

UNIVERSITY SUBJECT REVIEW

Provision provided by the School of Arts and Creative Industries

March 2012

Preface

Purpose of University subject review

The purpose of University subject review is to provide a mechanism which enables the University to be confident that the academic standard set and approved for all credit bearing and non-credit bearing provision and the quality of learning opportunities offered to all students meet University and Scottish Funding Council expectations.

Outline of the procedure

University subject review is implemented in three complementary stages: preparation, led and monitored by the Head of School; scrutiny, led by Academic Quality; and, implementation of a school enhancement plan, led by the Head of School and monitored by the University Quality Assurance Monitoring and Review Committee. Faculty Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee provides support, advice and guidance to schools throughout the process as appropriate. The procedure is evidence-based and is reliant on information gathered during faculty and school-based quality assurance and enhancement activities typically within a six-year cycle. University subject review has been designed to be developmental in nature and encourages self-critical reflection through promoting dialogue between peers on areas where quality might be improved.

Evidence

In order to obtain evidence for the review, the panel carries out a number of activities, including scrutinising a self-critical reflection produced by the school with responsibility for the subject areas being reviewed, reviewing the effectiveness of quality mechanisms and their associated documentation, and holding discussions with relevant staff and students. The panel's discussions are also informed by University policy and procedures and external subject benchmark information.

Outcome of the review

The outcome of the review is a school enhancement plan developed by the Head of School using information from the review report. The report records the panel's findings in relation to the effectiveness of the measures being implemented by the school to set and maintain the academic standard of its provision and to enhance the quality of the learning experience of all of its students. The report includes areas of good practice worthy of further dissemination and recommendations made by the panel to improve the school's management of its provision. A draft school enhancement plan noting the good practice identified by the review panel and any recommendations made will form part of the review report.

The school enhancement plan

Within a timescale agreed by the Head of School and Head of Academic Quality, the school completes an enhancement plan by identifying: the action to be taken to either share good practice or address recommendations; the individual with responsibility for implementing the action; a completion date; and, the means by which the success or otherwise of the action will be evaluated and reported. The Head of School will monitor the implementation of the enhancement plan and provide their Faculty Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee with regular progress reports. Faculty Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee will provide University Quality Assurance Monitoring and Review Committee with a progress report on the implementation of the enhancement plan as part of the annual reporting procedure.

Executive summary

Summary

The School of Arts and Creative Industries (the School) is one of three schools within the Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Creative Industries. There are five subject groups within the School: art, design and communication; English and acting; film and photography; journalism and publishing; and, music. The scope of the review includes all provision developed and delivered by the School which takes account of the expectations set out in the following subject benchmark statements:

- Art and design (2008)
- English (2007)
- Music (2008)

At the time of the review 1,669 students were enrolled within the School: 1,469 undergraduate students; 186 postgraduate students; and, 14 research students. Of these 1,515 are home or European students and 154 are from overseas. Forty four students are studying on a part-time basis. Sixty nine students are studying the BA (Hons) Communication, Advertising and Public Relations in Hong Kong in partnership with the Hong Kong School of Professional and Continuing Education. The School portfolio includes 17 undergraduate and 21 postgraduate programmes. A list of the programmes delivered by the School at the time of the review is included as Appendix 1.

The panel found no evidence to suggest that the academic standard of all provision in the School did not continue to meet subject, University, sector and professional body expectations. However, the combination of the diversity and complexity of the provision offered by the School and the limitations of the review methodology led the panel to find that it would be inappropriate to conclude that this review had undertaken an in-depth review of the School's provision. The sampling of material provided by the School enabled the panel to find that the School's curriculum is relevant, influenced by staff scholarly activity and research and delivered through a variety of appropriate learning, teaching and assessment approaches. The School monitors the effectiveness of learning and teaching through a range of mechanisms including student staff liaison committees and programme boards of studies. Small student cohorts encourage more informal feedback mechanisms to operate and students indicated that staff respond appropriately to their comments and provided examples of where modules had been changed to take account of their suggestions and feedback. The sample of external examiner reports and student work scrutinised by the panel confirm consistently the appropriateness of the academic standards across all of the School's provision.

The School produced a critical and succinct critical reflection which contained areas of good practice and also identified where development activity was required. This critical reflection, the collegiate discussions with staff and students and the scrutiny of the evidence base, demonstrated to the panel that the School was engaging effectively in enhancement-led activities.

The School is also home to Screen Academy Scotland, a Skillset Film and Media Academy. Screen Academy Scotland is one of only two dual-status Skillset Film & Media Academies in the UK. It was established in 2005 as a collaboration between Edinburgh Napier University and the Edinburgh College of Art. In 2008 Media Academy status was gained leading to the formation of the Screen Academy Scotland. This added a broadcast and interactive focus to the School's established reputation as a centre for excellence in film and media skills.

