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Prepared by
the **eca** Research Board

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{The published version of this document has been amended as in our view could substantially prejudice our commercial interest and we consider to be exempt under s.33(b) ("its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the commercial interests of any person (including, without prejudice to that generality, a Scottish public authority") of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.}

Executive Summary

After a period of extended consultation and discussion, Edinburgh College of Art sets out an ambitious strategy in pursuit of research excellence across all its subject domains. It is structured under five main headings:

- 1 - Research Vision**
- 2 - External Research Contexts**
- 3 - Key Themes**
- 4 - Structures & Functions**
- 5 - Development Plan**

Section 1, Sets out the **Research Vision** includes detailed Research Aims & Objectives (1.4)

Section 2, External Research Contexts highlights Creative academic collaboration (2.5) and External Funding Partners (2.6)

Section 3, sets out **Key Themes in Research Development**, including:

RAE 2001 Feedback from Panels (3.1)

Existing and Potential Strengths (3.2)

Individual Research and the Research Funding Structure (3.2.1)

Thematic Research through Centres and Groups, including Research Themes, Role of Research Fellows, and Funding Structure for Thematic Research (3.2.2)

Links with Learning and Teaching, in particular through the Graduate Research School, Research Degrees, and Education innovation beyond postgraduate level (3.2.3), and Enterprise and knowledge transfer (3.2.4)

Section 4 is concerned with **Operational Functions and Structures**, such as: Research Infrastructure, including, Strategic Research Management, Research Study Management in the Graduate Research School, Central Research Structure and Functions, Science Research Infrastructure Fund (SRIF) (4.1)

The Research Budget Model (4.2)

Related Departments, including Marketing & Development Office, and Exhibitions Office, and wider issues covering Research Dissemination and Information Support, Publication Strategy, Technical Support, The Research Estate, Research Student Support, and General Staff Development (4.3)

Section 5 is the **Research Development Plan 2003-2004**, including:

Central Research Operations, such as Personnel, Infrastructure and Research Activity (5.1)

School-based Activities (5.2)

Related Departments, including Marketing & Development, Enterprise, Human Resources, Library and Information Services, and Estates (5.3)

The Strategy will be annually reviewed through the College Research Board, from 2004, particularly in light of the forthcoming UK-wide review of research currently being undertaken by the Funding Councils.

Prof Brent MacGregor, Vice-Principal (Academic) & Chair of the eca Research Board
Dr Andrew Patrizio, Director of Research Development

Glossary of abbreviations & terms**Staff:**

| | |
|----------|--|
| Prin | Principal |
| VP | Vice Principal (Academic) |
| DirRD | Director of Research Development |
| RP(LA) | Research Professor (Landscape Architecture) |
| HoS | Head of School |
| RBRep | Research Board Representative |
| DirCVCS | Director, Centre for Visual and Cultural Studies |
| ProfArch | Professor in Architecture |
| HeadLib | Head of Library |
| DCE | Director of Creative Enterprise |
| SL | Senior Lecturer |
| DirStuds | Director of Studies (Architecture) |
| RF | Research Fellow |
| R | Reader |

Depts/Orgs:

| | |
|--------|---|
| RB | Research Board |
| GRS | Graduate Research School |
| HR | Human Resources |
| SenMan | Senior Management |
| HWU | Heriot-Watt University |
| EdVEC | Edinburgh University Virtual Environment Centre |
| VARIE | Visual Arts Research Institute, Edinburgh |
| RAE | Research Assessment Exercise |
| RIAS | Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland |
| RCAHMS | Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland |

