervision Protocol, providing clear guidelines on how to establish interdisciplinary supervision panels; The MSc Research Collections and Curating Practices. The review team wish to highlight this as a good example of an interdisciplinary programme which crosses the whole of ECA, and makes the most of being physically situated in Edinburgh. The panel believe this programme would be a helpful model to be further explored by other areas, especially as it also builds on efforts to increase placements and advance the employability of its students. 	1.7
4	The Panel commends the nascent but strong developing QA processes, in particular the work of the current Director of Quality, and the encouraging focus in ECA on QA being used for enhancement purposes. The use of an annual theme for quality enhancement purposes is an example of good practice, and the Board of Studies is an important vehicle for strategic cross-subject discussions.	3.1.2
5	The review panel commends the work of the ECA PGT and PGR administration and student support team. Both staff and students report that administrative and pastoral support for postgraduate students within ECA is strong, and that the administration and support team are doing an excellent job despite limited resources. The review panel notes that the number of staff employed in administrative and student support roles is small for the size of ECA, and that staff turnover for PGT support roles within the Postgraduate Office (PGO) is high, due to limited opportunities for administrative staff to gain promotion within ECA. The panel suggests	2.1.1

	that ECA School management consider increasing resources within the PGO office to allow these issues to be addressed.	
6	The panel commends the clear commitment to high-quality teaching and academic support within ECA. Postgraduate taught students report good relationships with their Programme Directors, and postgraduate research students report strong relationships with their PhD supervisors.	2.1.2
7	The review panel are impressed with the strong commitment to teaching articulated by the ECA senior leadership team. Programme Directors appear to work well together, and demonstrate a commitment to finding ways to improve the interdisciplinary nature of programmes. The review team commends the new Protocols for Interdisciplinary Supervision document, which sets out clear guidelines for cross-subject supervision of PGR students.	2.3.1
8	The review team note that PGR directors have established a constructive working relationship across ECA subject areas and articulated a considered developmental approach. The panel commends the positioning of student research within research groups,	1.6
9	The panel commends the positive steps being taken within ECA to gain a shared understanding of practice-based research, through subject-level and ECA-wide discussions about the meaning and purpose of practice-based research, and the terminology used to describe such research	1.4
10	One example of good practice noted by the review team is the Projects Office established by Architecture. The Projects Office has set up residencies for the first time this year in order to make live projects coherent and visible. Typically these are micro-residencies, held over the summer, with student workshops run over a few days. The review team commend this approach and suggest that this model could be shared across other parts of ECA.	2.7.5
11	The review panel commends the increase in the number of female PGR supervisors within ECA, and looks forward to seeing how this will progress into a higher number of female academic staff within senior roles.	2.5.1
12	The panel commends staff supporting postgraduate tutors and demonstrators and their acknowledgement of the valuable role tutors and demonstrators play in creating a link between the undergraduate and postgraduate student communities. The panel noted several examples of excellent tutor support at course level.	2.8.1
13	ECA has been a key stakeholder in the development of the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI). ECA staff believe EFI will provide increased opportunities for working across disciplinary boundaries and rethinking curricular design. The review panel were impressed by the fact that many of the approaches which will be used within EFI relate to interdisciplinary work already pioneered by ECA in programmes such as Design and Digital Media, and commend ECA for this. The panel noted that this is an example that others can follow in aiming towards an interdisciplinary approach.	2.7.3

Recommendations for enhancement/Areas for further development

Priority	Recommendation	Section in report	Responsibility of
1	The review panel strongly recommends that	2.8.6	Director of
	ECA take immediate steps to ensure all		Professional
	postgraduate tutors and demonstrators receive a		Services and ECA
			Senior

