

Edinburgh College of Art

Strategic Plan 2007-2010

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1907-2007 experience change ambition

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Strategic Plan 2007-2010

Contents

Introduction by the Principal 1

Vision 1

Aims and objectives 2

Student learning 2

Research 4

Internationalisation of learning 5

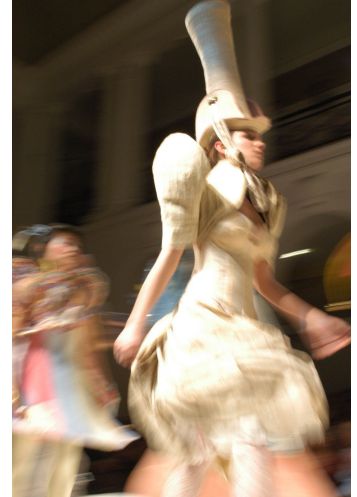
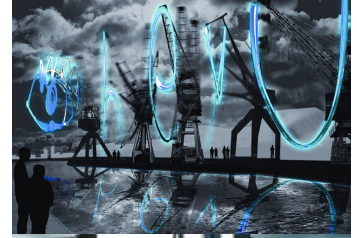
Staff 6

Space 7

Relationships 7

University of Edinburgh 8

Implementation 9



Photographs by John K McGregor

2007-2010 Strategic Plan

July 2007

eca is independent, innovative, inspirational and international

Introduction by the Principal

In 2007, our centenary year, it is a good time to review our progress and look forward to the changes we need to plan for the future.

This is a year of significant change for the College. In February we finished moving into our new building and by the end of the year we will have completed moves to bring all the Departments and Schools together on a single site. We are also at the beginning of a new phase in our relationship with our near neighbour, the University of Edinburgh. We have some ambitious but realistic plans to build on these and other developments over the next three years.

The College is a special place, synonymous with creativity and work of the highest quality. As a small, specialist institution we must foster that quality and distinctiveness, and recognise that to do so we must be ready to adapt, taking forward our own ideas and responding to new opportunities.

It is the people that make the College what it is, and I pay tribute to the staff and students whose work will make this plan reality. I hope you share with me a sense of privilege to work here, and to be part of this exciting community.

Vision

One College, independent and interconnected

- That the best students and staff, from all over the world, and from all backgrounds will want to come to.
- Where they can develop ideas, creativity, and skills that will have an international impact.
- That brings together a broad portfolio of art and design disciplines.
- That, through the creative practice of its staff and students, nurtures the cultural and economic life of Scotland.
- That staff, students, alumni and the wider community in Edinburgh and Scotland will be proud of.

Aims and objectives

Student learning

Aim 1

To attract the most talented students, whatever their background, to enrich the learning culture of the College.

We will take forward the most effective measures to widen access to the College to students from a broad range of backgrounds, including groups that are currently under-represented.

We will do this by:

- Developing widening access and retention initiatives that are integrated through the College from admission to graduation and across Schools and Departments.
- Working with schools, particularly in Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders but also in geographically remote areas, to break down preconceptions and raise aspirations, demonstrating the relevance of an Art College education to employment in the creative industries and also to the development of transferable skills and general well-being.
- Providing classes to support potential students in preparing their portfolios, to enable applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds to demonstrate their talent.
- Engaging with the community through our lifelong learning and other public provision and using Individual Learning Accounts to encourage participation in credit-bearing classes from under-represented groups.

We will increase numbers of postgraduate students, moving the balance of the College towards more advanced, independent and innovative study.

We will do this by:

- Reviewing our financial model for postgraduate taught students.
- Seeking opportunities to increase the number of funded places for home/EU postgraduate students, both taught and research (see proposal submitted to the Scottish Funding Council).
- Building on the new structure for postgraduate taught programmes, with one-year MAs and two-year MFAs in addition to the other established Masters and Diploma programmes.
- Establishing recruitment targets by programme for postgraduate taught students.
- Developing a joint graduate school with the University of Edinburgh, building on the Architecture alignment project (see under aim 10 below).

- Exploring with the University of Edinburgh and with the other Scottish art colleges* the potential for new shared postgraduate provision.
- Taking forward proposals, with Heriot-Watt University, for the Scottish Academy of Fashion.
- Making the most of the potential contribution of postgraduate students to the culture of the College.
- Providing for the needs of postgraduate students in administrative and support services.

