

Guidance for Applicants to Architecture Master of Architectural Studies: History and Theory of the City

Programme

The Masters in Architectural Studies is a 1 year (3 semester) programme combining individual specialist study, with the opportunity to share knowledge and experience with fellow students in a cross disciplinary context.

With a focus on Architecture and theory, the course is designed to provide an understanding of the reasons for the forms of our cities, and of the theories that have been developed to explain them. Drawing from architectural history and theory as well as sociology, cultural studies, and urban planning, the course takes a broad range of approaches to the historical and theoretical study of the urban built environment. Through case studies and first-hand experiences, it will give students the skills to devise and carry out research on the history and theory of the urban form, covering major themes of power, religion, memorial and environmental history of the city.

Please note the Masters in Architectural Studies does **not** provide exemption from Part 2 of RIBA/ARB Examination in Architecture. You should apply to the **Diploma in Architecture** if you wish to gain Part 2 exemption.



*Image: Studio Space
Bourdon Building*

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Why study at The Mackintosh School of Architecture?

The programme is aimed at graduates of architecture and allied disciplines who wish to extend their knowledge and skills by undertaking further specialised study, either to develop existing professional and research interests or to move into new areas of practice.

We are uniquely positioned within a wider community of artists and designers at the Glasgow School of Art and this allows our students the opportunity to make connections both academically and socially.

Our physical shared studio provides a permanent workplace for all students which provides peer support and learning throughout the duration of the programme.



Image: M.Arch Studies 2024
Courtesy of Chieh-Ming Yen

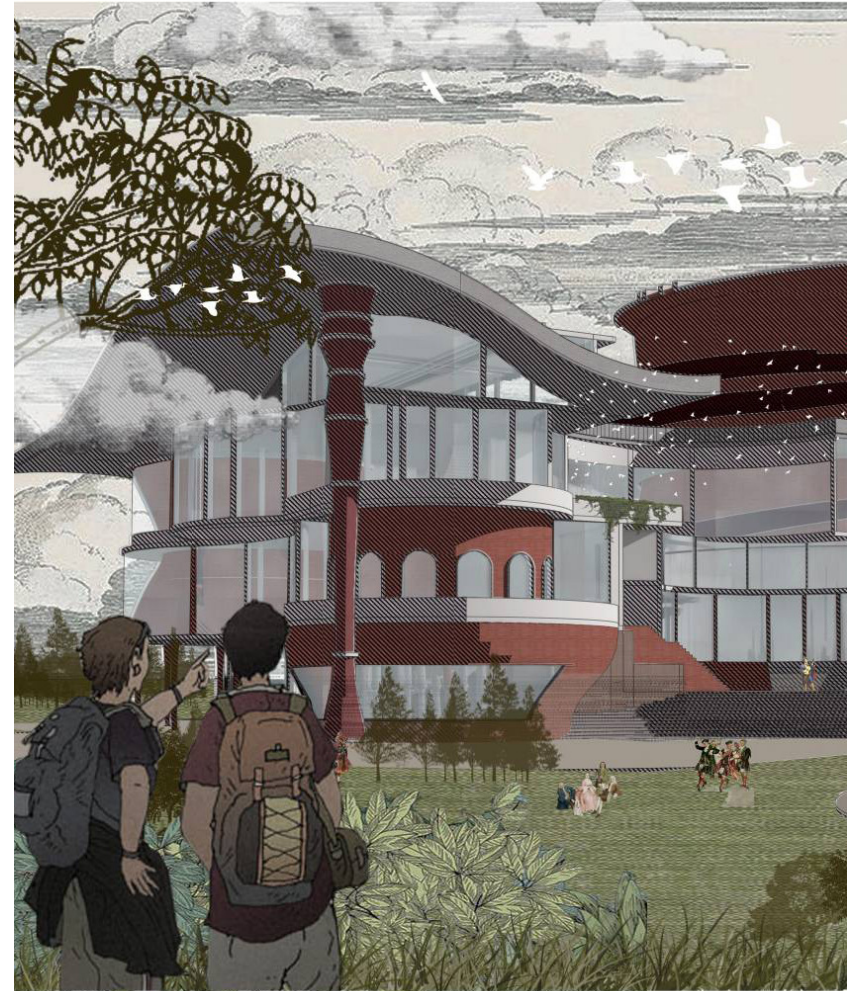
Applications to the MArch in Architectural Studies

An application to the Mackintosh School of Architecture consists of an online application and a portfolio of supporting visual material.

