

University Innovation Fund AY 2017-18

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) welcomes this opportunity to set out our plans for the use of the Universities Innovation Fund (UIF) in academic year 2017-2018. Our Outcome Agreement (currently being finalised) for the year ahead sets out our ambitions to play a role in Glasgow's and Scotland's economic, cultural and social development through creative collaborations, cultivation of talent and generation of new knowledge — with a particular emphasis on the role of the Creative Economy. We look forward to continuing to work towards those ends with the SFC and other HEIs with the support of UIF.

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We note that the SFC is making arrangements for GSA to report on our progress on the delivery of 16-17 UIF plans, with further opportunities to reflect on our achievements through the Outcome Agreement self-evaluation in October 2017. We would, however, like to highlight some of what we have achieved with UIF so far this year, and to mention some of our plans for the remainder of 2016-17.

The introduction of the UIF last year coincided with — and to some extent inspired — some organisational and staffing developments at GSA. Most significantly, our department of Research and Doctoral Studies is being reconfigured to form the department of Research and Enterprise, which will bring staff who manage research and knowledge exchange together with those responsible for student and graduate enterprise and professional practice. This will allow for more coordinated and strategic management of industry partnerships (across the spectrum of sponsored student projects, research and innovation support), and a better experience for senior students and graduates with entrepreneurial ambitions.

That change will also contribute to our progress with the ongoing work to review enterprise support provision for creative students and graduates (National Priority 1), on which we are working with RCS, QMU and others. GSA has been undertaking an internal review of industry-student/graduate links, and a separate review of local creative workspace, and we are planning an event to share best practice with peers in the early summer. This work is set to continue in 17-18 (see Outcome 4 below), and we are considering a SU11 bid in April to enhance that activity. With some investment from UIF, we piloted graduate participation in Taktal's cross-disciplinary 'Test Unit' summer school, and we are currently involved in the pilot Artful Innovation scheme at the Watershed in Bristol — another project that is testing innovative but appropriate methods of helping new creative companies to thrive. This year, we have also hosted GSA's first RSE Enterprise Fellow, and hope to repeat the process in 2017-18 (a GSA applicant is currently shortlisted).

GSA has also made good progress towards its ambitions for National Priority 6 — supporting the transition to more strategic dealings with industry sectors — through a renewed organisational commitment to developing our important relationships in the creative economy, especially in Glasgow. Between September and November 2016, GSA organised a series of successful 'Glasgow: City of Creative Production' events which brought together academics, companies, practitioners and policymakers to debate and explore the needs of the sector in the city. These events may have contributed to the reinstatement of creative industries as a priority sector in Glasgow's economic strategy. UIF is also being used to bring the Creative Mornings event series to GSA, further strengthening our links to local creative networks. We are also investing UIF in the appointment of a full-time Creative Ecology Fellow, who will lead on the development of creative economy impact and other initiatives, and work closely with our industry and alumni networks in the sector (the post is advertised at the time of writing). Since then, the SFC has commissioned research into how higher education can best support both innovation in creative companies and the impacts of creative graduates more widely,

and GSA was able to bring together a consortium of 12 HEIs to tender for this work. That contract had not yet been awarded at the time of writing, but whoever ultimately undertakes the projects, we look forward to supporting the process, and to participating fully in any future initiatives that result from it.

In addition, we are maintaining our commitment to the digital health innovation centre (DHI), and have been working closely with the University of Strathclyde to plan the second phase of that initiative. The Mackintosh School of Architecture is also getting more involved with the construction Scotland innovation centre (CSIC), with several projects now underway.

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For the remainder of this written response, we will outline GSA's proposed contribution to the national outcomes for the UIF in AY 2017-18, as appropriate to our disciplines.

Our response indicates activities that we will deliver independently and those on which we will work in collaboration with others in the sector. In discussion with the Scottish Funding Council, the sector has agreed, where relevant, to work together to:

- Analyse current activity and identify best practice
- Where appropriate, devise and execute a pilot programme
- If successful, develop/initiate a sector-wide programme.

