

The Glasgow School of Art

The Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance

Response approved by the Board of Governors, 11th June 2013

- .1 The Glasgow School of Art ('the School' or 'GSA') broadly welcomes the draft Scottish Code of HE Governance. As indicated in the School's submission to the Scottish Review of Higher Education Governance in September 2011, the School fully accepts the need for HEIs to be thoroughly accountable to key external and internal stakeholders, while being allowed sufficient autonomy to adopt the strategies and management actions necessary to enable them fulfil their missions effectively. The School believes that the draft Code delivers an appropriate framework of governance to enable this balance of accountability and autonomy to be achieved. While supportive of the need for institutions' decision-making processes to be as transparent as possible, there will be some documentation and discussions which will require an element of confidentiality. The School believes that it would be counter-productive, therefore, for governing body meetings to be held in public or for all paperwork to be made widely available, as this might actually lead to some decisions being taken outwith formal channels.
- .2 As a Small Specialist Institution (SSI), the School welcomes the acknowledgment in the draft Code of the position of SSIs, e.g. in relation to their size and to the differences in organisational structure which may exist between the SSIs and larger institutions. While there are no significant elements within the Code which give cause for concern to GSA in relation to its governance, the School welcomes the inclusion of the 'comply or explain' principle in the Code.
- .3 Part 1 of the draft Code – Purpose and Main Principles of Governance – is consistent with the School's existing Statement of Corporate Governance. This statement is reviewed annually in the light of developing best practice in governance and future reviews will be benchmarked against the final version of the Scottish Code. Thus, for example, the School will strengthen the emphasis in the Statement on academic freedom and equality/diversity, e.g. in relation to gender balance within the membership of the governing body. Similarly, the School will refer to the Code's Principles and Supporting Guidelines with respect to such significant processes as the appointment of the Chair of the Board of Governors and the appointment of the Director (Principal) of the School, e.g. by making explicit reference to staff and student membership of the panel established to appoint the Director. Similarly, while the School would not support the inclusion of staff and student representatives on Remuneration Committees, the School's procedure for appraisal and remuneration of the Director will include consultation with all governing body members, including elected staff and student representatives.