Good practice

The following areas of **good practice** were identified for further dissemination University-wide:

- the formal and informal collaboration between subjects and the integration of theoretical and practical work within programmes provides students with a wide range of relevant skills (paragraph 9)
- the initiatives being implemented to address the continuing challenge of engaging the wider student population in quality activities (paragraph 11)
- the support arrangements for students articulating from further education colleges (paragraph 23)
- external engagement by all subject areas with industry networks locally and internationally (paragraphs 36 and 37)
- the School's use of support from the *Confident Futures* programme which is embedded throughout programmes and used effectively during Week 1 (paragraph 40)
- the School's alumni initiative helps to engage students in their learning and to facilitate networking by encouraging graduates to keep in touch with the work of the School (paragraph 44)
- the non-traditional ways in which staff are engaging students studying English programmes with their learning are impressive and sector leading (paragraph 46)
- a strong commitment to the University's Teaching Fellowship scheme which provides a catalyst for innovation in learning, teaching and assessment (paragraph 47)
- the School's engagement with the services provided by Student Wellbeing (paragraph 49).

Recommendations

The panel recommends that the School of Arts and Creative Industries:

- continue to explore ways to ensure that practice-based subjects monitor the currency of staff skills to ensure that subjects are kept up-to-date (paragraph 5)
- develop an identity to compete in the market and to monitor the resources required to ensure that the competitive nature of creative industries subjects does not disadvantage the School (paragraph 7)
- continue to engage with the work underway University-wide in relation to the *Enhancement Theme: Developing and Supporting the Curriculum* as this will provide an opportunity to consider and shape the nature and effectiveness of their postgraduate student experience (paragraph 16)
- explore whether students have adequate access to specialist equipment particularly at weekends and in the evenings and to specialist software which is not available through the Jack Kilby Computer Centre (paragraph 17)
- ensure students are provided with accurate and current information on the personal development tutor scheme to be provided (paragraphs 19 and 20)
- continue to build on existing practise to ensure that the quality and timeliness of assessment feedback is consistent across the School (paragraph 27)
- develop a more consistent and systematic approach in gathering and using data which will assist the School in identifying any emerging patterns or trends and in

developing plans to take enhancement action where this is deemed necessary (paragraph 30)

- review its engagement with University and sector initiatives with a view to consolidating and rationalising its contributions to these (paragraph 33).

Matters to be referred outside the School:

- Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee to be invited to reaffirm the University's commitment to providing all students with access to social space which enables students to meet with their peers in a social environment (paragraph 18)
- Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee to be invited to reaffirm the University's expectations as to the implementation of the personal development tutor scheme at School level (paragraph 21)
- Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee to be invited to review University expectations in the provision of quantitative statistical information relating to student achievement and progression to inform the monitoring of the quality and standard of provision University-wide as a more strategic and consistent approach to gathering and using such data would assist the academic community in identifying where enhancement activity would benefit the student learning experience (paragraph 32)
- Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee to be invited to review the usefulness of the University's published *academic signature* and to the University's expectations on its role in informing curriculum development and design (paragraph 35)
- Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee to be invited to review the feasibility of providing specialist support services being on all campuses especially services provided by Finance, Planning and Commercial Services which entail students having to travel to the Sighthill Campus (paragraph 49)
- Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee to be invited to reaffirm the principles underpinning the relationship between the University and the Napier Students' Association and exploring the need for a service-level agreement setting out the roles, responsibilities and expectations of both parties (paragraph 50).

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY SUBJECT REVIEW

Provision provided by the School of Arts and Creative Industries: March 2012

Conduct of the review

1 This report presents the findings of the University subject review of provision provided by the School of Arts and Creative Industries. The review was carried out by:

Dr Karen Aitchison, Head of Academic Practice (Panel Convenor).

Professor Tim Middleton, Head of School of Humanities and Cultural Industries, Bath Spa University.

Dr Roni Brown, Acting Dean Faculty of Design, London College of Communication.

Frazer Mackenzie, Head of Applied Production and New Media, Bucks New University.

Cathy Lambert, Director of Student & Academic Services, Edinburgh Napier University.

Janis Deane, Senior Lecturer and Teaching Fellow, School of Life, Sports and Social Sciences, Edinburgh Napier University.

Justyna Paslawska, Napier Students' Association Sabbatical Officer.

Grant Horsburgh, Head of Academic Quality (Clerk to the Panel).

Setting the review in context

1 The School of Arts and Creative Industries is one of three schools in the Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Creative Industries. Established in 2006 when the Department of Design and Media Arts and the Department of Communication Arts were merged into a single School of Creative Industries, the School is one of nine, and the third largest higher education provider in Scotland, that have an established reputation for arts and creative media practice.