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Level One

research vision

- 1.1 **eca** engages in creative research at the highest international level.
- 1.2 **eca** recognises that research drives creativity, new knowledge and innovation in all the subjects areas in which the College specialises.
- 1.3 **eca** will continue to grow as a distinctive and creative research institution, increasing the quality, recognition and effectiveness of its research activity.
- 1.4 *Research Aims & Objectives*
 - 1. To ensure that eca enhances its international profile as a centre for study, research and innovation;
 - 2. To ensure that eca research in art, design and architecture makes a major cultural contribution within Scotland and further afield;
 - 3. To implement an ambitious but realistic strategy which takes an institutional view of research;
 - 4. To increase research income through an improved Research Assessment Exercise outcome, targeting new income streams and developing forms of creative commercialisation and knowledge transfer;
 - 5. To develop its international profile through collaborative partnerships across the globe and targeted recruitment strategies;
 - 6. To increase the proportion of research-active staff and ensure a focused research strategy which contributes to economic growth;
 - 7. To strengthen collaboration/partnerships with the creative industries and the environmental professions;
 - 8. To increase collaborative links with other leading research institutions;
 - 9. To increase the value, effectiveness and impact of research, e.g. through technological enhancement;
 - 10. To target a range of European and international funding opportunities;
 - 11. To increase the linkage between staff research and the teaching & learning communities;
 - 12. To consolidate and increase postgraduate study opportunities in research, including interdisciplinary themes;
 - 13. To enhance transition/progression opportunities and increase career choice for graduating students.

Level Two

external research contexts

2.1 This eca strategy has been developed over 2002-3, parallel with a UK-wide review of Research Funding. The Funding Councils have stated that new structures for Research Funding will be in place at the end of 2003. This, and associated new or refined policies from central government such as Knowledge Transfer, well demand that **eca** carefully monitors external research contexts within Higher Education, without becoming overly influenced by the Research Assessment process in general.

2.2 The forthcoming changes suggest that this Research Strategy will require annually revisiting (beginning in autumn 2004 - see Strategic Plan 4.1), in order that we are responsive to important external contexts that determine our ability to pursue our research mission. Annual audit and review of performance and focus will mean that the Research Strategy is integrated with the **eca** Strategic Planning cycle.

2.3 **eca** recognises that it operates within research contexts that go beyond the Higher Education sector, namely the gallery, museum, commissioning body, publisher, local authority and private sectors. To this extent this document tries to encapsulate many different research cultures that operate both within and beyond **eca**. The diversity of approach is recognised in order to exploit our various research activities to their maximum and to pursue those with the greatest potential and ability to deliver. It does not imply that all can or should be pursued equally.

2.4 The external research contexts within which **eca** operates are of great importance in terms of a) **creative academic collaboration** (2.5), and b) **funding partners** (2.6).

2.5 *Creative academic collaboration*

2.5.1 Academic collaboration is an essential element in realising eca's research vision, in order to enhance research quality, relevance, and technological capability, as well as allow more effective dissemination of research activity.

2.5.2 Future directions in the way that research is funded will require HEIs to demonstrate centres of research excellence and the ability to work in partnership with other organisations. This already exists across **eca**, but will require greater emphasis in the future climate.

2.5.3 eca will continue to pursue systematic and ambitious collaborations with partners in Edinburgh, the UK and internationally. It will seek partners of higher standing, matching or exceeding that of **eca**, in order that such partnerships benefit our institution. Currently, we have established joint research appointments with the University of Edinburgh at VARIE (Visual Arts Research Institute, Edinburgh) and at EdVEC (Edinburgh Virtual Environment Centre).

These are only two examples signalling an important growth area, which will enable advanced research activity and expertise to be brought into play at **eca**.

2.5.4 **eca** will strengthen its strategic alliances with Higher and Further Education Institutions (including the other Scottish Art Schools and Colleges), museums, galleries and research institutes as well as with other institutions here and abroad. VARIE in particular already encapsulates this, as it involves the National Galleries and National Museums of Scotland among its partners.

2.5.5 Current proposals are being developed for projects in Japan in 2004. If committed, **eca** could develop further Japanese connections of international standing. Such projects should be developed and invested in if they advance and expand our creative opportunities in research terms and in profile enhancement. These ambitious projects are now dealt with under the Major Research Grants scheme, administered by the College Research Board.