Aim 2

To review our teaching programmes against balanced criteria, to ensure that they are relevant, high quality, sustainable, inclusive and up to date in terms of both content and delivery.

We will enable the development of interdisciplinary learning.

We will do this by:

- Embedding a common assessment framework.
- Exploring the potential in developing a Common Course Architecture (CCA).

We will embed fully the educational principles of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

We will do this by:

- Integrating professional and transferable skills, such as reflection, writing, language skills, information literacy, teamwork, and IT skills, and awareness of employability and environmental sustainability, into the curriculum, while also making them explicit.
- Progressing Professional and Personal Development Planning.
- Engaging with the creative and cultural industries and other client groups outside the College, beginning by gathering information on the range of engagement that is already taking place.

We will work towards an appropriate organisational structure to support our distinctive, specialist student experience, preserving the advantages of distinct disciplinary identities.

We will do this by:

- Developing, in consultation with staff, a new streamlined organisational structure to manage and support the academic programmes.

* Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, Gray's School of Art and Glasgow School of Art.

- Specifying the form of an Architecture School jointly owned with the University of Edinburgh (see below).
- Establishing a graduate school (see below).

We will take the opportunities presented by new learning technologies to make the experience of students more flexible and rewarding.

We will do this by:

- Implementing the open-source e-learning platform Moodle as the basis of a virtual learning environment.
- Providing access to an increasing range of assistive and alternative technologies for staff and students, and developing the capabilities of staff to support students in using them.

We will enhance our students' learning experience, maintaining subject depth while creating a greater diversity of experience, including articulating the role of lifelong learning within the College's academic ethos.

We will do this by:

- Refining the Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- Reviewing the opportunities for flexible modes of study, particularly at postgraduate level.
- Embedding the quality handbook into academic practice.
- Working with relevant Subject Centres to ensure curricula are up to date.
- Developing a set of measures to evaluate groups of programmes in cognate territories, including incorporating arrangements for the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) into College procedures.

Research

Aim 3

To take a holistic view of promoting research and learning in our disciplines.

We will encourage staff to reach their potential in high-level research, and thereby enable the College as a whole to achieve the highest standards of excellence in research.

We will do this by:

- Adopting commonly agreed definitions of research that encompass practice-led, scholarly and critical work.
- Developing a research strategy that includes the work of individuals and groups of researchers in their Schools and Departments.
- Appointing as academic staff only those who engage, or have the potential to engage, in high-quality research.

- Exploring and developing links between research and student learning.
- Providing training for all staff, regardless of experience, to develop new skills and knowledge to support their research.
- Developing academic staff capabilities to undertake supervision of research students.
- Celebrating the achievements of staff and students in research in all its forms.
- Promoting the exchange of knowledge, building on our relationships with employers, policy makers and the public.

We will increase the capability of staff to obtain external research income, especially from the Research Councils.

We will do this by:

- Achieving compliance with requirements for full economic costing, including TRAC, and supporting staff in writing and costing research proposals.
- Further developing national and international research networks and research funding streams to support our work.
- Making the strongest possible submissions to the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise.

Internationalisation of learning

Aim 4

To ensure that our programmes prepare all students for international standards of professional practice.

We will do this by:

- Taking a strategic approach to the development of international alliances and links of all kinds.
- Complying as far as possible with the Bologna Process, including preparing to issue European Diploma Supplements to our graduates.
- Internationalising our curricula.
- Seeking opportunities for our students to learn foreign languages.

Aim 5

To increase the number of international students to a level that is both academically and financially sustainable.

We will do this by:

- Developing an international strategy that sets out key responsibilities and relationships, and provides for

increased volumes, in the recruitment and support of international students at all levels.

- Nominating academic staff to lead recruitment in particular markets.
- Setting targets for international students by country and by subject, consulting Schools and the Marketing and Development Department to ensure targets are realistic.
- Cultivating a variety of international markets, thereby spreading risk and providing a culturally rich student experience.
- Adjusting provision, where appropriate, to respond to demand from international students.

Staff

Aim 6

To ensure that our staff meet the future needs of the College.

We will continue to develop arrangements for the management of staff, ensuring parity in recruitment, reward and development, and the management of performance.