2 The review took place as the School was emerging from a period of significant structural and organisational change which had impacted on all staff. The School noted in its critical reflection that its strength lay in the belief and pride of its staff in their craft and expertise, and in their commitment to sharing it with students. The continual pressure of change had meant that while in some areas staff had not managed to be involved in as many developments as they would have liked there have been many positive moves forward with some innovative work being undertaken. The panel noted that staff met during the review demonstrated that the School is a cohesive unit with a recognised identity.

3 Since 2008 there has been a strong focus on developing a practical and professional focus to all programmes which includes developing external partnerships and seeking accreditation from professional bodies. The University-wide academic portfolio review undertaken during academic session 2011-12 provided a further opportunity for the School to ensure that its portfolio is fit for the future, meets the needs of students and industry and helps the University to meet its targets and strategic objectives. The redevelopment of the Merchiston Campus taking place at the time of the review was viewed by the School as having a key role in developing its learning facilities and its accommodation in particular.

4 At the time of the review the School had 93 staff comprising a Head of School, 68 academic staff of which 47 are full-time, 16 technical staff and 8 administrative staff. The School acknowledged in its critical reflection that the large percentage of part-time staff

can be challenging to the management of the delivery of its provision. The School was taking steps to address the situation and rationalise future staffing requirements, while putting clear workload procedures in place to ensure that part-time staff are able to take on roles beyond teaching. In addition the School has a strong reliance on specialist 'zero hours' staff to ensure core and specialist aspects of its programmes are delivered; 67 academic staff and 10 technical demonstrators are engaged on zero hours contracts across the School.

5 The School operates an appropriate staff induction programme which covers generic advice to staff in accordance with University expectations. Staff new to teaching in higher education are enrolled on the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and the School appoints a mentor for each individual. Experienced staff provide pedagogic advice and guidance to less experienced colleagues to support teaching practise and on School, faculty and University processes and procedures. In acknowledging the mechanisms in place to support new and less experienced staff the School should explore ways to ensure that practice-based subjects monitor the currency of staff skills to ensure that subjects are kept up-to-date.

6 The School works across five different campuses. Work was underway at the time of the review to relocate all provision to the revamped Merchiston Campus with effect from the start of academic session 2012-13. The School welcome the opportunities offered through having all staff located on one campus and the positive impact this will have on future developments in the School particularly in relation to the student experience and the management of teaching provision. It is hoped that this will facilitate collegiate opportunities to further develop interdisciplinary approaches to student learning and the embedding of employability skills. The provision of ambient and social spaces for students and plans to build on existing subject synergies to provide teaching spaces for all students as opposed to subject dedicated rooms or spaces will also facilitate and underpin interdisciplinary working. It was noted that music students appreciated being involved in discussions relating to the move and on the learning facilities being provided.

7 The apparent enthusiasm of staff and a clear recognition and desire for subject areas to work together were obvious to the panel during the review. The panel supports the view that the move will help to facilitate the establishment of a creative hub and that the single campus will increase the School's appeal to students as it will be perceived as being equitable to a single art school. However, staff acknowledged that there would be benefit in the School developing an identity to compete in the market and to monitor the resources required to ensure that the competitive nature of creative industries subjects does not disadvantage the School.

The appropriateness of the academic standard set and maintained by the School

8 The academic standards set and maintained by the School meet University and sector expectations. The School utilises a wide range of appropriate benchmarking opportunities including subject and qualification benchmark statements, professional body accreditation and the needs and expectations of local and regional employers. However, the panel noted that the combination of the diversity and complexity of the provision offered by the School and the limitations of the review methodology led to insufficient time being available to scrutinise the provision in detail at the level of individual programmes or modules.

9 The sampling of material provided by the School enabled the panel to find that the School's curriculum is relevant, influenced by staff scholarly activity and research and delivered through a variety of appropriate learning, teaching and assessment approaches. The formal and informal collaboration between subjects and the integration of theoretical and practical work within programmes provides students with a wide range of relevant skills. The sample of external examiner reports and student work scrutinised by the panel

consistently confirm the appropriateness of the academic standards across all of the School's provision.

10 The School monitors the effectiveness of learning and teaching through a range of mechanisms including student staff liaison committees and programme boards of studies. Small student cohorts encourage more informal feedback mechanisms to operate and students indicated that staff respond appropriately to their comments and provided examples of where modules had been changed to take account of their suggestions and feedback. Staff and students noted that effective dialogue between staff and students tends to prevent matters of concern progressing to a formal complaint. However, while staff student liaison committees take account of matters raised by student representatives, the School acknowledges the continuing challenge of engaging the wider student population in quality activities.

11 As a means of addressing this challenge the graphic design programme team has run an initiative to improve the staff student liaison function. A monthly course board has been setup which includes four students from each year of the programme. While this is a new initiative the process appears to be working more effectively than the previous staff student liaison committee with students being more willing to engage with the quality agenda. The School is also exploring how social media might be used as a medium for engaging students in quality processes.