	contract of employment before they commence any teaching duties. Teaching planning and allocation deadlines should be created in consultation with HR and firmly adhered to so that there is sufficient time for HR to process contracts for tutors and demonstrators before they begin teaching.		Management Team
2	The panel note that change will continue with the new estates strategy and in-coming head of ECA but recommend that early consideration be given to enhancements to postgraduate provision, and enhancements carried out expeditiously, to allow curricular developments to inform decisions on physical estate	1.1	ECA Principal and ECA senior management team
3	The review team notes that many students and staff members do not feel themselves to be part of a wider ECA community, identifying most clearly with their subject area. The panel recommends that the ECA leadership team work with colleagues at all levels and across all subject areas to collectively articulate a shared vision and sense of purpose in terms of the culture and identity of ECA	1.5	ECA Principal and ECA senior management team
4	The panel further recommends the articulation of a clear postgraduate strategy.	1.5	PGR and PGT Programme Directors and Boards of Studies
	 The panel further recommends that the postgraduate strategy recommended in Section 1.5 take greater account of the specific challenges for students undertaking practice-based research. 	1.4	PGR Programme Directors
	The panel recommends that future postgraduate strategies put together by ECA should incorporate opportunities for ECA students and staff members to socialise and share their research outside of their specific subject areas. Specifically, they recommend establishing an ECA-wide PGR forum to be attended by both students and staff members This should be an annual opportunity for all PGR students to present their work to a wider audience than their own supervisory team and subject area colleagues	2.2.5	PGR Programme Directors
	PGT students report that in general they are satisfied with their learning experiences. However, some PGT students raised concerns that they have been forced to take undergraduate-level courses as part of their programme due to	2.3.2	PGT Programme Directors and Boards of Studies

	their preferred postgraduate choices being taken by undergraduate students. This has greatly reduced their ability to specialise in their preferred areas of study. PGT students who are converting from a different subject at undergraduate level state that they sometimes need to rely heavily on the help of their classmates to master skills required for their programme, and PGT students with a undergraduate background in the same subject they are studying at Masters level sometimes experience strong overlap between material covered at undergraduate level and material covered within the first few months of their PGT programme. The panel recommends that these issues are taken into account in the recommended Postgraduate Strategy, with a clear articulation of the ethos and distinctiveness of PGT study within ECA.		
•	Despite the generally positive experiences reported by online students, the review team are concerned by the lack of pedagogical consideration of the specific needs of online learners on the online MSc Digital and Media Design programme, given student's reported experiences of the way in which material is structured and presented to online learners. The panel recommends that as part of a wider postgraduate strategy for ECA, further attention should be paid to curriculum delivery methods and student support for online students, with an evidence-based approach towards the design of online learning experiences that scaffold student learning (through strategies such as chunking and active learning). This should include more opportunities for online students to interact with course material, rather than the current focus of relying on virtual access to on-campus sessions for online learners.	2.6.7	Programme Directors for online PGT programmes
•	The panel recommends that consideration should be given to the purpose and future of online learning as a whole within ECA as part of a wider ECA postgraduate strategy.	2.6.8	PGR and PGT Programme Directors and Boards of Studies
•	The panel recommends that the recommended ECA-wide postgraduate strategy should include strategic consideration of skills development and	2.7.10	PGR and PGT Programme Directors and Boards of Studies

	employability for its postgraduate students.		
	The panel recommends that in creating an ECA-wide Postgraduate Strategy, there should be a strong emphasis on the clear delineation between undergraduate and postgraduate level teaching. The strategy should specify which PGT programmes are intended as conversion courses programmes (programmes for students with no undergraduate background in a specific subject area) and which as specialisations (programmes allowing students with an undergraduate background in a specific subject area to further specialise within this area), and this information should be made clear to potential applicants.	2.7.13	PGT Programme Directors and Boards of Studies
	The panel recommends that an admissions and recruitment strategy should form part of the recommended wider ECA postgraduate strategy.	3.1.3	ECA Recruitment and Admission Strategy Group
5	The panel also recommends that ECA identify and implement ways to better integrate research students into the research culture, noting that the lack of transparency and consistency of some existing processes, such as desk and funding allocation, is hindering students' engagement with their studies.	2.2.6	PGR Director
6	The panel recommends that ECA review all postgraduate taught and research student spaces to ensure: • Spaces are of sufficient quality, consistent, available and appropriate to student need; • Spaces are fairly distributed according to need; • The process of space allocation is made clear to students and is consistently applied; • All students have access to the space required to complete their studies.	2.6.4	ECA Principal & Director of Professional Services
7	The panel recommends consolidating emerging initiatives to develop a more distinctive and confident culture of practice-based research within ECA.	1.4	ECA Principal, PGR Director and Subject Area PGR Leads
8	The panel recommends that ECA School management consider increasing resources within the PGO office to allow the issues to be addressed	2.1.1	Director of Professional Services and ECA Senior Management Team

Suggestions for noting

If an issue is minor but the review team nevertheless wants to flag it as a potentially useful action, it will be couched as a suggestion rather than a formal recommendation. Suggestions are not tracked in onward reporting.

