

**Information Sheet**

**Evaluation of stakeholder perspectives on a participatory curriculum development project and its outcomes**

**Introduction**

The aim of the study is two-fold: 1) To evaluate stakeholders’ views on the existing programme and portfolio provision; 2) To evaluate the perspectives of different stakeholders (principally university staff, industry representatives, current students, alumni) contributing to a curriculum re-development project, both in terms of the process and in terms of the outcome (programme design, learning, teaching & assessment approach, industry and society engagement).

This study runs parallel to the review of the portfolio of programmes (principally undergraduate programmes) within the Department of Engineering at Glasgow Caledonian University. Programmes are reviewed every five years as part of a periodic review and, along with the reshaping of the School of Science and Engineering at GCU, then this is an opportunity to engage a range of stakeholders (current students, staff, industry, alumni, and others) within the review. We are seeking to determine your views of the approach and outcomes of this portfolio review.

The study will involve phases and parallel activities, so you may be invited to be part of one or several of these. We will make it clear which phase we are in and how your involvement assists us when we are interacting with and collecting data from you.

The study is being led by Dr Christopher (Chris) Smith and Dr Elaine Smith at Glasgow Caledonian University.

Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand what participation in the study will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please contact us at the address below if you would like more information.

**Why is this study important?**

This is an important study because Portfolio review typically happens every five years and so it is important that any alterations to the programmes are clearly aligned to developing capable graduates within a positive university community. The approach being adopted (based around a participatory approach) seeks to be a positive, strengths-based approach, which has not been tried before at GCU. Therefore, getting your views on this approach are important to the Portfolio Review team, School Senior Management, and to the wider engineering and engineering education community [relates to research aim 2]. The ability to share an evaluation of this approach to know how it worked within GCU and with the wider community is important.

Also, as part of the Portfolio review we will gather data (research aim 1) around views on the current programme and input into the refreshed programme. This data is important to ensure we have an evidence-based approach to the review.

**What will I have to do if I take part?**

If you are interested in taking part, you will be invited to give consent. Giving consent will involve acknowledging that you have read the Participant Information Sheet and that you consent to take part.

Providing this consent will work in two main ways (depending on what data collection exercise you are participating in):

1. Online survey: at the start of the survey you will be given a summarised version of the Participant Information Sheet, with a link to the full Participant Information Sheet, and asked to confirm that you a) can consent (are old enough) and b) that you consent to participating and for your anonymised data to be used for the purposes outlined (input into Portfolio Review; for wider dissemination and publication).
2. Workshop/focus group/interview: through an invite email the Participant Information Sheet will be shared with you, along with a Consent Form. You will be able to return the consent form in advance or before the workshop/focus group takes part. Additionally, oral consent will be re-iterated at the start of the workshop/focus group.

Once consent has been completed you will be invited to participate in one of the data collection phases:

1. online survey (expected within October 2025);
2. Workshops and focus groups (expected within October/November/December 2025). These will be arranged at mutually convenient times.

**Do I have to take part?**

No. You decide whether or not you want to take part. You can stop taking part in the study at any time, without giving a reason.

For online survey, then due to the anonymous nature of the survey, then withdrawal of your data will only be possible if you remember the self-generated code at the start of the survey.

There are no consequences to withdrawing from the study.

**What are the possible risks with taking part?**

All studies involve some level of risk and inconvenience. The possible risks involved with this study are mainly around risk of data breach [please see section below on how your data will be stored], and for those in workshops being involved in discussions where people have different views that may not align with yours. For this second risk, we anticipate that the use of a participatory approach will create a positive environment of sharing.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

We can’t promise the study will help you personally. However, the results should help improve the programmes and portfolio that we provide within the Department of Engineering, School of Science and Engineering at Glasgow Caledonian University.

We anticipate that this will enhance the learning experience for our future students, and identify ways for enhanced collaboration within our programmes.

More broadly, we hope that by sharing and disseminating the findings it will help the engineering and engineering education community when they are re-designing their own curricula.

**What happens when the study stops?**

The data and its analysis will be used in two main ways:

1. To feed into the Portfolio review and the design of the new portfolio of programmes;
2. To disseminate within GCU and more broadly in reports and scholarly publications (at conferences and journal articles).