The quality of the learning opportunities and the learning experience provided to students

12 In most cases students indicated that their expectations regarding the learning experience on offer are being met. Undergraduate students appreciate and value lecturers' contacts with industry which contributes to their learning experience and helps to provide students with access to work placements. Students also value the opportunities provided through the curriculum to work with students in other years of similar programmes.

13 The School encourages formal and informal collaboration between subjects as this helps to provide students with a wide range of skills and encourages more formal networking between student cohorts. Inter-subject collaboration also supports an enhancement-led quality culture as staff can build on the experience of others to share good practice and where things have not worked as well as anticipated.

14 Interdisciplinary working is supported by networking skills being embedded within all undergraduate modules which encourages students from different subject groups to work together. Examples cited during discussions included television and film students working with journalism and design students on different aspects of project-work. Mechanisms to encourage more formal integration between subject groups are being explored and it is anticipated that the move to a single campus will enhance this working environment and encourage the School to function more effectively as a single unit as opposed to subject-based silos.

15 Screen Academy and postgraduate students stated that they did not feel that they were an integrated part of the University as they had no opportunity to meet with other postgraduate students. The School acknowledged that its postgraduate community is relatively new and is therefore still evolving. It was noted that the nature of creative industries subjects implies that students need to engage as a community to succeed and the School does not wish to establish a distinction between undergraduate and postgraduate student communities. However, it was acknowledged that the School could probably do more to build a postgraduate cross-school community and it was envisaged that the move to a single campus will provide an opportunity to facilitate this.

16 Postgraduate students also suggested that some theoretical teaching lacks intellectual and academic challenge and that programmes contain more practice-based

learning than was expected at postgraduate-level. Staff were aware of students' concerns and acknowledged that their continuing engagement with the work underway University-wide in relation to the *Enhancement Theme: Developing and Supporting the Curriculum* provided an opportunity for teaching teams to consider and shape the nature and effectiveness of their postgraduate student experience.

17 A small number of students indicated that the learning facilities do not match their expectations, particularly those articulating from a further education college. For example journalism students noted a lack of access to specialist equipment particularly at weekends and in the evenings and all students noted that the Jack Kilby Computing Centre did not provide access to specialist software. All students met by the panel cited the library at the Merchiston Campus and its restricted opening hours in particular as 'not being great'. Staff acknowledged that some areas of the School are more library resource intense than others and work closely with the subject librarian to try and ensure there is adequate access to books, journals and electronic resources.

18 A notable concern for students is the lack of social space at the Craighouse and Merchiston Campuses. An important feature of working in the creative arts is meeting with peers in a social environment and students currently do not have access to such facilities. However, students acknowledged that they look forward to the centralisation of the School on the revamped Merchiston Campus as they hoped that this would address their concerns regarding the library and the lack of social space. Discussions with staff and the School's critical reflection recognised and acknowledged students' concerns in these areas. The University's investment in the Merchiston Campus is seen as the means for addressing these concerns and of providing an appropriate learning ambience for creative industry students. However, there would benefit in the Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee reaffirming the University's commitment to providing all students with access to social space which enables students to meet with their peers in a social environment.

19 Staff indicated that students identify with their programme as opposed to the School. All students are allocated a personal development tutor to provide them with advice and guidance on where specialist support can be obtained if required. Students' experiences of the effectiveness of the personal development tutor system varied between subject areas. Journalism students were less aware of the scheme than others but English literature students supported the scheme enthusiastically and noted that additional meetings can be arranged with tutors as required. Journalism students were particularly negative regarding the effectiveness of communication channels between staff and students, a concern echoed by students studying for a combined degree.

20 Discussions with staff indicated that students having a personal tutor is not new to practice-based subjects. Staff spend a lot of time speaking and meeting with students while the personal development tutor scheme provides a more formal mechanism for ensuring that students are being supported individually. The School believes that the University scheme has been designed as part of a network for supporting students and that the School takes full account of the expectations of the scheme. Staff acknowledged that they were not surprised to learn that the meeting with students indicated a general lack of awareness of who their personal development tutor might be as there are a number of differently named schemes in place across the School, for example, study skills advisors.

21 The School is providing its students with appropriate tutorial support and while this takes full account of the intended function of the scheme it is not being operated in the full spirit of the scheme. As published information on the student portal and intranet relating to the personal development tutor scheme differs from the service being provided in some parts of the University, student expectations are not being met which could result in grounds for a future appeal or complaint. During their discussions the panel noted that the

University needs to ensure that students are provided with accurate and current information on the personal development tutor scheme being made available to all students. As such there would benefit in the Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee reaffirming the University's expectations as to the implementation of the personal development tutor scheme at School level.