Applications for the MSc in Sustainable Cities are made directly to the school via the Registry Department at Glasgow School of Art using the online application forms available on the website.

The application form will ask for the following information:

- Personal Details
- Academic Qualifications
- Language Qualifications (as appropriate)
- References
- Personal Statement



*Image: M.Arch Studies 2024
Courtesy of Ziyang Wang*

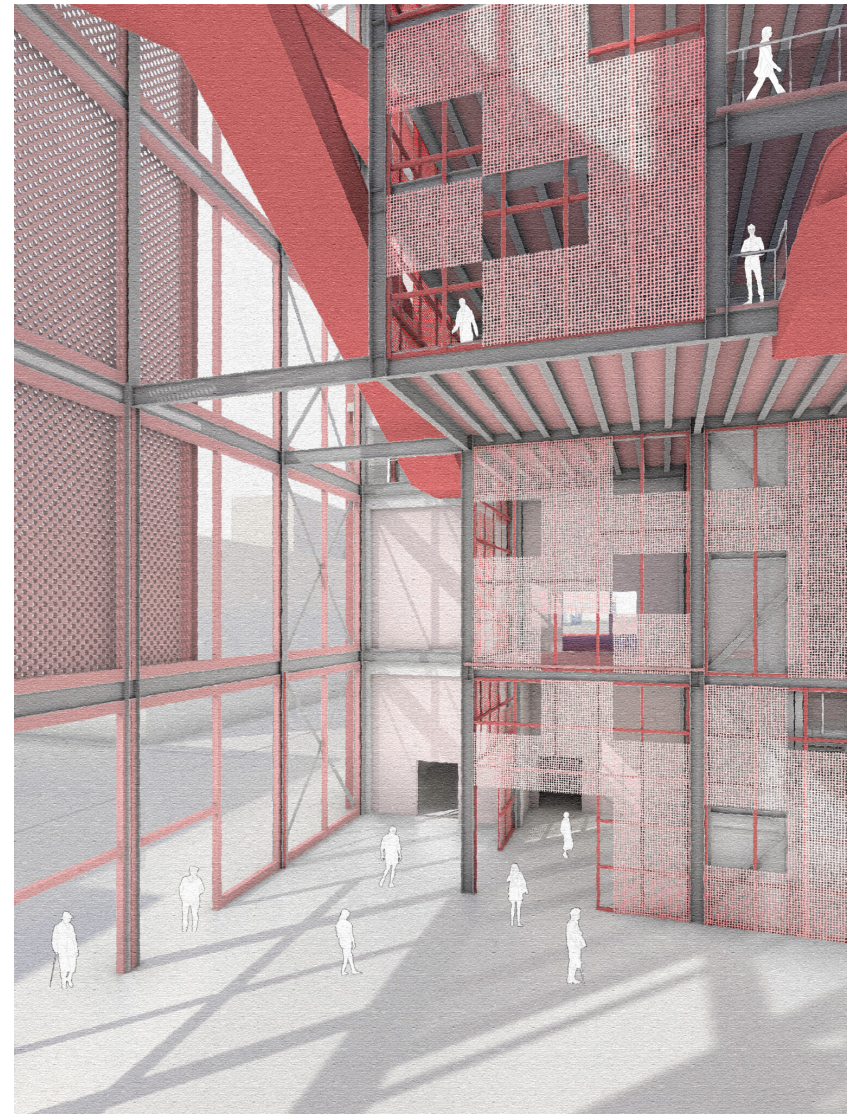
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Completing your Application

On receipt of your completed application, registry will invite you to upload your Supporting Visual Materials via the Portfolio Upload site. Information about how to access the portfolio site and set your password will be sent by email. You should receive this around 4 working days after submitting your application. If you do not receive this, please contact registry: registry@gsa.ac.uk

Once your portfolio has been uploaded, the Mackintosh School of Architecture will be issued with your completed application and will assess your statement of purpose, references and portfolio of work.