Examples of such collaboration to date include:
National / International Art & Design institutions

- Examples – Visual Arts Research Institute Edinburgh; Akiyoshidai International Art Village; Malmo Konstakademie
- The commercial gallery, agency and publication networks
- Examples – collaborations with the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh; Edinburgh Virtual Environment Centre; the Nuffield Laboratory, University of Oxford; the Sir John Soane Museum, London; the Archive of Modernity in Mondrisio, Switzerland; the University of the Arts, Philadelphia.
- Interdisciplinary bodies

2.6 External Funding Partners

2.6.1 **eca** considers that increasing the number and scope of our external funding partners is an essential element in realising its research vision. The institution expects that core research funding from SHEFC will not substantially increase, but the availability of specific funding through identified schemes, both from SHEFC and other sources, will increasingly be put in place (i.e. the Core Plus model of Research Funding). This section deals chiefly with academic-related grant opportunities, but commercialisation and enterprise schemes are also relevant (covered in Level 3, section 4 below). **eca**'s ability to undertake ambitious research projects as well as be competitive with other HEIs in the field will be reflected in how successful we are in attracting increased grants. Widening our research funding base will also decrease our vulnerability to RAE based funding variation.

2.6.2 **eca** sets as a baseline at least doubling its research income compared to the last RAE period 1996-2001 (in units 33, 60 and 64), by targeting individual and collaborative funding opportunities, and in so doing, increasing the institution's national and international standing. In this, all relevant research councils and other major or new research funding schemes will be targeted, with a particular focus on the Arts & Humanities Research Council and appropriate research charities.

2.6.3 In order to underpin this effort, support will be put in place, including:

- Increased advice to academic staff from senior research staff and members of the Research Board in developing fundable research projects
- New internal and external guidance and advisors charged with developing grant application expertise. This will include:
 - A Research Funding Handbook, outlining internal and external funding sources, in particular signposting web resources in grant gaining
 - A Grants / Information Officer, with skills in grant gaining in Higher Education and in promoting research profile externally
 - Increased links with the eca Marketing and Development offices, expressed through a jointly agreed plan
 - Access to University of Edinburgh expertise through mentoring and collaboration, including:
 - Research & Innovation staff
 - the jointly funded Research Fellow in The Edinburgh Virtual Environment Centre
 - the Administrator of the Visual Arts Research Institute, Edinburgh.

2.6.4 **eca** will seek to ensure that UK Research Funding regimes acknowledge funding attracted through exhibition and publication activity beyond Higher Education (i.e. support that is 'invisible' to HE research metrics as it is processed externally). This anomaly was highlighted by a number of leading HEIs in their RAE 2001 submission, and will remain an important factor in **eca** research activity and potential research metrics.

Examples of SHEFC funding sources accessed to date include:

- RAE core grant; Research Development Grants; Science Research Infrastructure Funds; Knowledge Transfer Grant; Creative Enterprise / Commercialisation of Professionalisation Grant

Examples of non-SHEFC funding sources accessed to date include:

- AHRB; BBC; Binks Trust; Channel 4; D'Oyle Carte Trust; European Science Foundation; European Union; Forestry Commission; Henry Moore Foundation; Historic Scotland; Hope Scott Trust; National Lottery; Russell Trust; Scottish Arts Council; Scottish Screen;

Level Three

Key areas of research development

3 Developing research requires risk taking and firm consolidation of our strengths. This section is guided by two main principles – a) building on what our existing and potential strengths are (3.2), and b) responding to less strong areas in our last RAE 2001 submissions (3.1).

3.1 RAE 2001 Feedback from Panels

Feedback received by **eca** included the following “snapshot” quotes:

General commentary in UK Art & Design area:

‘emergence of multi- inter- and digital media’; ‘decline in practice-based and industry-linked design’; ‘little pedagogic research into learning’; ‘lack of investment in core infrastructure and resources for practice-based areas’; ‘a need to distinguish between practice *per se* and research which was embedded in practice’; ‘research management and support mechanisms had received substantial investment alongside a facilitating structuring or groups or individuals’; ‘low fractional or short-term appointments and research having to be undertaken exclusively outwith contracts’; ‘great variety in research degree provision’

Specific to eca Art & Design area:

General commentary in UK Built Environment area:

Commended strengths in architectural history and theory, design theory, landscape architecture, sustainable built environment; Concern about age profile and need to develop young leaders/new researchers; Applied research dominating theory; multidisciplinary research used to hide weaknesses.