22 Students who had entered a programme through articulation agreements with local colleges suggested that their Higher National diploma programmes provided an appropriate basis for University-level study. However, the experience of individual students indicated that having joined a programme at the start of stage 2, some struggled to catch-up with their colleagues who had completed stage 1. Similarly, students articulating into stage 3 of a programme suggested that the intensity of teaching was more relaxed at the University than in the second year at college.

23 The School provides a programme of induction activities to help articulating students in their transition to higher education study. The programme draws on Week 1 activities and centrally available resources and services. Further support is provided to students as they approach their first assessment. In addition staff visit partner colleges to ensure that students have an awareness of university life and what will be expected of them if they are to succeed. Such visits also enable staff to gain an awareness of the teaching context within a further education environment. It was noted that staff believe that students articulating from further education colleges are generally extremely motivated and that there is no suggestion that the School has had to compromise on standards to make allowances for them.

The effectiveness of the systems implemented by the School to manage the quality and standard of its provision

24 Overall, the School has in place effective systems for managing the quality and standard of its provision. Appropriate account is given to University and faculty expectations and requirements to ensure that academic standards are set and maintained at an appropriate level and that the student learning experience is enhanced through a process of critical evaluation involving internal and academic peers. Effective mechanisms are in place to take account of and act upon student feedback and students are encouraged to engage with their learning through an appropriate variety and range of teaching and assessment strategies.

25 The panel regarded the School's critical reflection as being open and honest. This demonstrated the School's willingness to engage in critical and evaluative reflection on their practise and provided the panel with appropriate and sufficient information to enable them to undertake the review. A series of student focus groups had been held to enable students' views on a number of specific topics to be used to inform the content of the critical reflection. However, staff acknowledged that, contrary to University expectations, students had not been given the opportunity to comment on the critical reflection prior to its publication.

26 The School utilises a variety of appropriate formal and informal methods to provide students with feedback on their performance. Students particularly welcomed and valued the systems of peer feedback employed across the School.

27 Discussions with students indicate that while assessment feedback was helpful, bunching of assessments across programmes means that they are unable to use feedback from one assessment to improve their performance in another assessment within the same trimester. Students demonstrated a mixed understanding of the University's timeframe for the provision of assessment feedback. However, while a small number of students indicated delays in receiving assessment feedback, the majority of students agreed that assessment feedback is provided within the three-week timescale described in the Student Charter. Some students noted that concerns over such delays had been

discussed at staff student liaison committees which had resulted in students receiving assessment feedback more timeously.

28 Staff suggested that the provision of assessment feedback within the three-week timescale described in the Student Charter is an unrealistic expectation for large student cohorts, particularly where essay marking is involved. The School communicates with students to ensure that expectations on receipt of assessment feedback are understood. In addition, the School is exploring the design of module assessment strategies to ensure that there is sufficient time between assessments to provide students with feedback which will inform their future learning.

29 The critical reflection acknowledged difficulties encountered by the School in ensuring that reports resulting from the routine monitoring of its taught provision are submitted in a timely fashion. In recognising that at the time of the review the University was in the process of reviewing the implementation of its annual monitoring procedure, the School is encouraged to explore ways in which module and programme teaching teams can reflect upon and evaluate the effectiveness of the student learning experience and standard of student achievement after the delivery of each module and at the end of each stage of study.

30 Centrally produced quantitative statistical information relating to student achievement and progression is used to inform the School's monitoring of the quality and standard of its provision in some subjects. However, staff indicated that a more consistent and systematic University approach to producing such data and clearer guidance on the use of data to inform the enhancement of the student experience would assist the School in identifying any emerging patterns or trends and in developing plans to take enhancement action where this is deemed necessary. In exploring how the School might adopt a more consistent and systematic approach account should be taken of recognised good practice within the School and elsewhere within the Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Creative Industries, particularly the Tracker system which provides useful data relating to, for example, attendance and performance monitoring. Similarly, the School should explore how the University's student management system SITS might be used more effectively to assist with monitoring student progression and achievement.

31 Students commended the role of the School administrators as a source of subject-specific advice and guidance. It was suggested that this facility might be lost should the faculty move to a centralised administrative support office.

32 During their discussions the panel noted that there would be benefit in Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee reviewing University expectations in the provision of quantitative statistical information relating to student achievement and progression to inform the monitoring of the quality and standard of provision University-wide. A more strategic and consistent approach to gathering and using such data would assist the academic community in identifying where enhancement activity would benefit the student learning experience.

The effectiveness of the School's engagement with University and faculty strategies, policies, procedures and initiatives

33 Staff demonstrated sound awareness of QAA *Enhancement Themes* particularly with regard to employability and research-teaching linkages. Similarly, discussions with students and staff indicated familiarity with professional body and subject-specific expectations and of the University's focus on internationalisation of the curriculum and of the drive to develop learning, teaching and assessment methods which develop independent learning. The School also plans to develop further its portfolio of master's and continuing professional and personal development provision and to explore opportunities for international collaboration both overseas and through articulation routes. The School believes that this will serve to enhance its external profile in Scottish and national creative

industries higher education. However, while it is commendable that small teaching teams are striving to deliver to this wide and varied agenda, there would be benefit in the School reviewing its engagement with University and sector initiatives with a view to consolidating and rationalising its contributions to these.