We will do this by:

- Creating a staffing strategy for each School and academic Department that analyses the need for staff in each category and the balance between them.
- Developing staff succession plans, to ensure retention of key skills and knowledge.
- Managing staff resources so that Schools and Departments have the number, skills and quality of staff they need, and that the College can afford, rather than relating staffing levels directly to School income.
- Developing a consistent workload planning model for the College.

We will implement a staff development strategy that ensures staff members are able to fulfil their roles, and can reach their full potential.

We will do this by:

- Providing, or finding, development activities for staff that are relevant and that are aligned with operational and strategic needs.
- Ensuring that all staff discuss their development needs with their managers at least once a year through the career review process.
- Providing, or finding, training and development in pedagogy and in new learning technologies.

- Ring fencing a portion of School/Departmental budgets for staff development.
- Monitoring the effectiveness and value for money of staff development.

Space

Aim 7

To use the opportunity presented by the consolidation of the estate to work towards better use of space through more flexible space management.

We will develop an integrated Lauriston Place campus, as set out in our Estate Strategy.

We will do this by:

- Continuing with a phased programme of remodelling of the older buildings.
- Improving the integration of the new building on West Port with the rest of the campus.
- Considering the place within the estate of social space for students and staff.
- Monitoring implementation of the business plan for the consolidation of the estate.
- Giving appropriate priority to a continuing programme of maintenance, especially to the older buildings.
- Setting out financially sustainable plans for both maintenance and new developments for the next fifteen years.

We will allocate and manage space so that it supports academic needs and plans.

We will do this by:

- Developing a model for assessing space needs, using data from across the sector on the levels of space required for each student and member of staff.
- Establishing shared facilities, for example for student computing, for workshops and for lectures and seminars, and policies and processes for managing them.
- Considering reviewing the balance between studio and flexible project space.

Relationships

Aim 8

To plan and prioritise effective marketing activities, including student recruitment, in line with evidence.

We will do this by:

- Developing a marketing strategy that prioritises the most effective marketing activities.
- Developing a programme to gather market intelligence, using specific market research where necessary, to target, and evaluate the effectiveness of, all relevant activities.
- Developing a new, accessible College web site and intranet as a resource for external stakeholders, including prospective students, employers, policy makers, cultural industry professionals and funders.
- Continuing to build relationships with our alumni.
- Reviewing the organisation and functions of exhibitions in learning, assessment and public engagement.

Aim 9

To develop efficient, integrated, user-centred processes and systems, recognising that administrative systems form part of the student and staff experience and have an impact on our reputation.

We will do this by:

- Reviewing and developing information processes and systems, ensuring that new developments are based on thorough analysis and deliver benefits for the College as a whole.
- Ensuring that teams work together across functional boundaries, improving working relationships between departments where necessary.
- Renewing commitment to the Staff Charter.

University of Edinburgh

Aim 10

To develop a partnership with the University of Edinburgh, short of a full merger, involving collaboration in research, curricula and support services, for the benefit of both institutions.

We will do this by:

- Working together with the University to establish a common approach to implementation of a Graduate School model, including working jointly on the development of staff as research student supervisors.
- Submitting a proposal to the Scottish Funding Council for strategic funds to support substantial collaboration involving the creation of a joint graduate school.
- Specifying the form and setting a date for establishing a jointly owned architecture school, including aligning teaching in Architecture and Landscape Architecture, making a joint submission for Architecture to the 2008 RAE, and developing a joint management framework.

- Facilitating new, and building on existing, research collaborations across both institutions.
- Facilitating the sharing of teaching and services by aligning our organisations where appropriate and mutually beneficial.

Implementation

Aim 11

To implement the Plan through the College's management structures.

We will report regularly on progress in implementing the Plan.

We will do this by:

- Developing the plan into a series of specific and measurable action plans, integrated with our resource strategies, identifying responsibilities, resources and timetables, and monitor these through meetings between staff and their managers.
- Ensuring that plans are financially and environmentally sustainable.
- Developing arrangements for the routine provision of accurate and timely management information.

We will improve communication, so that staff are clear about decisions that have been made and why.

We will do this by:

- Arranging a programme of informal meetings between staff and senior management to facilitate building relationships and exchanging information up, down and across the College.
- Reviewing the use of email, the intranet and the ePortal to communicate with staff and students.

29 June 2007

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Overview of student targets