Guidance on what evidence should be demonstrated is given on the following pages:



*Image: M.Arch Studies 2025
Courtesy of Zhenghao Zhou*

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Personal Statement

Your personal statement (500 to 700 words approx) should demonstrate your knowledge and interest in the built environment, along with details of your experience to date.

You can also include details of:

Your motivation:

We are interested to know about your specific interests within the field of architecture and how your studies or work in practice to date have influenced this.

Your awareness of the course and the city:

We would like to know what research you have undertaken on the course and why you think studying here in Glasgow and as part of The Glasgow School of Art would suit you.

Reasons for choosing MSA:

We want to know why you think the Mackintosh School of Architecture aligns with your aspirations for this next stage of your academic development.

References

All applicants are asked to provide **2** references on headed paper:

- An academic reference
- A reference from practice. (If this is not relevant, a second academic reference should be provided)



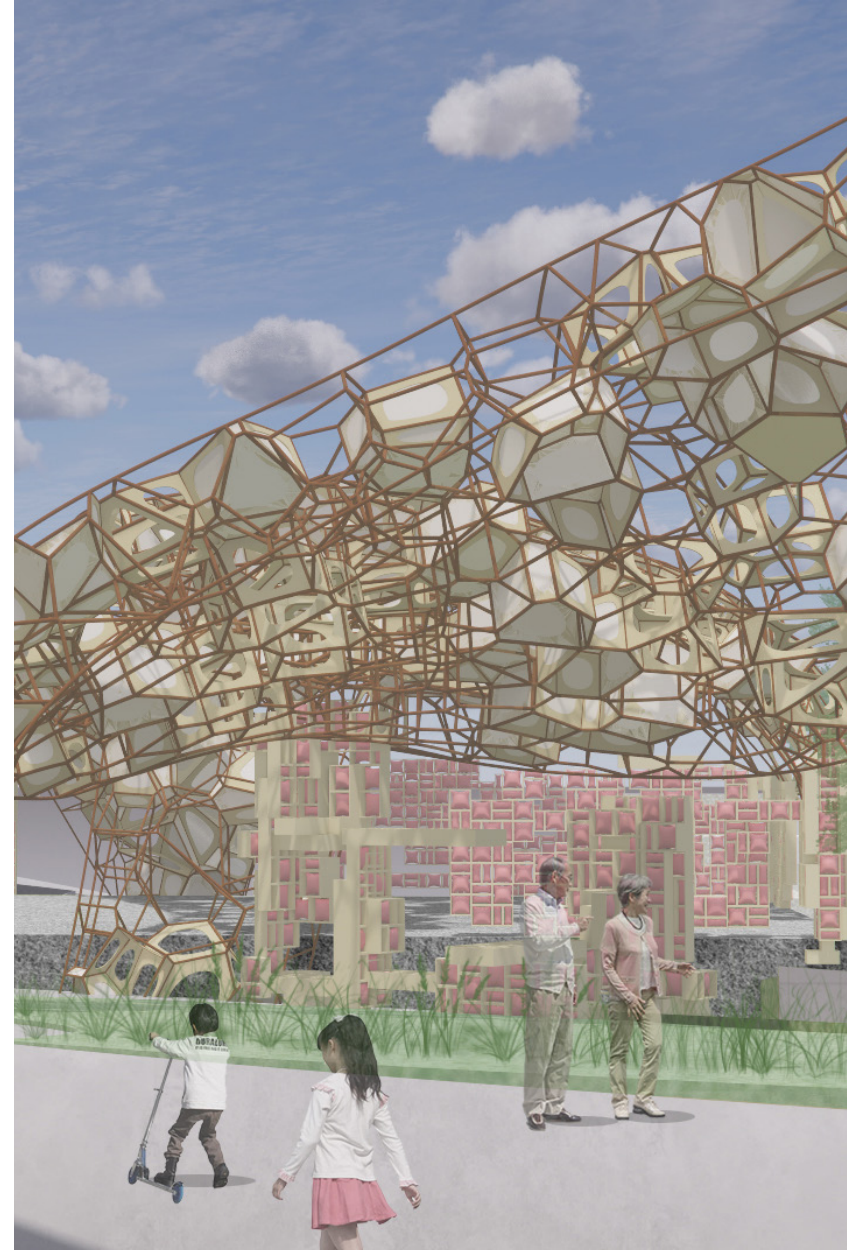
*Image: Group Tutorials
Review Space, Bourdon Building*

Supporting Visual Material

Applicants are asked to upload supporting visual material in the form of a portfolio to accompany their application.