Suggestion	Section in report
The panel suggests that the existence of research groups should be advertised more widely to PGR students, and stronger student engagement with these groups should be encouraged by PGR directors.	1.6
The panel suggests that course organisers direct all students towards information about the University's extended marking scheme prior to the submission of their first assessments and consider including this in any induction activities. The panel further suggests that course organisers consider the use of exemplar assignments to illustrate grading.	2.4.2
The panel suggests that, as School, ECA should take a more ambitious approach towards integrating placements and outreach opportunities within programmes to increase the employability of students.	2.7.9
Students have suggested the value of providing additional pre- programme short courses over the summer for conversion students entering PGT programmes without an undergraduate degree or equivalent background knowledge of the area of study. Students also suggest that recruitment information should provide clearer information about the purpose of specific programmes (specialisation vs conversion) and the graduate attributes these programmes are expected to produce. The panel suggests that Programme Directors take these concerns into consideration as part of a wider ECA postgraduate strategy.	2.7.12
The panel suggests greater sharing of good practice and school-level leadership of issues affecting tutors and demonstrators.	2.8.3
The panel suggests that ECA set up a tutors' forum to allow issues to be raised tutors and demonstrators. This will provide acknowledgement of the fact that postgraduate tutors and demonstrators are a group with specific similarities and needs, and will promote cross-subject sharing of ideas and resources.	2.8.3
The panel suggests that all ECA tutors and demonstrators are provided with details of an ECA HR contact to assist them with any HR issues they may encounter, including information about the specific hours of work for which they have been paid.	2.8.7
The panel suggests the creation and implementation of an ECA-wide process to ensure that tutors and demonstrators are reliably informed about the specific learning needs of their students in a timely fashion.	2.8.8

Appendices

Appendix 1: University remit

The University remit provides consistent coverage of key elements across all of the University's internal reviews (undergraduate and postgraduate).

It covers all credit bearing provision within the scope of the review, including:

- Provision delivered in collaboration with others
- Transnational education
- Work-based provision and placements
- Online and distance learning
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD)
- Provision which provides only small volumes of credit
- Joint/Dual Degrees
- Massive Open Online Courses MOOCs (even if non-credit bearing)

Under each of the headings, the Reflective Report should highlight areas of good practice as well as areas for further development and action planned.

1. Strategic overview

The strategic approach to:

- The management and resourcing of learning and teaching experience,
- The forward direction and the structures in place to support this.
- Developing business cases for new programmes and courses,
- To managing and reviewing its portfolio,
- To closing courses and programmes.

2. Enhancing the Student Experience

The approach to and effectiveness of:

- Supporting students in their learning
- Listening to and responding to the Student Voice
- Learning and Teaching
- Assessment and Feedback
- Accessibility, Inclusivity and Widening Participation
- Learning environment (physical and virtual)
- Development of Employability and Graduate Attributes
- Supporting and developing staff

3. Assurance and Enhancement of provision

The approach to and effectiveness of maintaining and enhancing academic standards and quality of provision in alignment with the University Quality Framework:

- Admissions and Recruitment
- Assessment, Progression and Achievement
- Programme and Course approval
- Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting
- Operation of Boards of Studies, Exam Boards, Special Circumstances
- External Examining, themes and actions taken
- Alignment with SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) level, relevant benchmark statements, UK Quality Code
- Accreditation and Collaborative activity and relationship with Professional/Accrediting bodies (if applicable)

Appendix 2: Subject specific remit

Subject specific remit items are proposed by the subject area and are issues or areas of development that they wish the review team to consider and comment on. The subject specific remit for the ECA postgraduate programme review consisted of the following items:

- Skills Development and Employability. These themes focus on the ability of students to identify meaningful future career paths that related to their study; developing key skills for employability; and successfully transitioning into employment after their studies
- Community, Space and Experience. These themes encompass the physical estate, work and study spaces, and the sense of student community across different sites, subject areas and types of practice.