34 The 2011-12 academic portfolio review, the co-location of the subject groups to the revamped Merchiston Campus and further enhancement of existing inter-subject working will assist in facilitating such consolidation. In reviewing its strategic management of school and individual staff priorities there would be value in the School identifying what its strengths are in respect of the University and sector agendas and where these are located within each subject group.

35 The panel noted that staff were unfamiliar with the University's *academic signature* and the expectation that this was perceived as an important tool to inform curriculum development and design. However, while staff may not be familiar with the term, full account has been given to the expectations of the *academic signature* within the vocational and practice-based focus of the School's programmes. There would benefit in the Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee reviewing the usefulness of the University's published *academic signature* and to the University's expectations on its role in informing curriculum development and design.

The effectiveness of the School's engagement with employers and professional and statutory bodies to ensure that its provision remains relevant and produces employable graduates

36 A substantial body of evidence exists to indicate that there is effective engagement by all subject areas with industry networks locally and internationally. The School acknowledged in its critical reflection that while it works closely with industry professionals it intends to explore the feasibility of implementing regular industry advisors or forums, where the views of industry professionals can be heard on a more formal basis. This has already been used to good effect within the journalism and publishing subject group and will be expanded across the School.

37 The role of professional accreditation bodies in facilitating reflection on the quality of the work of School is recognised by staff and the School engages with a number of professional bodies. For example, Skillset relicence the Film Academy and Media Academy every three years which involves a rigorous process of self-analysis involving staff and students. Other programmes are accredited by the Broadcast Journalism Training Council, the Periodicals Training Council, Chartered Institute of Public Relations and by the Chartered Institute of Marketing. Preparation for such accreditations provides staff with an opportunity to reflect on the work being undertaken and to engage with industry professionals as part of the process.

38 The School is a founder member of the Scottish Drama Training Network which seeks to enhance the quality of training in performance, television and film across all levels of education in Scotland.

The effectiveness of mechanisms for encouraging student engagement with their learning and with quality processes

39 The School's mechanisms for engaging students with their learning have been discussed in earlier sections throughout this report.

40 Discussions with students indicated that the inclusion of *Confident Futures* Week 1 activities at the start of the first year of a programme was a popular and effective means of bringing students together as a group. Discussions with students and staff indicated that a range of *Confident Futures* activities have been successfully embedded within modules at all levels across the School's provision. Students joining programmes at a stage of study

other than stage 1 through an articulation route indicated that the embedded *Confident Futures* activities helped them to settle into higher education learning.

41 There is a degree of variation between students from different subjects on the effectiveness of mechanisms in place within the School to address student concerns. While students on music programmes indicated that all matters raised are responded to quickly and efficiently and the outcome reported back to students, journalism students indicated that they are not provided with feedback on concerns raised. Overall, the small student cohorts and the approachability of staff led students to report that they have no concerns regarding communicating with staff on matters of concern.

42 Full and part-time students demonstrated general awareness of mechanisms in place to seek academic and pastoral advice and guidance including staff student liaison committees. However, while the majority of students are confident that subject or School-specific concerns will be addressed they are less confident that action will be taken to address matters outside the control of the School. All students agreed that they would be able to find any information they required through either the student portal, their personal development tutor or by approaching a member of the teaching team or the subject-specific administrator.

43 Students suggested that the information technology infrastructure within the School does not meet fully the needs of creative industries students. Students noted that creative industries are collaborative in nature but there is no infrastructure to support this across the School. For example, there are no cross-subject mailing facilities and no distribution lists to enable students to contact their peers on other programmes as a means of encouraging interdisciplinary learning.

44 The School has an established mechanism in place to maintain informal contact with its alumni. Alumni are invited to contribute to the development of new programmes and to present guest lectures to students. Students indicated that such lectures are popular and well-attended. It was noted that the School's alumni initiative helps to engage students in their learning and to facilitate networking by encouraging graduates to keep in touch with the work of the School.

The effectiveness of staff engagement with research, knowledge transfer and other personal and professional development activities

45 The School has a vibrant research and knowledge transfer culture. Teaching staff regularly practice with industry partners and publish research which informs and updates their pedagogy. The School works closely with the Institute for Creative Industries which offers research, consultancy, training and support to those who work in, with and for the arts and creative industries. The Institute works through a number of specialist research centres to which School staff are aligned. The centres undertake a range of activities including commercialisation projects and consultancy in design, art direction, and creative development in a range of areas, working with industry partners to promote and explore new initiatives. Staff use consistently and effectively the research they have had published as the basis for teaching materials on various modules and there are strong traditional models of scholarship informing teaching across the School, including in English, photography, journalism and in music.

