Internal Periodic Review
Year-on response report

Internal Periodic Review of: ECA (Edinburgh College of Art)
Date of review: March 2023
Date of 14 week response: November 2023
Date of year on response: 12 July 2024

The School/Subject Area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action.
 If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed.   Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Recommendation no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	**Student Support/EDI** The review team recommends that ECA carries out cost of attendance analysis across all programmes and follows this with equality impact assessment to ensure equity of access and equity of outcome for students. The high financial cost to students involved with some disciplines may impact upon sustainability and upon accessibility for some demographics and deter students from widening participation backgrounds. Cost of attendance should be clearly communicated to students so that they understand additional programme costs.	Various	Further to our 14-week response, ECA recognises this multifaceted issue and had already commenced reviewing some aspects of costs to be born by students prior to the IPR. We are aware that there are many sides to the issue, and that the lived experience of students across ECA can be varied in terms of how formal expectations are defined vs perceived.	
		For start of AY 2024-25	Cost of Attendance policy: As outlined in our 14-week response, ECA will issue a School-level Cost of Attendance Policy prior to the start of AY 2024-25, which will formally set out baseline requirements for all ECA programmes and the manner in which they are communicated to students. This policy will focus on essential/necessary costs, i.e., costs that are non-negotiable and not subject to individual preference, as actual costs incurred by students can vary vastly depending on individual choices and preferences.	
		Complete	Materials and printing costs: ECA ITTS (Information, Technology and Technical Services) have done (and continue to do) frequent analysis around materials costs, which has led to a number of changes in 2023-24, including a new transparent and consistent pricing model for materials and, in partnership with the 2023-24 ECA UG Student Convenor and EUSA VP Education, a £50 printing credit grant for all students.	
		Complete and ongoing	New curriculum development and approval: Costs to be born by students have been scrutinised carefully by the ECA Board of	

			Studies at both course programme level already since the beginning of 2022-23. COs are required to make explicit any necessary costs and strongly encouraged to promote sustainability as well as cost-effectiveness, e.g., through material re-use, by means of course design. Impact assessment: The ability of the ECA EDI Committee to engage with cost of attendance and impact analysis has been limited by workload capacity. The issue is under scrutiny by the Committee and Widening Participation Group. ECA wishes to note that the IPR recommendation cannot be completed as stated for a number of reasons. ECA does not have the resources or the right to gather actual cost of attendance data from all students; ECA does not have the resources to cross-reference actual cost of attendance data with student attainment; UoE does not gather WP data for PGT programmes. The above outlines the scope of action deemed possible and proportionate at School level.	
2	**Assessment and Feedback (SSRI-1)** The review team recommends that ECA develop systematised assessment rubrics, in consultation with students, to ensure it can demonstrate how assessment of process and product is achieved.	Complete Further enhancement for the start of AY 2024-25	Since the IPR Final Report, this recommendation has been superseded by the UoE's response to the November 2023 QESR, specifically the 'Minimum Standards for assessment guidance and feedback' document issued by CAHSS to all its Schools, which stipulates that 'all assessments must include either a marking rubric or detailed grade descriptors'. By the time of ECA's IPR 2023, all ECA Subject Areas were already using marking rubrics and/or enhanced grade descriptors which ECA supplied to the IPR team during the Review Visit; however, these were not considered or commented upon in the Final Report. That these have been largely effective is evident from the high level of student satisfaction with marking criteria at ECA compared to the UoE: In the 2023 NSS, ECA scored 73.9% against the UoE's 63.5%, CAHSS's 63.4 and the Russell Group's 70.9% on the Assessment and Feedback theme. In the 2024 NSS, ECA scored 71.9% against the UoE's 61.0%, CAHSS's 60.8% and the Russell Group's 70.8 % on the Assessment and Feedback theme. In the 2023 PTES, ECA scored 80.8% against the UoE's 68.4% and the Russell Group's 73.5% on the Assessment and Feedback theme. In the 2024 PTES, ECA scored 81.8% against the UoE's 71% (benchmarking data not yet available) on the Assessment and Feedback theme.	[Complete – i.e., meeting CAHSS Minimum Standards, already at the time of the IPR]