Specific to eca Built Environment area:

General commentary in UK History of Art, Architecture and Design area:

‘Interdisciplinarity is the norm rather than the exception in current work on visual culture’; ‘it is hoped that curatorship will become a more firmly established feature of any future assessments’.

Specific to eca History of Architecture area:

3.2 Existing and Potential Strengths

These broadly lie in the following areas:

1. individual research
2. thematic research through centres and groups
3. links between learning and teaching
4. enterprise and knowledge transfer

3.2.1 Individual research

eca recognises that a significant majority of its current research activity is based on dynamic, self-motivated, sole researcher models. These research models take the form of a) studio or workshop based, b) library or archive based, and c) curatorial and exhibition work. Most, though not all, of these research forms are ‘practice based’, i.e. research of an applied nature accompanied by a question, an appropriate context and methodology, and expressed in an acceptable form. **eca** will support and develop these kinds of models to their full potential.

It will also seek to give clear guidance on future developments in defining ‘professional practice’, ‘research embedded within practice’ and the various kinds of traditional research activities undertaken within the HE sector. It is recognised that these definitions can be a source of confusion for **eca** staff, given the creative and practice/studio-led work which predominates, and that external policies are having an effect on how these definitions are being applied.

Key objectives in the area of individual research include:

- Focused and transparent institutional support
- Accessible resources
- Appropriate rewards for research excellence
- Recruitment and promotion of research-active staff
- Provision of research time / leave
- Recognition of individual research as contributing to new research themes
- The provision of in-house and external mentoring & research training
- The provision of research-related staff development
- Platforms for feedback of staff research to colleagues within eca (workshops, seminars, etc. on research subjects, research skills and fundraising)

Research Funding Structure

Individual academic staff will be able to apply under the following schemes in order to support their on-going research.

- A. Small Grants
- B. Early Career Grants
- C. Research Leave
- D. Visiting Fellows

A fast-track option for bids under £300 is administered at School level.

Each of these schemes has been designed around the needs of individual researchers that predominate at **eca**, although the schemes do ask staff to consider how their individual work fits into the wider context of **eca** research. Guidelines and procedures for accessing these funds are on the **eca** intranet and in the **eca** Research Handbook.

3.2.2thematic research through centres and groups

Research Themes

•

Role of Research Fellows

Thematic research will be a key focus for the development of Research Fellows at **eca**. The institution will build upon its initial expansion of research fellows, whose contribution can be seen in:

- heading ambitious research themes and projects
- expanding research contacts and **eca** profile internationally
- providing a 'bridgehead' into external research funding
- mentoring for staff and students
- submitting work to the RAE
- bringing in ideas and foci free from academic, teaching constraints

Research Fellows will be fixed term members of staff, with responsibility for leading research themes and generating research income. They will have specific job descriptions and contracts, outlining their duties, which will include a limited amount of teaching, tutorial or seminar work. They will be line-managed by the Director of Research Development or a senior member of academic staff in their own area.

eca will expand the types of Research Fellows it employs to include:

- Associate Research Fellows
- Research Professors
- Visiting Research Fellows (not directly employed)

Funding Structure for Thematic Research

(for details see below)

Academic staff will be able to apply under the Major Research Grants scheme in order to support thematic research. Applications to support individual projects, which may relate to thematic research will be met through Small Grants, Research Leave and Visiting Fellows schemes.

Guidelines and procedures for accessing these funds are on the **eca** intranet and in the **eca** Research Handbook.

3.2.3 links between learning and teaching

An essential theme in the **eca** research strategy is linking learning and teaching to research. New knowledge and skills of staff and students needs to have a strong foundation in enquiry and research based learning across the board. The system should simultaneously develop student learning and the research base. **eca** will strengthen research training available to students, promote the creation of teaching & research teams, as well as integrating training with research output production and administration.

eca will seek to increase pedagogic research activity and reflective practice, in order to link the research and teaching components of staff work, and so create further links between research, learning and teaching.

