

The Glasgow School of Art Student Mental Health Agreement 2025-2027



1. Introduction

As part of the NUS Think Positive Student Mental Health Project, The Glasgow School of Art signed up to NUS [Think Positive](#) and committed to co-creating a Student Mental Health Agreement (MHA) in partnership with the GSA Student's Association. This was in support of the first GSA Student Partnership Agreement 2022/23 which set the ambition to:

“grow our understanding of students’ learning experiences..... foster a sense of trust, honesty and reciprocity.....identify and take forward a range of partnership projects to improve learning, teaching and the wider student experience”

In partnership with the GSASA; supported by internal working groups, consisting of staff and students, we have reviewed and evaluated the 2022-2024 Mental Health Agreement <https://gsofa.sharepoint.com/sites/StudentIntranet/ProfessionalSupport/StudentSupportServices/Pages/Mental-Health-Agreement.aspx> and developed the 2025-2027 version.

The 25-27 Student Mental Health Agreement supports the Scottish Government [student-mental-health-action-plan](#) (2024) that looks to address student mental health, through effective collaborative working across colleges, universities, NHS Boards, Integrated Joint Boards, Public Health Scotland, Health and Social Care Partnerships, and the third sector. This action plan identifies 5 priority areas for stakeholders to address, and the GSA Mental Health Agreement has utilised these as the key working areas to address and evaluate.

The Student Mental Health Agreement is aligned with the core values guiding our behaviour and decision making as evidenced in our [GSA Strategic Plan 2022-2027](#) and is aligned with the persistent inequalities identified by the [SFC/EHRC National Equality Outcomes](#)

Working Areas for the 2025 – 2027 GSA Student Mental Health Agreement

Working Area 1: Promoting mental and physical health and wellbeing to prevent mental ill health

Enhancing student awareness of physical and mental health, raising awareness of available resources which support mental wellbeing.

	Actions
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with a yearly student mental health event that will be delivered with the express aim of reducing stigma, allowing opportunity for informal access to knowledge of available support, participation in wellbeing activities and the opportunity to provide feedback on issues and service provision. • Mental Health and Counselling staff will sustain participation in Fresher's events and student induction resources and activity. • Further development of a programme of workshops that support students to manage their wellbeing and mental health. The Five Ways to Wellbeing approach is used as the foundation in all wellbeing workshops offered as this is recognised as a model that covers many areas of wellbeing. These workshops will continue to be advertised on Canvas, Student Support's newsletter and the new Instagram page, in addition to posters throughout the campus as requested by students. • Continue to use creative approaches within drop-in sessions, such as Craft and Chat and GSA Book Group to support and encourage students to take time to support their sense of wellbeing and promote self-care in an accessible manner. • Develop proactive resources, training and psychoeducational groupwork for students to support them to develop coping strategies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Support will devise and facilitate wellbeing sessions targeted at specific vulnerable groups such as students aged over 25 years old. Offering them a space to connect with others and help support their wellbeing, promote self-care and reduce isolation. • The Mental Health and Wellbeing team will welcome and utilise feedback from students, GSASA, the Equality Officer and the wider Student Support team to identify other areas of concern with targeted group delivery. • GSASA will continue to offer a Trans Healthcare Week, offering a week of health-related events that support students and staff within the trans community. • GSASA will continue to run a programme of online and in person activities for students throughout the academic year to promote community and combat potential isolation. • The GSASA bar, The Vic, has now been opened and this will be promoted to ensure that students are aware that this is a social space that can be utilised to promote connection with others and promote wellbeing. • GSA societies continue to offer a space for students to foster a sense of connection with others, as well as developing new skills and promoting self-care and wellbeing.
	Success Measures
Success measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased engagement of students accessing services available to them • Attendance at events will be monitored and reported to evidence increased participation. • Attendance at group workshops will be monitored and reported to evidence increased participation. • Feedback will be sought to evidence the difference made and inform future practice.