			ECA is using the introduction of the CAHSS 'Minimum Standards' document as an opportunity for prompting SAs to review, update and improve the clarity of existing grade descriptors and rubrics. We are doing so by updating the ECA Course Organiser Handbook and training sessions, staff guidance in the relevant section of the Blackboard Ultra (VLE) course template and providing an adaptable ECA-wide enhanced grade descriptor / rubric to ensure consistency in the application of CMS1 and CMS4. Consultation with students prior to the AY 2024-25 was strongly encouraged, and SAs/COs will be asked to solicit feedback from students on marking criteria. In recognition of the usefulness of assessment rubrics for students and staff alike, SAs have been encouraged to increase their use of these via the 2024 February ECA Staff Forum and ECA Education Committee meetings, which included student presenters and respondents in discussions. One of our explicit priorities (SSRI document) had been 'Feedback and suggestions on subject-specific approaches to programme-level, synoptic, or integrative assessment (suggestions particularly sought from external Review Panel members), i.e., Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities point 8. Unfortunately, this point was not addressed either in the Review Visit or Final Report. We hope to explore this point in the future, perhaps in discussions within the University.	
3	**Tutors** The review team recommends that ECA professionalise and systematise employment of tutors on guaranteed hours contracts. The review team considered that there is a risk of not being able to recruit sufficient tutoring staff which in turn presents a risk to programme delivery	Already reported as complete in 14-week response	In our 14-week response, ECA reported this item as complete (ECA already operated a systematic, professional approach to GH staff at the time of the IPR, outlined in the ECA Handbook) and provided documentation that outlined 1) the workflow for determining tutor needs and 2) the formal HR hiring process. As noted in our 14-week response, employment and hiring practices are a UoE-level matter. It seems very probable that comments on lack of professionalism in the employment of GH staff voiced by ECA tutors at the IPR visit were occasioned by the disastrous introduction of People and Money as the latter had impacted severely on tutor recruitment and resulted in long delays in tutors' being issued contracts and payments, consequently impacting on tutors' perception of how GH recruitment and employment were handled.	[Complete already at the time of the IPR]

			Apart from the IPR recommendation and in response to the November 2023 QESR, CAHSS has recently issued 'CAHSS Expectations for the Support and Supervision of Tutors and Demonstrators' to supplement the UoE's Tutor and Demonstrators policy. More recently still, the UoE has announced constraints on staffing. ECA will continue to engage with this and future emerging guidance as appropriate and required.	
4	**Student Support (SSRI-2)** The review team recommends that the College works with ECA to provide clarity on boundaries of roles for staff involved with student support and wellbeing within the new student support model. The College should also ensure that support is in place for staff involved in dealing with casework issues. Note: This item was jointly addressed to ECA and to CAHSS. Our "comment towards progress" is therefore split into two parts, from ECA and CAHSS, respectively.	Partially complete but ongoing as dependent on UoE guidelines and timescales	This area remains challenging. As the Student Advisor role and job description are UoE-wide, ECA has limited influence in this area and, not being keen to develop School-level guidelines, has been struggling with slow release of central guidelines. ECA notes that early in 2023, a significant HR matter (involving ECA colleagues, CAHSS and UoE HR, Union representatives and the UoE Student Support Project Board) arose when the majority of ECA Student Advisers queried the responsibilities and purpose of the Student Adviser role which the School had little influence to progress both in terms of content and timing. A task list outlining specific Student Advisor responsibilities, to be read alongside the job description, was confirmed for all Schools in early December 2023, more than 6 months after most of the new Student Advisers were appointed. The UoE finalised its Student Support Operational Guidelines (also referred to as student support standards), which constitute the basis for ensuring key boundaries of the role, in April 2024. This has significantly impacted progress in ECA. These discussions continued until April 2024 and reached formal conclusion only in mid-May 2024. ECA is now moving forward with aspects of the new roles as, due to complex HR considerations, some work had to be paused. Since summer 2023, 6 Student Advisers have left ECA (or are about to leave) as the job was not what they expected following the central University recruitment campaign in 2023. Since the task list was approved, ECA has shared it with candidates prior to interview. Nevertheless, role focus (and boundaries) remain a challenge. Circa 60% of applications (out of e.g., 320 for the last FT position) are entirely unsuitable, and many of the remaining applicants anticipate the job to have a greater pastoral or wellbeing focus. ECA has fully engaged with the CAHSS Student Support Implementation Group, attending all meetings, and raised for	

discussion matters around consistency of support and a shared understanding of Student Advisor remits. These remain live discussion. ECA has also made multiple requests for UoE or CAHSS training and guidance for managers who are expected to facilitate debriefs and support Student Advisors who have been a first, or are a regular, point of contact for complex or traumatic cases. ECA is fortunate in that one of our managers (on a temporary contract) has a background in social work and wellbeing and, thus, is able to assist with this area. ECA also works closely with the Wellbeing Advisers to ensure efficient handover of cases; this relationship works effectively.