46 Students commented that they value the activities undertaken by teaching staff to ensure that their significant practical experience of working at a high professional level in the creative industries is combined with conceptual and theoretical thinking. For example, English students spoke enthusiastically of the teaching and learning strategies implemented by the subject group including the use of reading diaries and student-led seminars. The non-traditional ways in which staff are engaging students studying English programmes with their learning were noted as being impressive and sector leading. The distinctive assessment strategies in use provide students with an opportunity to develop

their subject knowledge to a broader perspective. Staff and students believe that the wide range of personal and professional activities undertaken by staff is of direct benefit to students. Students are able to see in the work of their teachers how the integration of theory and practice might be achieved and the value such integration might bring to the students' own professional development. To encourage this potential career paths are embedded in project modules as an employability initiative in non-practice-based subjects. For example, English students are working alongside prison teaching staff to develop prisoners' writing skills, an initiative that was initiated as part of the module leader's research interest.

47 The School demonstrated a strong commitment to the University's Teaching Fellowship scheme which provides a catalyst for innovation in learning, teaching and assessment and encourages pedagogic cross-subject working. At the time of the review six staff were being mentored through the process of developing their Teaching Fellow applications with a view to enhancing the existing supportive community within the School where staff engage in critical debate on pedagogic approaches and can learn from others good practice.

The effectiveness of the School's engagement with professional service areas

48 The School has effective informal mechanisms in place to liaise with professional service areas as appropriate. Discussions with staff indicated that communication with all professional services is regarded as good. The School believes that professional service areas provide protection for individual lecturers who do not necessarily have the professional background to deal with more challenging student problems. The panel noted the view that professional service areas have increased in effectiveness in recent years and that subject staff have more confidence in engaging directly with central services. However, keeping staff up-to-date on services provided by the University continues to be a challenge. The suggestion of an over-reliance on the intranet and student portal staff was noted and the School has organised on all campuses well-attended information workshops to enhance the inter-action between the University, staff and students.

49 Merchiston Campus based staff and students commended the services provided by the Student Wellbeing team within Student & Academic Services. However, other staff and students in particular commented that specialist support services being unavailable on all campuses can be problematic. Students were particularly critical of the need to travel to the Sighthill Campus to deal with any financial matters and of the complete lack of library and catering facilities on the Craighouse Campus.

50 Students expressed dissatisfaction and disappointment with the service and support offered by the Napier Students' Association. It was suggested that the Association was 'invisible' and that the lack of any real information or support led many students to delete email messages from the Association without opening them. The facilities provided within the Napier Students' Association building were described as inadequate and this combined with the short opening times contributed to students not engaging with the Association and not using their facilities. In acknowledging that the Napier Students' Association building is small and under-used the panel noted that an effective student representative system is an important feature of the broader student experience and that any notion of disconnect between students and their recognised representative function should be explored further. There would benefit in the Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee reaffirming the principles underpinning the relationship between the University and the Napier Students' Association and exploring the need for a service-level agreement setting out the roles, responsibilities and expectations of both parties.

Provision included within the scope of the review

- 1 Undergraduate programmes:
 - a) BA (Hons) Acting and English
 - b) BA (Hons) Acting for Stage and Screen (advanced entry)
 - c) BA (Hons) Communication, Advertising & Public Relations (advanced entry)
 - d) BA (Hons) Culture, Media and Society
 - e) BA (Hons) English
 - f) BA(Hons) English and Communication (running out)
 - g) BA (Hons) English and Film
 - h) BA (Hons) English and Journalism (running out)
 - i) BA (Hons) Journalism
 - j) BA (Hons) Photography and Film
 - k) BA (Hons) Popular Music
 - l) BA (Hons) Television (advanced entry)
 - m) BDes (Hons) Design and Digital Arts (advanced entry)
 - n) BDes (Hons) Graphic Design
 - o) BDes (Hons) Interior Architecture
 - p) BMus (Hons) Music
 - q) BDes (Hons) Product Design

- 2 Undergraduate programmes delivered in collaboration with a partner organisation:
 - a) BA (Hons) Communication, Advertising & Public Relations (advanced entry)

- 3 Taught master's programmes:
 - a) MA Creative Writing
 - b) MA Film
 - c) MA International Journalism for Media Professionals (Distance Learning)
 - d) MA Journalism
 - e) MA Screen Project Development
 - f) MA Screenwriting
 - g) MA Sound Production
 - h) MFA Advanced Film Practice
 - i) MA / MDes Design (Digital Arts)
 - j) MA / MDes Design (Graphics)
 - k) MA / MDes Design (Interaction)
 - l) MA / MDes Design (Interdisciplinary)
 - m) MA / MDes Design (Interior Architecture)
 - n) MA / MDes Design (Lighting)
 - o) MA / MDes Design (Product)
 - p) MA / MDes Design (Sustainability)
 - q) MA / MDes Design (Urbanism)
 - r) MSc Creative Advertising
 - s) MSc Magazine Publishing
 - t) MSc Publishing
 - u) Pg Cert Screenwriting (Distance Learning)