Working Area 2: Early intervention

Helping students and institutions to develop early intervention strategies, identifying potential mental health concerns and providing timely support to address emerging issues. This can be achieved through fostering a supportive and inclusive, trauma informed, whole institution approach which recognises the barriers that can prevent students accessing support and reduces levels of mental health stigma

	Actions
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to increase percentage of staff that have completed the mandatory online training modules of Identifying and Responding to Student Mental Health Problems and Safeguarding. At present, 76% of all staff have completed both modules. The GSA aim to achieve a 100% completion rate for all compulsory staff training (People Strategy) • Mental Health staff will continue to contribute to the delivery of the GSA Learning and Teaching Conference to support staff and student awareness of mental health and wellbeing • Continue to offer and promote Mental Health training for staff and monitor and report on participation rates. • Continue to offer and promote mental health training for students and monitor and report on participation rates. Promotion of understanding-wellbeing, student mental health module • Devise and implement a Suicide Safer Strategy; publish and promote a whole school approach. • Embed the trusted contact's process

- Maintain the GSA [Safeguarding Process](#) and the Support to Study Policy and Procedure and deliver session to Programme Leaders re safeguarding process, internal and external support strategies and Support to Study Policy.
- Promote the GSA [Report and Support tool](#), where staff and students can report issues of bullying, discrimination, abuse, assault or harassment etc, either anonymously or by including contact details so an adviser can provide support. All staff reports are triaged by senior members of HR with Student Support taking responsibility for student reports.
- Student Support staff will complete the appropriate modules of the National Trauma Training Programme to ensure that they are promoting a trauma informed practice when working with the student population.
- Targeted wellbeing workshops and programmes will be devised and offered to certain times of the year. Examples of this may be anxiety management workshops when it is recognised that there are summative assessments due within the curriculum.
- Promote the use of wellbeing spaces, quiet rooms and ensure that students are aware of their location and purpose. (Inclusive Spaces Project)
- Develop a range of student networks e.g. mature student network
- Promotion of online platforms, such as SilverCloud, that provides a free, private space to help manage mental health and wellbeing using a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) approach through personalised content, tools, and support.
- Student Support have devised a resource document that contains relevant information on how to access appropriate assistance for various mental health and wellbeing issues, such as BEAT, Breathing Space, NHS

	<p>inform, etc. This document will be shared with students and staff through online platforms, as well as paper copies within various points of the school such as waiting rooms and other departments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In support of the SFC/EHRC National Equality Outcomes, we will monitor the success and retention rates of students who declare a mental health condition. We aim to identify barriers and set informed action where required to improve the success and retention rates of students who declare a mental health condition • Baseline data established in 2023/24: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9.5% of students declared a mental health condition (+3.1%) • GSA overall retention rate is 96%, 10.2% (+1.9%) of withdrawals were students with a mental health condition • Attainment data has fluctuated (-3.4 in favour disability in 22/23 to +2.8 in favour of non-disability in 23/24) <p>The GSA will sustain excellent student retention and strive to achieve a target of less than 10% of overall withdrawals from students with a mental health condition (link to NEO action plan)</p>
Success measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will have a greater understanding of mental health, trauma informed practice and the safeguarding process. • Students will have a greater awareness of online supports that they can utilise. • Students, who require access to wellbeing spaces and quiet rooms, will be more aware of these and how to access them. • Positive feedback from SSCC's and BOS • Resource document will be devised and circulated to the student population through various mediums.

- Staff report increased awareness of internal and external services

Working Area 3: Provision of services

Improving access to mental health services to ensure students have appropriate and accessible options for support. Institutions and NHS Boards should work together to ensure that students with more complex mental health needs can access the services and treatments they need.