Through the Research and Commercialisation Directors' Group (RCDG), and with the support of Universities Scotland, each institution has agreed to contribute to a number of outcomes. As an institution we have indicated our willingness to take part in reviews of current activity for all outcomes, and to contribute to pilots and wider programmes in outcomes one, four and six, with a particular interest in doing so in ways that are relevant to creative disciplines (as described below).

As a small specialist institution, GSA is not in a position to match the UIF in cash terms. As in previous years, however, UIF investment will be matched in-kind by the contributions towards relevant activities by staff paid for by other cost centres, including research managers and developers, staff responsible for student enterprise and employability, the finance department, technicians and others, as well as through use of our estate and specialised facilities such as fabrication and printing workshops. Around 75% of the Platform Grant in AY 2017-18 will be invested in staff (central Knowledge Exchange Manager, distributed Business Development Manager and new Creative Ecology Fellow), with the balance invested in strategic projects and relevant expenses.

Outcome One (Demand Stimulation)

The Platform Grant will again enable us to expand and enhance elements of GSA's Annual Research Showcase, including by taking the promotion of our work and services to potential partners out to appropriate venues throughout Glasgow, as we did last year and plan to do in the current session. It will also enable research centres to exhibit at selected industry events throughout the year: GSA Researchers can apply to an internal Impact Fund (with UIF investment) to promote their work to industry and non-academic audiences.

In addition, we are interested in how our disciplines can drive innovative capacity in some businesses; based on previous research, our Institute of Design Innovation is developing CPD programmes to help Scottish companies cultivate more innovative corporate cultures through design, and there could be potential for expansion of this activity with Outcome grant support.

We note Interface's enhanced approach to supporting the creative industries sector, and are keen to support this work when our researchers are able to offer appropriate expertise.

In collaboration with other HEIs, we would be interested in promoting our research and services through Scotland's new Innovation and Investment Hubs, particularly if such activity

could be supported with the Outcomes Grant. We would be particularly interested in a themed approach, based on disciplines and target markets.

Outcome Two (Simplification/Commercialisation)

Our use of UIF will continue to be managed by the recently reorganised Department of Research & Enterprise, which will simplify access to GSA for industry partners – whether they initially wish to sponsor student projects or to work with our researchers. This will in turn facilitate better management and coordination of our industry relationships, and should increase the number of ongoing collaborations.

GSA hopes to reduce reliance on transactional collaborations by improving our focus on key sectors and areas of practice. For instance, our Creative Ecology Fellow (funded by the UIF for one year in AY 2017-18), will be responsible for developing more effective ways of maintaining our networks with creative companies and practitioners, and thus to develop more strategic relationships with the sector over time. Similarly, UIF will support researchers in the Mackintosh School of Architecture to build on their already strong links to the architecture, built environment and planning sectors through industry engagement events and the development of new CPD programmes. And we will continue to work closely with Highlands and Islands Enterprise to gain insights into supporting the needs of rural and remote companies from our Creative Campus in Forres.

GSA appreciates the work of other HEIs in developing standard contracts for industry engagement. We will continue to use the contracts and support their development, while also contributing to the post-project referral process when appropriate.

Outcome Three (Simplification/Greater Innovation)

As a specialist institution, GSA welcomes the Growing Value Scotland task force's recommendation that practice must follow the innovation styles of different sectors. As the SFC/Creative Scotland Action Plan for Innovation Support in the Creative industries recognises, the process of innovation within creative sectors is distinctive, as are innovation inputs by creative practitioners more broadly. As noted, we have signaled our interest in this work by leading a collaborative bid to manage and undertake the studies resulting from the action plan. Upon completion of those studies (in August 2017), GSA would be very keen to play a key role in developing appropriate new interventions to increase the innovation impacts of creative companies and individuals in Scotland, in collaboration with other HEIs.