**What if there is a problem?**

If you are concerned about your participation in the study and would like to speak with someone out with the study team, please contact Geraint Bevan [G.Bevan@gcu.ac.uk] who is the Head Department of Engineering.

**What will happen to the information given during the study?**

This section will explain what happens to the information you given during the study.

As there are two main ways to gather data then this section will explain what is distinct for those methods as well as common aspects.

Online survey

Firstly, the survey is designed so as not to collect personally identifiable information, so the approach of design for anonymity is used. If there is a follow-up request, then there will be a link to take you to a different page.

MS Forms (as made available to the researchers by GCU IT Services) will be the platform/software to collect data. Only those that have a valid reason to access the raw data will have access:

* Lead researchers to manage the overall study.
* Alumni Office for alumni survey as they have a valid reason to be interested in the results of the survey.
* Research and Knowledge Exchange Services (unit within GCU) as they have a valid reason to understand what industry needs are to be able to support those.

Information to be collected at this stage will be around your views on 1) the current portfolio (programmes), 2) your thoughts on what could be done to enhance the portfolio, and 3) your views on the process and outcomes of this review.

Analysis of the data will be conducted using Excel and/or R and these files will be in a password protected shared Teams folder that is only accessible to those that have valid reason to access [separate channels will be used to manage access to that data and lead researchers will be administrators for that MS Teams folder].

In reports and publications, only anonymised results [averages; anonymised quotes] will be used.

Workshop/focus-group/interviews

Two main types of data will be collected: a) workshop outputs; b) recordings of focus-group/interview activities.

Workshop outputs will be stored in locked cabinets by the co-leads. Digital [scanned] versions will be stored in the MS Teams folder with only those that have a valid reason to access these being allowed to.

If workshop outputs have personally identifiable information then these will be edited out of the digital information (to bring in anonymity at this stage).

For recordings, then MS Teams will be the preferred (as recording and transcript are stored on GCU-approved storage). Transcripts will be stored on researchers laptops and used in analysis software (e.g., NVivo) for which file storage is local. All names will be removed from transcripts and replaced with anonymous identifiers, e.g. Int1.

Data will be kept securely for 10 years, in line with GCU Retention Policy on Research Data.

The data controller is Glasgow Caledonian University. Information is being processed on the basis of Article 6(1)(e) of the General Data Protection Regulation and to perform a task carried out in the public interest.

Enquiries specifically relating to data protection should be made to the University’s Data Protection Officer (DPO). The DPO can be contacted by email: dataprotection@gcu.ac.uk. If you are unhappy with the response from the University, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). The ICO can be contacted by email: casework@ico.org.uk.

GDPR also gives study participants the right to ask for their personal data to be erased. If you would like us to stop using your personal data, then you can contact Dr Christopher Smith [Christopher.Smith@gcu.ac.uk] and ask for your personal data to be erased. However, it will only be possible to erase data that has not been anonymised and/or published. Further information about your rights can be found at: https://www.gcu.ac.uk/dataprotection/rights/

**Who is organising and funding the study?**

This study is being organised by Dr Christopher Smith and Dr Elaine Smith. This project is being supported by the Department of Engineering, in the School of Science and Engineering (there are no external funding bodies involved).

**What will happen to the results of the study?**

The study results will be available to a range of people including e.g. health professionals, researchers, and the public. It will not be possible to identify any individual participant from these reports or publications. Some studies may seek permission to share anonymous data with researchers conducting separate ethically approved studies, but this will need to be added to the consent form and included in the consent process for this study.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

All studies involving human participants carried out at Glasgow Caledonian University are reviewed by an ethics committee. The role of the ethics committee is the protect the safety, rights, wellbeing, and dignity of study participants. This study was reviewed by the School of Science and Engineering Research Ethics Committee and given ethical approval on 13th October 2025.

**What happens next?**

If you are interested in participating and would like to know more then please contact Dr Christopher Smith [Christopher.Smith@gcu.ac.uk] or Dr Elaine Smith [Elaine.Smith@gcu.ac.uk]

**How do I make contact with the study team?**

You can contact the study team via the lead co-researchers:

Dr Christopher Smith [Christopher.Smith@gcu.ac.uk] or Dr Elaine Smith [Elaine.Smith@gcu.ac.uk]

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.