ECA is using the maximum number of places available to the School (2 places) on the UoE's RestorEd Self-Care Pilot (see below, CAHSS response). However, we note our concern regarding the limited availability of places, uncertainty about the scheme's future as well as continued absence of guidance for managers supporting Student Advisors. UoE guidelines have been helpful but arrived too late and are not sufficiently comprehensive, requiring ECA to develop School-level guidance (e.g., on service standards), which we believe should be issued centrally or at College level.

CAHSS provided the following response on 12 June 2024:
'The central university's Student Support Project Team, in close collaboration with the College Student Support Implementation Group, has recently published an updated job description and task list for Student Advisors, as well as more general university-wide Student Support Guidelines. While there has been no specific training session on 'role boundaries', it is hoped these documents provide greater clarity on this issue, and they will remain under review by the central university's Student Support Continuous Improvement Group, as well as by the College Student Support governance structures. Meanwhile, a clear theme that emerged from the evaluation and monitoring of the Student Adviser role was the need to support staff in building skills and self-care when dealing with complex and emotional student casework. The RestorEd programme seeks to do this and has been developed by colleagues from the Centre for Psychological Therapies in Health in Social Sciences. A pilot is being run across all three Colleges for a period of twelve months.'

| 5 | **Student Voice**
The review team recommends that ECA consider a structured approach to enhancing how it involves the student voice. As noted above, there are opportunities for greater involvement of student voice in projects. There is an expectation that the student voice is structured into any review of assessment and feedback. The staff survey carried out by ECA on assessment is a useful way of identifying self-perception but does not address any underlying student issues, such as understanding of the criteria for assessment and ensuring equity of experience. | Complete | ECA reported this item as complete in our 14-week response. However, we would like to update the SQAC on further work since then and respond to its feedback (Feb 2024): 'ECA are encouraged to involve students in the development of guidance for staff on student co-development of the curriculum (it was acknowledged this may already be happening). Students know best how they'd like to be involved in this.'
In Sem 2 2023-24, ECA Student Representatives (in particular School Convenors and members of the Education Student Rep interest group) contributed prominently to discussions of Assessment and Feedback practices at ECA Education Committee and Board of Studies meetings as well at the very well received Feb 2024 ECA Staff Forum (whose focus was on Education). Contributions confirmed the usefulness of current ECA and College initiatives (which were discussed with students) and served to highlight to staff students' capacity to critically evaluate Assessment and Feedback practices.

In the spring of 2024, the ECA QA Director invited ECA Student Representatives to meet in order to draw up guidance for staff on student co-development of the curriculum to be included in the 2024-25 ECA Student Voice Policy. However, the attendants did not wish to draw up School-level guidance, confirming (as per our 14-week response) their preference for flexible SA-level approaches, with students being invited to participate in online surveys via e-mail as a base line for essential curriculum matters (such as major programme changes). Instead, they prioritised developing a plan that aims to 1) enhance the effectiveness of the ECA Student Representative Interest Groups that were first introduced in 2023-24 (Community/Events/Activities, Education & Curriculum, EDI, Materials/Equipment/Building, Student Welfare, Sustainability), and 2) encourage continued engagement of Student Representatives (including with Education & Curriculum matters) throughout the year.