The Research Board will also contribute to an institutional review of Staff Development, which will seek to address traditional contractual variations in practice between teaching, administrative and research duties. This recognises the fact that overly diverse practices exist across **eca** and that high research performance in the future must take into account teaching and administrative loads, and make adjustments accordingly. The problems faced by a) fractional staff, b) course leaders, c) readers and professors, and d) heads of departments/schools, is particularly recognised. From this, **eca** hopes to instigate a college-wide formal staff review system, which includes research activity as well as other staff development areas. Currently this process is not uniform across **eca** Schools.

It will also seek to adopt best practice in research-led teaching and learning through national guidelines, e.g. Learning and Teaching Support Network, ILT, etc.

I - Graduate Research School

The Graduate Research School (GRS) has a pivotal role in integrating higher research students with the wider research agenda. The functions of GRS permit a co-ordinated approach to student and staff research development and training.

More detail on activities within the GRS are to be found in the structure section, level 4.

II - Research Degrees

In RAE 2001, the relatively low number of PhD and M.Phil students was noted in the feedback. This has both an adverse effect on the Minor Volume Indicators, which determine our core grant, as well as on the research culture in general. As a response, **eca** will put in place methods for increasing its PhD and M.Phil capacity, in terms of student numbers, resources and space requirements, and in developing supervision capacity among staff, and crucially improving progression rates so that at any one time the majority of students are in the main stage of their research with limited numbers writing up.

III - Education innovation beyond postgraduate level

Primarily through the protoacademy research project, instigated in 1998, **eca** has developed a reputation for exploring new models of 'post postgraduate education'. The models and activities of protoacademy are currently being reviewed by the Research Board, in close collaboration with members of the protoacademy. There are opportunities to expand/refocus the structure, role and activities of protoacademy, and/or develop alternative innovations (currently as part of a European consortium under the term 'Future Academy', led by the London Institute/Chelsea School of Art).

In either case, this area will continue to be an important link between the functions of research and learning/teaching, and **eca** will seek to continue its internationally recognised work in this area.

3.2.4 Enterprise and knowledge transfer

This strategy recognises that the Higher Education sector is coming under increasing pressure to quantify and justify the effect of research on the wider economy. Within our core areas of arts, design and the built environment, this presents us with specific opportunities as well as challenges.

Creative Enterprise

In line with our Strategic Plan, **eca** will continue to emphasise the commercialisation of research and the development of potential collaborative relationships with the creative sector including product innovation and incubation support and the potential for 'concept to market' initiatives. **eca** will identify enterprise opportunities to enhance the reputation and commercial impact of research generated within the institution. It will also increase additional funding beyond the RAE-based grant. The most immediately appropriate areas for early development are within Design & Applied Arts (furniture, glass, interior design, fashion and textiles, etc.) but the principles involved will be extended to all potential areas of **eca** research activity.

Creative enterprise will be pursued as a dynamic and imaginative response to the government's enterprise agenda, including the Scottish creative and cultural industries, and SHEFC's 'knowledge transfer' and related schemes. The aim is to

create bridges between innovative research activities and the cultural and creative economies.

In addition to assistance with conventional research bids, support is needed for maximising income streams from research outputs in the commercial arena, including links with industry. This extends to legal advice on intellectual property rights (IPR) and copyright, sharing of income and royalties, etc. The Director of Research Development has a role to play in establishing procedures and guidance to support academics, maximise commercial opportunities and ensure fair benefits accrue to the College and to individual researchers and collaborators.

Knowledge Transfer

eca will respond to the Knowledge Transfer agenda in its own distinctive way, recognising the wide and fragmented public nature of most of our research output (i.e. through galleries, museums, publications, commissioning bodies and other institutional frameworks). It currently is using the Knowledge Transfer grant to support dissemination of research (scottishresearch.com, website development, publications of **eca** research activity) as well as research infrastructure (Scottish Research Infrastructure Fund) and enterprise development. **eca** must remain proactive in ensuring that the related metrics which may be brought to bear on our subject areas reflect the real contribution we make to the community through research.