Actions

- Continue to promote the relationship with Glasgow Association of Mental Health (GAMH) Compassionate Distress Response Service (CDRS) and ensure all staff know how to refer to the service.
- Student Support staff will continue to develop relationships with local GP surgery through invites to Fresher's week and request meetings, as required.
- Devising an information leaflet to inform students, both home and international, of their right to care, and how to access the services such as GP, dental and optician etc
- Continue to promote the local Primary Mental Health Teams (PMHT) to students who are requiring further external support for their mental health and wellbeing.
- Student Support staff will continue to link in and refer to appropriate services such as Glasgow Council of Alcohol and ESTEEM.
- Continue to support students to access appropriate services, such as Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) and accompany them, if required.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to liaise with Inpatient Mental Health Teams, as required, to ensure good communication and support for students who are required to be admitted to their local mental health hospital.
Success measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental Health and Wellbeing team will have stronger links with external agencies, in including GPS, PMHTs, CMHTs and other specialist organisations such as ESTEEM. Increased staff and student knowledge of GAMH service (CDRS) Feedback from external organisations. Information leaflet will have been devised and shared with students through various mediums. Feedback from students and staff about their experience of working in collaboration with GSA staff and external teams.
<p>Working Area 4: Partnerships and collaboration</p> <p>Strengthening partnerships between institutions, student bodies, healthcare providers, and community organisations to create a comprehensive network of support for students.</p>	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to invite a wide range of services and organisations to the annual wellbeing event to ensure that students are able to access these and to help build relationships between the institution and the external services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Support will continue to develop links and work in partnership with other departments, such as Halls staff, GSASA, the Library Team or the Collections and Archives Department to devise, implement and evaluate joint initiatives that promote positive mental health and wellbeing. • Continue to develop and strengthen links with other external agencies through networking events and practice sharing meetings such National Suicide Prevention Network. • Continue to make stronger links with GGC Health Board • Develop an information leaflet that explains the services that GSA is able to offer, in terms of mental health and wellbeing, so that external agencies have a greater understanding of our support available. • Continue to attend other networking forums such as UMHAN, National Suicide Prevention Network and Scottish <i>Heads of University Counselling Service (SHUCS)</i>. • Utilise formal student feedback mechanisms such as the Student Staff Consultative Committees, Boards of Study, School forums and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee to identify issues and respond accordingly
Success measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and evaluation of student participation in GSASA events • Information leaflet, offering information of internal and external mental health and wellbeing supports, will be devised and distributed through various mediums such as online and in school departments.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger informal links with other external agencies and NHS services will be more evident. • Partnership between all Glasgow HE's and Greater Glasgow Health Board * • Direct referral pathways will be in place for NHS crisis teams * • A data sharing agreement will be in place * • The Head of Student Support will represent GSA at sector meetings such as the University Scotland Student Mental Health Group and participate in any government consultation. • Local GP service will participate in fresher's week <p>*These are long term aims which will require a sector approach with support from Government to progress</p>
<p>Working Area 5: Data collection and evaluation</p> <p>Regularly collecting and analysing data to monitor progress, identify areas for improvement, and inform future interventions.</p>	
Actions	<p>The National Student Survey (NSS) ran February 2024 to May 2024 with GSA achieving an overall response rate of 73%. GSA NSS Results by Question Group note a slight decrease in positive response to Mental wellbeing; 72% in comparison to 75% in 2023.</p> <p>The Student Experience Survey 2024 included three additional questions:</p>

	Student Experience Survey (SES) Question	Positive Response	Negative Response	N/A
	I am aware of Student Support services and how to access these.	90%	2.9%	7.1%
	I feel safe to be myself at the Glasgow School of Art.	86.2%	1.9%	11.1%
	When needed, the information and advice offered by Student Support services has been helpful.	78.5%	2.9%	18.6%
<p>For session 2025/26, we will be able to consider data by protected characteristic i.e. disability and mental health, sex, race, religion, transgender etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Core 10 as an evaluation tool for all MH students • Evaluation of mental health and counselling service. • Evaluation of full Student Support Services. • Evaluation of all wellbeing workshops. • Evaluation of all wellbeing events. • Evaluations of all training sessions offered to staff and students. • Arrange focus groups to ensure that students' opinions are heard and supported. • Attending the GSA annual conference to feed back any significant findings. • Feedback evaluations and finding to external forums such as Think Positive meetings and UMHAN meetings. • Ensuring that all findings from all evaluations are fed back to staff and students through appropriate forums such as BOS meetings, focus groups, online and other relevant platforms. • Ensuring feedback is used appropriately to help shape future workshop, events and training sessions to ensure the needs of the students and staff are being met. 				
Success measures:				

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- Monitoring of student participation of student engagement with all services, including mental health and counselling, workshops and training sessions.
- Increased number of staff will have participated in mental health training offered within the school, including online modules and mental health 1st aid.
- Future workshops and events will be developed and adapted to ensure that the student feedback has been taken on board.
- More staff, within the school and other outside agencies such as Think Positive, will have a greater awareness of new and further developments that are offered to support student mental health at GSA.