It is worth noting that satisfaction with the Student Voice has been high in ECA, at least at UG level: In the 2023 NSS, ECA scored 70.1% against the UoE's 65.5%, CAHSS's 63.9% and the Russell Group's 69.0% on the Student Voice theme. In the 2024 NSS, ECA scored 70.5% against the UoE's 64.9%, CAHSS's 64.2% and the Russell Group's 70.8 % on the Student Voice theme. [The PTES | June 2024 |

			and PRES do not contain questions pertaining to Student Representation.]	
6	**Postgraduate Research Supervision** The review team recommends that ECA consider whether there are appropriate mechanisms in place for supporting postgraduate research students if a change in supervision arrangements is indicated following annual progression review.	Complete	As an update to our 14-week response, ECA can report that we held Annual Review training in March and April 2024 for students and supervisors. In this year's iteration, we highlighted the UoE regulations and the place in the form where the question is asked about the supervisory team (as noted in original response). We also highlighted the role of staff who could offer support beyond the supervisory team if the student was uncomfortable, i.e., the Review Chair, Subject Area PGR Director, ECA PGR Director as well as the PGR Administration Team. The latter would both administer a change and also sign-post students to Wellbeing Advisors if needed. This is not a change in process but a clarification for all parties.	March/April 2024
7	**Employability/Graduate attributes** The review team heard evidence that students across all levels of provision (undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research) recognise that their future careers are unlikely to be within their disciplines. Students identified a gap in information on employability and a lack of clarity on the skills they are developing. The review team notes that this is an issue for arts across the sector and that a stronger narrative on the intangible impact of arts students on their locales and communities needs to be developed. This would demonstrate the value of students' approach to work and life and impact on their communities. The ECA Plan and Education Strategy could provide a mechanism for more clearly articulating this. The review team recommends that ECA consider ways of making explicit to students the life-wide learning that they are acquiring through their studies.	Continually ongoing	ECA acknowledges the review team's comments on this issue, but is concerned that a) they may be anecdotal in nature, and that b) the recommended action does not address the perceived concern. As a School, ECA has a number of programmes that are highly vocational in nature, some leading to professional qualifications, and many with high rates of employment within their field. As a whole, ECA (70.0%) scored in line with the UoE (71.2%) on the Learning Opportunities theme in the 2024 NSS, with 9 of the 17 programmes that returned at programme level scoring above UoE average on the question 'developed knowledge and skills for the future'. The two lowest-scoring programmes, both in Art, are in the process of being phased out. The third-lowest scoring (in Design) is in the process of a programme re-design (see below). In the 2024 PTES, ECA scored 80.3% on the Skills Development theme against the UoE average of 75.2%, including 76.6% against the UoE average of 72.4% on the question 'Encouraged to develop career skills'. Of the 16 programmes that returned at programme level, only 2 scored significantly below UoE average on this question, and 11 scored between 5.4% and 21.9% above. ECA therefore disputes that, across the School, 'students recognise that their future careers are unlikely to be within their disciplines' or that there is 'lack of clarity on the skills they are developing' ECA suggests the evidence heard by the review panel relates to some recognised local issues and some sector-wide issues, both of which are being addressed, as outlined below.	

| | | Cohort Building Events: Throughout 2023–24 Student Development Team: | Locally, ECA recognises that some of its programmes have historically had a high degree of disciplinary specialism, and that graduates of these programmes have expressed concerns as to the narrowness of their qualification. ECA has completed a significant redesign of it portfolio of UG programmes within the Subject Area Art, which includes strategic development of career skills to enhance employability. In the Subject Area Design, ECA is embarking on programme portfolio redesign to combine small specialist programmes into larger degrees with continued room for specialism but greater opportunities for developing transferable skills.

More generally, ECA is engaged with a wide number of UoE Initiatives that respond to a sector-wide recognition that Higher Education could do more to ensure the provision of applicable and transferable skills.

ECA has strategically engaged with the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities to ensure skills are a key focus of our pedagogic practice. ECA has done a lot of work over past years to implement tangible enhancements to processes to embed issues around employability and Graduate Attributes within teaching. Since the start of 2022-23, the ECA Board of Studies has strategically been raising awareness of the University's Graduate Attributes Framework (which account for transferable skills and 'life-wide' learning) among ECA teaching staff and required proposers to consider Graduate Attributes as part of course and programme design/review and clearly explicate to students how they link to course-/programme-specific skills and knowledge in all new course/programme proposals and major course/programme change proposals. Indeed, ECA has been surfaced as an exemplar at UoE level for its Board of Studies work at meetings of the UoE Directors of Teaching Network and Board of Studies Forum in 2022-23.

Through the Student Support Model implementation, we have been developing School-wide initiatives involving Cohort Building events, Careers Services events and Student Development events that engage student cohorts in considering wider aspects of their learning and career development, specifically in terms of going beyond existing course-level activities, including cross-programme | |

		Throughout 2023–24

UG CTP Timeline TBC | industry/alumni events organised involving, for example, Graphic Design, Product Design and Illustration.