Level Four

Operational Functions and Structures

4 The award of Small Specialised Institution (SSI) status to **eca** and successful expansion and development of its research profile create rich opportunities for the evolving research environment. Despite continuing resource constraints for all HEIs, it is important to invest in appropriate research infrastructure in order to maintain and enhance quality and competitiveness. Support and enhancement falls under three main headings: 4.1 Research Infrastructure, 4.2 Research Budget Model and 4.3 Related Departments.

4.1 RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

4.1.1 Strategic Research Management

Strategic research management has a role in articulating the external interface between relevant funders and policy makers, giving voice to the needs of **eca**'s creative research activity, as well as guiding staff regarding external policies. It also has a role in managing the administration of internal policies regarding staffing, staff support and funding.

Strategic research management will be carried out by core senior research staff; this will continue to involve academics whose primary role is research and committees where research, teaching and learning at School level are represented. Current Senior Research staff reflect different traditions and foci in research under the existing school structure. In future structures, such support will, in principle, continue to be needed and to be funded centrally, although the distribution of expertise and allocation of responsibilities may change.

Similarly, there will continue to be a need for dedicated administrative support for senior research staff, and to build up experience and expertise in research support (see also below).

4.1.2 Research Study Management in the Graduate Research School

An essential component of research is formal research study, which may take place at any level from staff to undergraduate students. Where the study involves a research degree, the QAAHE guidelines require quality assurance procedures as currently provided through the Graduate Research School Code of Practice. The GRS development strategy and systems will be monitored to ensure that they are effective and provide a good basis for any expansion of research teaching and learning. Elements of research study needing further development in future include:

- Research methods teaching at taught postgraduate level and at undergraduate level
- Research supervisor training, monitoring and support
- Research student support, including development of central cultural and social facilities
- Support for staff to take research degrees, including financial incentives and/or assistance with time management

4.1.3 Central Research Structure and Functions

The Research Board reflects the need to link School priorities to broader research and academic aims at all levels, and to feed into decision-making and monitoring systems at College level. The Research Board has an agreed constitution and remit, and is chaired by the Vice-Principal (Academic), drawing on Senior Management, Schools and Research staff for its membership, reporting to Academic Council. Research Sub-Committees will manage or have oversight of much of the detailed programme of research undertaken by individual academic staff.

The Research Board and Sub-Committees will be transparent, objective, accessible, participative and encourage a positive research climate within the institution. The new remit of Research Board representatives will be a) to chair Sub-Committees, b) to act as a clear line of communication between the Research Board and the staff they represent (which will cross School and Department boundaries), in terms of keeping staff up-to-date with policies, assisting in advising staff, and relaying comments and concerns from staff to the Research Board, and c) to advise on research strategy, encouraging the growth of the research culture in **eca**, keep abreast of current HE research policies, and participate in the awarding of research monies to staff projects under the existing schemes.

4.1.4 Science Research Infrastructure Fund (SRIF)

There is a need to build on SRIF, through purchasing equipment to support the research base. In the first stages, funding is available for Virtual Environment and Visualisation facilities, with technology support. SRIF will continue to be a strand in funding, so a policy which addresses the fund and its opportunities is required.

4.1.5 Working in parallel with the Research Board is the newly established Postgraduate Studies Committee within **eca**. This Committee has primary responsibility for the development, recruitment and support of the postgraduate and research student population. However, close ties with the Research Board exist, both in terms of reporting and of common membership. The Research Board will have the authority to determine the quantity of PhD Studentships available through R Grant funding, and any strategic directions it seeks to encourage in its research student membership, but passes over direct responsibility for recruitment and administration to the PGSC.

4.2 Research Budget Model

This model provides the formula for delivering RAE grant monies. In addition, research income is received by **eca** under a) Knowledge Transfer Scheme (SHEFC), b) Scientific Research Infrastructure Fund (SHEFC), and c) miscellaneous contract and commissioned research. These are accounted for under other budget systems, though a policy for establishing how research income is disbursed needs to be adopted by the Research Board.