Your portfolio should demonstrate the following:

- Your design and communication skills.
- Provide evidence of a range of design abilities.
- Show multiple projects from initial ideas to resolved design.
- Development and resolution of a brief through a variety of media.
- Evidence of how relevant research informed your design process.
- Where relevant, technical knowledge and proficiency in applicable programs.
- Where required, examples of academic writing, should be from degree level and demonstrate a clarity in formation of an argument through research and appropriate referencing.



*Image: M.Arch Studies 2024
Courtesy of Wenshi Zhan*

Invitation to Interview

If your application passes an initial assessment, you will be invited to attend an interview. We aim to assess and interview applicants as quickly as possible so please keep an eye on your inbox, including your spam folder, once your full application has been submitted for details on how to book an interview time. If you have not heard back within 2 weeks of submitting your portfolio please email architectureadmissions@gsa.ac.uk

Interviews will take place online via zoom and should last approximately 20 minutes. You will be asked about the work in your portfolio so it is a good idea to have the document to hand. We advise that you test your camera and mic prior to the start of the interview and are in a quiet environment with a strong internet connection.



Image: M.Arch Studies 2025
Courtesy of Kate Drummond

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During your Interview

Interviewers will be assessing you on the following criteria:

- Ability to discuss architecture + responsiveness to interview
- Skills Range- 3D work, technology, observational skills, portfolio format etc.
- Evidence of work having a theoretical position and reference to a wider architectural context
- Design work at an appropriate degree of complexity and resolution

Each criteria is assessed on the following 7 point scale:

1. Unsatisfactory evidence of required ability
2. Very limited evidence of required ability
3. Limited evidence of required ability
4. Satisfactory evidence of required ability
5. Good evidence of required ability
6. Very good evidence of required ability
7. Excellent evidence of required ability

There will be an opportunity at the end of the interview for you to ask questions to the interviewers about the course or studying at MSA.



*Image: M.Arch Studies
Courtesy of Hailu Huang*

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Why do we interview?

The Mackintosh School of Architecture is one of the few institutions to have maintained an interview process for its Masters applicants. Whilst this means that you will not get an automatic offer from us as quickly as many other institutions, we understand that the decision in your choice of institution is an incredibly important one.

Our interview process is therefore as much about ensuring that you feel confident in your decision, that the Mackintosh School of Architecture will provide you with the kind of educational experience you are looking for, as it is for us to have the opportunity to ask you questions about your work and get to know you a little bit better as a person.



*Image: Model Making Workshop
Bourdon Building*

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What happens next?

After your interview, the Mackintosh School of Architecture will make a decision whether to offer you a place based on your interview score, and return this to our Registry department who liaise directly with you.

You will receive a formal offer (conditional or unconditional) or rejection from registry and you should receive this within the advertised time-frame (round) associated with your application date.

Once you have received an offer and in the lead up to the start of term, we will hold a series of events to give you a better insight into the ethos, character and day-to-day operation of the school as well as give you the opportunity to meet other offer holders.

If you have any queries at all, the architecture admissions team will be happy to help you. We can be contacted through our designated applicant email: architectureadmissions@gsa.ac.uk

If you experience any issues uploading material, please contact registry on registry@gsa.ac.uk as soon as possible.



*Image: Stage 5 research model, 2023.
Courtesy of John Pottage*

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Frequently Asked Questions

Does this course provide exemption from Part 2 of RIBA/ARB Examination in Architecture?

No - applications should be made to the Diploma in Architecture if you wish to gain Part 2 exemption.

Where can I view examples of work from previous years?

Examples of work undertaken by students from across the School of Architecture can be found on our [Graduate Showcase](#).

Can I study online?

The course is taught in-person in Glasgow and there is not an option for remote study online.

Do Masters students get their own studio space?

MArch students get their own desk within a dedicated open plan studio space and access to workshop facilities across the GSA campus.

Any additional questions about the course or portfolio content should be addressed to the architecture department: architectureadmissions@gsa.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest in our programme and we look forward to receiving your application.