Through the Curriculum Transformation Programme, we anticipate enhancing already strong work-experience and 'experiential learning' offers, as well as making space for 'challenge courses' to widen monocular curricula.

With respect to the recommendation that "ECA consider ways of making explicit to students the life-wide learning that they are acquiring through their studies", we feel quite strongly that, as above, we are already taking action to address this issue both in terms of identified local and institution-wide initiatives outlined above.

With respect to the recommendation that ECA develop a 'stronger narrative on the intangible impact of arts students on their locales and communities', we query the basis of this recommendation and its relation to suggested concerns over student employability. | |
| 8 | **Space**
The review team identified a potential risk of separation with dedicated space leading to isolation and recommends that ECA consider the risks of spaces becoming or remaining siloes.

The review team recommends that ECA consider ways of supporting and maintaining student-led and other community building activity. Postgraduate research students particularly appreciated access to studio space as being a game-changer and would welcome more informal opportunities for creating contact and community, for example through exhibiting work in process. | ECA Capital Project completion (2027)

Complete as regards commendation 8 | In our 14-week response, ECA noted that this recommendation seems in direct contradiction with one of the commendations given to ECA in the Review Report (#8: The review team *commends* ECA on the careful development of space allocation related to need. Students appreciate the availability of studio space and recognised the opportunities this provides for community building.).

In our 14-week response, we also advised that ECA recognises that space allocation and usage is an issue of great importance to many staff and students and that we do not envisage any significant change to the strategic allocation of space in the next 2–3 years, until the ECA Capital Project delivers its refresh of teaching space at the Lauriston Campus, including more cross-programme and collaborative working space.

It is worth noting that students are consistently asking for dedicated 'home' space rather than shared / multi-purpose spaces across UG, PGT and PGR for day-to-day work, which arises from a number of factors, including the logistics of storing essential materials and physical work-in-progress. | |

| | | As far as community building is concerned, the new Student Support Model, which was rolled out in ECA (as a Stage-2 School) in 2023-24, has brought with it a wide range of community of community building activities by Cohort Leads (on which we will report via APMR). In addition, the ECA Student Development Team has supported student-led work by Student Peer Coordinators.

PGR: A shared PGR practice space open to all ECA PGR students continues to bring together students from different disciplines in a welcoming community of practice research. Students have used this as a basis to run small exhibitions, monthly informal peer crit sessions and social events. The students in this space are also the leads on the next Student Showcase due to take place in October 2024 which will include work from PGR students across ECA. Partially due to convenience of location and partially due to significant effort invested by PGR Directors in Art and Design, which also encouraged high levels of engagement from PGR Student Representatives in these Subject Areas, this space is used primarily by PGR students in Art and Design. This was reflected in student satisfaction in the relevant theme in the 2023 PRES results for Art in particular (Community theme: 84.8% against 55.8% for the UoE and 59.4% for the Russell Group; Resources theme: 88.0%, against 80.1% for the UoE and 82.6% for the Russell Group).

All PGR students have access to dedicated study/work spaces in their respective Subject Areas. However, it must be noted that PGR Directors' engagement with community building is less strong in other SAs. The ECA QA Director has requested that ECA Senior Management revise the SA PGR Director role descriptor to include community building as a key responsibility.

In terms of UG/PGT community building, we would refer to recommendation #7 above and the significant cohort building aspects embedded into the new Student Support Model. | |
| | Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review | As per our 14-week response, the IPR Report was shared with all ECA students via the ECA Handbook (internal SharePoint). It was also flagged at the first meeting of the ECA-wide Staff-Student Liaison Committee in October 2023 and subsequent SSLC meetings in relationship to updates on ongoing work. | |

		Several of the recommendations have lead to close collaborative working with students, in particular with Student Representatives.
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review	Progress made against IPR recommendations relate to enhancement initiatives on which ECA had already commenced prior to the IPR. This is because ECA had 1) already stepped up its efforts in relationship to ELIR recommendations (which correspond to the IPR University remit) and 2) used the IPR strategically to advance work on institutional priorities/ change projects, specifically the introduction of the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities and the Student Support Model. To some extent, recommendation #1 has increased attention to the issue of cost of attendance.