School enhancement plan: School of Arts and Creative Industries, March 2012						
Good practice						
	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the formal and informal collaboration between subjects and the integration of theoretical and practical work within programmes provides students with a wide range of relevant skills (paragraph 9) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the initiatives being implemented to address the continuing challenge of engaging the wider student population in quality activities (paragraph 11) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the support arrangements for students articulating from further education colleges (paragraph 23) 						

School enhancement plan: School of Arts and Creative Industries, March 2012

Good practice (continued)

	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> external engagement by all subject areas with industry networks locally and internationally (paragraphs 36 and 37) 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the School's use of support from the <i>Confident Futures</i> programme which is embedded throughout programmes and used effectively during Week 1 (paragraph 40) 					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the School's alumni initiative helps to engage students in their learning and to facilitate networking by encouraging graduates to keep in touch with the work of the School (paragraph 44) 					

School enhancement plan: School of Arts and Creative Industries, March 2012

Good practice (continued)

	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the non-traditional ways in which staff are engaging students studying English programmes with their learning are impressive and sector leading (paragraph 46) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a strong commitment to the University's Teaching Fellowship scheme which provides a catalyst for innovation in learning, teaching and assessment (paragraph 47) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the School's engagement with the services provided by Student Wellbeing (paragraph 49) 						

School enhancement plan: School of Arts and Creative Industries, March 2012

Recommendations						
It is recommended that the School:	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to explore ways to ensure that practice-based subjects monitor the currency of staff skills to ensure that subjects are kept up-to-date (paragraph 5) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop an identity to compete in the market and to monitor the resources required to ensure that the competitive nature of creative industries subjects does not disadvantage the School (paragraph 7) 						

School enhancement plan: School of Arts and Creative Industries, March 2012

Recommendations (continued)

It is recommended that the School:	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to engage with the work underway University-wide in relation to the <i>Enhancement Theme: Developing and Supporting the Curriculum</i> as this will provide an opportunity to consider and shape the nature and effectiveness of their postgraduate student experience (paragraph 16) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore whether students have adequate access to specialist equipment particularly at weekends and in the evenings and to specialist software which is not available through the Jack Kilby Computer Centre (paragraph 17) 						

School enhancement plan: School of Arts and Creative Industries, March 2012

Recommendations (continued)

It is recommended that the School:	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure students are provided with accurate and current information on the personal development tutor scheme to be provided (paragraphs 19 and 20) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to build on existing practise to ensure that the quality and timeliness of assessment feedback is consistent across the School (paragraph 27) 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a more consistent and systematic approach in gathering and using data which will assist the School in identifying any emerging patterns or trends and in developing plans to take enhancement action where this is deemed necessary (paragraph 30) 						

School enhancement plan: School of Arts and Creative Industries, March 2012

Recommendations (continued)

It is recommended that the School:	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review its engagement with University and sector initiatives with a view to consolidating and rationalising its contributions to these (paragraph 33) 						

School enhancement plan: School of Arts and Creative Industries, March 2012

Matters to be referred outside the School

It is recommended that Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee be invited to:	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reaffirm the University's commitment to providing all students with access to social space which enables students to meet with their peers in a social environment (paragraph 18) • reaffirm the University's expectations as to the implementation of the personal development tutor scheme at School level (paragraph 21) 						

School enhancement plan: School of Arts and Creative Industries, March 2012

Matters to be referred outside the School (continued)

It is recommended that Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee be invited to:	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review University expectations in the provision of quantitative statistical information relating to student achievement and progression to inform the monitoring of the quality and standard of provision University-wide as a more strategic and consistent approach to gathering and using such data would assist the academic community in identifying where enhancement activity would benefit the student learning experience (paragraph 32) 						

School enhancement plan: School of Arts and Creative Industries, March 2012

Matters to be referred outside the School (continued)

It is recommended that Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee be invited to:	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review the usefulness of the University’s published <i>academic signature</i> and to the University’s expectations on its role in informing curriculum development and design (paragraph 35) • review the feasibility of providing specialist support services being on all campuses especially services provided by Finance, Planning and Commercial Services which entail students having to travel to the Sighthill Campus (paragraph 49) 						

School enhancement plan: School of Arts and Creative Industries, March 2012

Matters to be referred outside the School (continued)

It is recommended that Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee be invited to:	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reaffirm the principles underpinning the relationship between the University and the Napier Students' Association and exploring the need for a service-level agreement setting out the roles, responsibilities and expectations of both parties (paragraph 50) 						