The following model is based on financial year 2002-3, and will be subject to some variation in future years.

Following best practice in the HE sector, we will determine what specific items of infrastructure are met through the Top Slice, i.e. central institutional support.

4.3 Related Departments

4.3.1 Marketing & Development Office

At the time of writing, the Marketing & Development Office is recruiting a new head, chiefly with the focus on marketing. Research activity will develop strong and clear links between areas of marketing, development and exhibitions.

A vital feature of research development will be a culture in which bids for outside research funding become a regular part of research activity for staff. An essential component of this is support by one or more (perhaps part-time) research officers whose task is to assist in identifying appropriate sources of funding, alerting staff to particular opportunities and, and who have expertise in costing proposals and managing collaborative bid preparation. Such support should also extend to general assistance in setting up systems for research budget management, advice on reporting procedures, etc. This post could be housed in the Development Department or in the Research Office.

4.3.2 Exhibitions Office

There is a need to develop strategic and mutually supportive activity between the Exhibition functions of **eca** and the research activity across **eca**. Both departments should develop policies within their own plans, which will contribute to supporting quality exhibitions within **eca**, externalise research activity within **eca** and wider afield, and develop external research partnerships/collaborations through exhibitions programme

4.3.3 Research Dissemination

It is recognised that this has traditionally been an area of weakness in the institution, with good work going largely unacknowledged in the sector and having a reduced effect in repositioning **eca** as a strong centre for research activity in our core areas. Similarly, internal dissemination of best practice and current successes is also an area requiring more attention and supporting structures.

- Along with other sector partners, **eca** will advocate the importance of Art, Design, and Environmental Studies in the widest cultural and economic context.
- It will promote awareness of current research excellence in **eca**.
- It will take advantage of working with subject-specialist partners and other HEIs, and through public bodies such as the UK Creative Industries and Urban Renaissance agenda, to promote its own work and that of its disciplines.
- It will demonstrate its contribution to the economic and cultural growth of Edinburgh and Scotland, within a UK and international context.

Support will include guidance and practical assistance in dissemination through media and venues outside the College, as well as through dissemination vehicles established by **eca**. Thus, guidance on appropriate publishing houses and journals, seminars on how to get published or exhibited, support systems for commenting on draft submissions, etc., will need to be available, through Research Directors and other, experienced research academics.

Marketing Department will take a more proactive role in disseminating individual staff and institutional successes, and in promoting **eca** to prospective students. This activity is easily overlooked but has great benefits in terms of information flow and creating a positive environment. A detailed 'Marketing Research' plan will be evolved after the Head of Marketing has been appointed.

Existing platforms to promote eca research:

Scottishresearch.com
HERO RAE 2001 website

4.3.4 Research Information support

Library and Information Services are a key part of research infrastructure and it is vital that good literature search, indexing, referencing and other electronic and internet-based systems are developed and maintained. Initial investment under the Scottish Research Infrastructure Fund and SRIF in 2001-04 will be seen as part of a broader and ongoing investment in information systems.

Discussions are ongoing between Research and Library staff, in order to develop a policy between the two areas in support of Research and Information services in general. Over the initial period of this Strategy, steps will be taken to develop short, medium and long-term opportunities in order to enhance resources for Library & Research areas, in particular infrastructure and space. Proposed new staff with responsibility for Grants and Information would work closely with Library staff in order to deliver assistance to academic staff and external collaborations.

The development of a Research archive, of staff outputs and related collections, is also being explored as a priority.

The use of R Grant to support strategic research areas of Library provision will be actively discussed within the Research Board.

Current discussion headings include supporting the research community; developing existing Library initiatives, electronic developments; space planning; coordination of professional information; and Library Collection Development.