GSA will continue to support sector-level innovation through our involvement in innovation centres, including participation by architectural researchers in CSIC, and in particular our ongoing provision of Experience Labs for DHI, now in partnership with the University of Strathclyde. Having established the experience lab capability, with SFC investment, we are interested in how other sectors might benefit from that approach. Direct support of those initiatives by GSA's Research & Enterprise staff is made possible by the Platform Grant.

We will continue to use the Platform grant to provide staff with access to professional development resources through Auril/Praxis Unico, ARMA and Vitae to help them develop the knowledge and skills to work with external partners.

Outcome Four (Entrepreneurialism)

Access to appropriate entrepreneurial training is important to our students, many of whom establish themselves as creative practitioners after they graduate. In AY 2017-18, we aim to continue our ongoing review of good practice in this field, in collaboration with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), Queen Margaret University (QMU) and others. Through RCDG, we have indicated our willingness to lead on a sub-theme of Outcome Four relating specifically to creative graduates. With partners, we are keen to look at the feasibility of a joint events programme for aspiring creative entrepreneurs, and potential 'pre-business incubation' activities that would complement existing provision (although scoping work remains to be done).

Outcome four is closely aligned with Aim 4 of our Outcome Agreement, which the UIF enables us to enhance. The Platform Grant will also help us to maintain our participation in the Deutsche Bank Awards for Creative Practice, Enterprise Campus, Converge Challenge, RSE Enterprise Fellowships, the Glasgow City Deal's Tontine incubator and other schemes, and to continue to sponsor industry contributions to professional skills programmes. We are planning further collaboration with Taktal's Test Unit scheme to help graduating artists, architects and designers develop their professional skills, and we are also exploring the potential for a collaboration with public arts organisation NVA and St Peters Seminary, Cardross, to develop professional practice opportunities for art, design and architecture staff and students.

Outcome Five (International)

Given our profile and the nature of our international activities, we have limited capacity to support innovation in the Scottish economy through international links, although we would be happy to contribute to initiatives if appropriate opportunities arise. GSA has good links with overseas art & design institutions through networks such as Cumulus, the Nordic Alliance Research Consortium and our Masters in European Design programme. Future opportunities may arise via our teaching partnership with the Singapore Institute of Technology: a programme through which our Design Innovation researchers will help Singaporean SMEs to develop innovative company cultures is currently in development.

Outcome Six (Inclusive Growth and Social Impact)

Not all of GSA's core disciplines have obvious commercial applications, but all of our Schools are motivated by the potential to achieve positive social impacts — for example, through socially engaged artistic practice. As an institution, we also have an evident interest in identifying and understanding the cultural impact and value of what we and our students do — through our research, exhibitions, public engagement, archives and collections and, of course, our students and graduates — and how that relates to the inclusive growth agenda. As such, we are considering how to use UIF appropriately to support cultural and social impact. In AY 2017-18, we plan to use UIF to develop a mentoring scheme with arts charity Impact Arts, to help graduates and ECRs to develop the professional skills to collaborate in community and other settings. GSA will contribute to the planned RCDG group on Outcome Six, to be led by the University of Stirling, with a particular interest in working with institutions such as RCS to explore the cultural dimension.

Outcome Seven (Equality and Diversity)

As an art school, we understand that fostering diversity is central to our purpose (we believe it stimulates creativity), and that equality should be at the heart of our organisational ethos. Diversity and equality thus inform and underpin the ambitions set out in our institutional strategies, and outcome agreement (Aim 1). This extends to our research, knowledge exchange and innovation activities, as reflected, for example, in our recent achievement of Vitae HR Excellence in Research, and our ambition to work towards Athena Swan. Our Mainstreaming Equality policy is designed to ensure that equality and diversity are fundamental to our day-to-day activities, and all policies and major initiatives are subject to equalities impact assessment prior to approval. That should apply not only to our staff and students who will be affected by implementation of the UIF, but also to those with whom we collaborate.