Appendix 3: Additional information considered by review team

Prior to the review visit:

- School Quality Assurance Reports
 - o 2017-2018
 - 0 2016-2017
 - o 2015/16
- External Examiners summary reports:
 - 0 2017-2018
 - 0 2016-2017
 - 0 2015-2016
- Edinburgh College of Art Structure
- Edinburgh College of Art Professional Services Organisational chart
- Programme Handbooks
 - o Art
 - Interdisciplinary Creative Practices
 - Contemporary Art Practice
 - o Art MPhil PHD
 - History of Art
 - Collections & Curating Practices
 - History of Art (MSc)
 - History of Art (MScR)
 - History of Art MPhil PHD
 - Design
 - Animation
 - Design for change
 - Design Informatics
 - Fashion
 - Film Directing
 - o Glass
 - o Graphic Design
 - Illustration
 - o Interior Design
 - Jewellery
 - Landscape & Wellbeing
 - Performance Costume
 - Product Design
 - Textiles
 - Design MPhil PHD
 - o ESALA
 - o Advanced Sustainable Design
 - Architectural & Urban Design
 - Architectural Conservation
 - Architectural History
 - Architecture
 - Art, Space & Nature
 - Cultural Landscapes
 - Design & Digital Media
 - Digital Media & Culture

- Digital Media Design
- Landscape & Wellbeing
- Landscape Architecture
- Material Practice
- Urban Strategies & Design
- Architecture MScR
- o ESALA MPhil PHD
- Music
- Acoustics & Music Technology
- Composition for Screen
- Musicology
- Sound Design
- o MScR Music
- o Music MPhil PHD
- Programme Specification Information
- Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) reports
- ESALA Landscape Architecture MLA Re-accreditation return 2018
- Screen Academy Skillset Tick Accreditation
- Architects Registration Board website
- Architects Registration Board Application for Renewal of Prescription of Qualifications
- Statistical information:
 - o Completion rate of MSc by Research entrants report
 - Completion rate of PGT entrants report
 - Course results
 - Entrants report PGR
 - Entrants report PGT
 - Progression report
 - o PGR Progression and outcomes report
 - Student applications PGR
 - Student applications PGT
 - Students Studying Abroad
 - Equality and Diversity Student report
 - o School Background Data for first Destination Statistics (DHLE Survey) Research
 - School Background Data for first Destination Statistics (DHLE Survey) Taught
- Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) results and reflection
- Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) results and reflection
- Student Staff Liaison Committee meeting minutes (previous academic year)
- PGT Subject Area SSLCs:
 - Design
 - History of Art
- UG & PGT SSLC
 - Music
- PGR SSLC encompassing all ECA research programmes
- Responses from external body contacts in relation to remit:
 - o Comments from Architects Registration Board
 - Comments from Fruitmarket Gallery
 - o Comments from Universität Politecnica de Catalunya
 - Comments from Scottish Centre for Conservation Studies
 - o Comments from National Museums Scotland
 - Comments from Amsterdam University of the Arts
 - o Comments from Amsterdam Academy of Architecture
 - o Comments from Liebniz University Hanover

During the review visit:

- ECA Plan 2018/19
- ECA Outline Plan 2019-2022
- Interdisciplinary Supervision and Research Students: Current Protocol for Interdisciplinary Supervision

Appendix 4: Number of Students

Entrants by entry session and entry student type

	2014/ 5	2015/6	2016/7	2017/8	2018/9
Postgraduate Taught	419	495	568	490	465
Postgraduate Taught Visiting	3	5	4	8	3
TOTAL	422	500	572	498	468

	2014/5	2015/6	2016/7	2017/8	2018/9
Postgraduate Research	69	66	52	71	66
TOTAL	69	66	52	71	66