Name of GSA Lead: Julie Grant

Position: Head of Student Support

Signature: *Julie Grant*

Date: 30.7.25

Name of GSASA Lead: Alicia Bickerstaff

Position: GSA Student President

Signature: 

Date: 30.07.25

Appendix 1

Glasgow School of Art Mapping Exercise of Current Services

Institutional support available to students:

Comprehensive student induction highlighting support available and how to access

Proactive approach for students that have disclosed a disability at application – invited in over the summer to agree reasonable adjustments to aid early intervention

Access to the inclusive community student eLearning modules in support of awareness;

Optional Trusted Contact process in support of mental health

Mandatory emergency contacts process

Gender neutral and single sex toilets available in all main buildings

The Personal Tutor Scheme is fully embedded in all Schools supporting early intervention, referral, and signposting opportunities, with training provided to Personal Tutors

The GSA have trained 279 staff (including GSASA staff) in Mental Health 1st Aid

The GSA [Report and Support tool](#), where staff and students can report issues of bullying, discrimination, abuse, assault or harassment etc, either anonymously or by including contact details so an adviser can provide support. All staff reports are triaged by senior members of HR with Student Support taking responsibility for student reports.

Mandatory staff training includes:

Equality and Diversity in the Workplace

Identifying and Responding to Student Mental Health Problems

Safeguarding

Staff have the option to complete a variety of non-compulsory modules including:

[Enabling a Positive Culture - Dignity and Respect at Work, Workshop](#)
[Prevent Awareness Training](#)
[Insiders and Outsiders - How Micro-Behaviours affect the Workplace](#)
[Being an active Bystander](#)
[Corporate Parenting Workshop](#)
 Disability Awareness
 Gender-based Violence
[Guidance for Managers on having wellbeing conversations](#)
[Mindful Wellbeing for Teachers with Stress and Anxiety](#)
[Neurodiversity at work](#)

Optional student training includes:

Understanding Wellbeing Module
 Suicide Zero Alliance- Let's Talk Module
 Bystander Intervention Module
 Gender Based Violence
 Sexual Consent

The GSA Student Association offer signposting and casework support for students going through student facing processes at GSA eg. Complaints, Academic Appeals processes, Disciplinary

All of these strategies raise awareness of issues, promote healthy conversations and support internal signposting for specialised support.

Specific support available via Student Support and Development

Common: cross-referrals between teams for the benefit of the student and with their permission; all one-to-one appointments available both via online and in-person to suit the student's needs

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<i>Counselling</i>	<i>Mental Health Advisers</i>	<i>Learning Support and Development/Disability</i>	<i>Student Welfare</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-to-one counselling sessions • Development of a Bereavement Peer Support group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with GP and MH appointments (including support to make appointments and providing company if required) • Linking with external organisations in support of students • Support in managing prescribed medication • Assistance with attending other facilities (e.g. support groups or agencies) • Liaising with teaching staff to support the implementation of reasonable adjustments for students • MH monitoring (checking in with students and supporting them in their university and personal life) • Individual MH support plan • Mental Health mentoring for students eligible for DSA • Mature Students Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning needs assessment for disabled students • Reasonable Adjustment Reports • Individual requirements form • Disabled Student Allowance applications • Mentoring • Study skills development <p>Online sessions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking your mind: English Language Support discussion groups • starting research/essay writing and academic reading • research/essay planning • academic writing/writing for research • using and reviewing academic resources • Organisation and time management for creative practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on GSA policies and practices • Support with appeals • Good Cause/ leave of absence/ academic appeals/ programme transfer application support • Pre-arrival support (covering both prior to application and once they receive an offer) • Registering for a GP and accessing NHS services • Advice and guidance on wellbeing and safety and life in Glasgow <p>Private accommodation support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and resources • Help to look at tenancy agreements • Help in resolving landlord disputes • Contact with potential flatmates

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and student book group • Collections and Reflections workshop with Archives Department • Staff and student training in managing own/ others mental health and how to sign post to appropriate services. • Wellbeing workshops utilising mindfulness, photography, journaling and nature • Anxiety psychoeducational workshops • Wellbeing support at Hall's events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking about your creative ideas • Inspiration, block and creative routines – How to keep going • Communicating your ideas at GSA – Preparing for presentations • Staying connected • Writing about your work: Statements, manifestos, poetry, creative writing • Curatorial practice – Visual glossaries and reading groups 	<p>Funding and finance support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAAS and SFE applications • Budgeting advice • Council Tax exemption (via Registry) • Opening a bank account (via Registry) • Hardship fund applications (SAAS discretionary fund) • Childcare fund applications • Scholarship applications • US Federal Student Aid and Canadian loans • Crisis awards and emergency food vouchers <p>Immigration and visa support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and information is available around student visas, Schengen visas and post-study visa options • For international students - visa support, induction sessions and help to build soft skills in order to successfully acclimate to university life in Scotland
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pastoral support for loneliness and isolation• Any other non-academic concerns
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