4.3.5 Publication Strategy

From an almost non-existent base in 1997, **eca** has developed a modest but high quality publication activity, through partnership and own initiative. This has resulted in promotional publications, in particular a) 'Edinburgh Projections 2000', which showcased art & design activity, b) School-originated leaflets and CDROMs showcasing individual staff c) collaborative co-publications with organisations such as the Royal Botanic Garden, Metronome, Fruitmarket Gallery, Kyoto National Museum of Art, etc. d) artists books, in particular 'The High Road' by Kenneth White, staff and students. **eca's** most significant investment has been in 'twoninetwo: essays in visual culture' (3 issues, editorial board from HEIs across Scotland, all issues sold out, subscribers from across the world and major library collections.)

eca will build on this start and consider options of developing existing initiatives on a firmer footing and/or developing new initiatives. Any projects funded by R Grant would be required to meet our strategic research goals.

4.3.6 Technical support

Research, whether in architecture, design or fine art domains, will increasingly rely on computer-based technology and related IT. Such physical hardware and software requires expert personnel who can provide the technical support that allows its creative and efficient use by research academics. It is inevitable that the number of person-hours dedicated to computer/IT support will increase and become more specialised, particularly for research which uses Virtual Reality and the proposed immersive Virtual Environment and Visualisation Facility. Without this support, the potential for effective exploitation of new research areas and new hardware will be hampered.

eca will use existing and new grants available (such as Science Research Infrastructure Fund, AHRB's Resource Enhancement, etc) to build our technical support strategically.

4.3.7 The Research Estate

Currently the Research Office is located in the Grassmarket Campus, providing facilities for Research Directors, the Graduate Research School, administrative staff, PhD students, Research Fellows and funded research projects & centres. The benefits of a dedicated research building or section are clear:

- encourage academic and social cross-fertilisation and interaction
- make a publicly-accessible statement about the importance of research in **eca's** vision
- offer infrastructural support to specific research projects, staff and research students
- house research equipment, workshop and specialist exhibition space
- provide links to information dissemination and teaching programmes
- invigorate the relationship between research, learning and teaching which is fundamental to **eca's** work
- support international exchanges and visiting artists / scholar programmes

eca will look positively and adventurously at providing appropriate estate for research activity, in order to build on its strengths and increase its profile as a research institution. In the first period of this strategy, this will involve identifying the medium and long-term needs for research activity across **eca**, in order that a clear plan for providing estate which supports this activity can be achieved. Much of this will involve consolidating and expanding central resources for **eca** funded research and will explore sole or collaborative bids to SHEFC and AHRB (e.g. Resource Enhancement Scheme) to put in place suitable estate and resources.

The Strategic Plan 2002-6 cites the possibility of a new building on the Keir Street site as 'potentially housing specialised research facilities including a 'digital sandbox', **ecalab** innovative projects, protoacademy, a social space for creative industries interaction and a centre for Contemporary Architecture in collaboration with the RIAS'. Further research is required to establish the feasibility of this and/or alternative research functions.

It is also recognised that staff support their own research through self-funded facilities based outwith **eca** premises. Whilst it will be impossible to provide individual working space for many of our academic staff, the research estate strategy should look at providing central resources of use to many staff, as well as short-term accommodation for specific individual projects that require space (this model already operated successfully in the Bristo premises, 2000-1).

4.3.8 Research Student Support

One option for supporting an individual's or group's research programme is to fund PhDs which are concentrated in researchers' areas of interest (and will provide publications/outcomes for supervisors as well as their students). This can be an option available to research-active staff, with a demonstrable research record, who apply for support through the Faculty Research Committee or its equivalent. **eca** might wish to set a minimum number of funded PhDs per year as a way of ensuring a baseline level of research student activity which also directly benefits research staff goals.

In addition, a small part of research support might be available to existing research students, or those funded from other sources, to allow them to develop research or present at conferences/exhibitions, particularly where public outputs of joint authorship with their supervisors will maximise the benefits.

4.3.9 General staff development support

The institutional connection between staff development, reviews and research activity will be strengthened, with line managers and research directors collaborating closely. A proportion of funding at School level should be available to assist individual staff development in research. In particular, staff should be encouraged to undertake and complete PhDs, as well as present at conferences, get publications or work for exhibitions accepted, etc.

