

Glasgow School of Art Programme Specification

Programme Title: Graduate Diploma in Art, Design and Creative Practice



Demelza Kingston, Harvest, 2024

Please note that this specification is correct on the date of publication but may be subject to amendment prior to the start of the Academic Year.

1. Programme Details	
Programme Title	Graduate Diploma in Art, Design and Creative Practice
School	Cross School Programme
Programme Leader	TBC
Award to be Conferred	Graduate Diploma
Exit Awards	<p>Students who exit the programme achieving 120 credits at SCQF level 10 may be awarded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate Diploma in Art, Design and Creative Practice (Communication Design) • Graduate Diploma in Art, Design and Creative Practice (Contemporary Fine Art Practice) • Graduate Diploma in Art, Design and Creative Practice (Design Innovation) • Graduate Diploma in Art, Design and Creative Practice (Interior and Architectural Studies) <p>Students who exit the programme achieving 60 credits at SCQF level 10 may be awarded: Graduate Certificate in Art, Design and Creative Practice</p>
SCQF Level	Level 10
Credits	120
Mode of Study	Full-time Low Residency (Blended)
HECOS Code	100059 / 101316 / 100048 / 100061

Academic Session	2026 - 2027
Date of Approval	Programme Approval October 2025

Awarding Institution	University of Glasgow
Teaching Institutions	Glasgow School of Art
Campus	Glasgow
Lead School/Board of Studies	TBC
Other Schools/Board of Studies	School of Design School of Fine Art School of Innovation & Technology Mackintosh School of Architecture
Programme Accredited By (PSRBs)	N/A

2. Entry Qualifications & Requirements	
Highers	N/A
A Levels	N/A
Other	<p>An undergraduate Degree or equivalent in a relevant subject area or equivalent professional practice.</p> <p>Applicants who do not meet entry requirements through formal qualifications but can demonstrate experience, skills and abilities at the appropriate level can also be considered.</p>

	Additional entry requirements: Applicants are normally required to submit a portfolio of work, along with satisfactory academic references and a personal statement as parts of their applications. Applicants may also be required to attend an interview as part of their admissions assessment.
English Language Requirements	<p>Applicants who are not a national of, nor have obtained a degree in one of the countries on the approved UKVI exemption list or those who require a Student Visa, will need to provide evidence of their English language ability.</p> <p>GSA's preferred test is the IELTS for UKVI (Academic) test taken at a UKVI approved test centre. GSA require all students, who require a student visa, to meet the following requirements to gain entry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IELTS for UKVI Academic with an overall score of 6 with a minimum of 5.5 in all components; • An alternative Accepted English Language Test which can be found on the Undergraduate 'How to Apply' page on the GSA website.

3. Programme Introduction

The Graduate Diploma in Art, Design and Creative Practice is a full-time programme delivered through a low residency (blended) mode of study, offering pathways in Communication Design, Contemporary Fine Art Practice, Innovation Design, and Interior and Architectural Studies. The programme is designed to support highly creative and motivated applicants seeking to extend their studies to the postgraduate level and advance their careers in the creative industries. Whether joining the programme from another educational system, reskilling for a career change, or returning to education after a period of time, this programme aims to facilitate students' transition by cultivating and enhancing their skills and broadening their cultural, critical and contextual knowledge and awareness.

Pathways

Students explore and develop their knowledge, skills, and creative practice within pathways, each offering progression routes to further study within a relevant discipline at The Glasgow School of Art and allowing students to tailor their studies to their personal and professional goals.

Applicants select a pathway during the admissions process from the following four options:

- **Communication Design**

The Communication Design pathway fosters innovative and critically engaged approaches to the field of communication design. Students can explore their practice in graphic design, illustration, photography, and interdisciplinary or emergent practices. Through practice-led research, informed by contemporary and historical communication design and critical reflection, students generate and test ideas, developing creative and insightful outcomes and sustainable Communication Design practices.

- **Contemporary Fine Art Practice**

The Contemporary Fine Art Practice pathway enables students to explore and develop their artistic practice. The pathway supports diverse practices, including drawing, painting,

printmaking, sculpture, photography, and those that explore performance, sound, screen, digital technologies and publication. Students will create a body of work shaped by practice-based experimentation, theoretical and contextual research, critical enquiry and dialogue. They will also examine how contemporary art practices can challenge perceived boundaries and connect with people, places, and society.

- **Design Innovation**

The Design Innovation pathway equips students to tackle complex societal and planetary challenges through reflective and design-led practices. The pathway explores the interplay between theory and practice, offering workshops, tutorials, and projects that develop research skills, foster innovative and creative thinking, and promote people and planet centred outcomes. Driven by intellectual curiosity, critical dialogue, active debate, collaboration, making and prototyping, this approach enables students to develop ideas and produce outcomes for change, transformation and positive impact.

- **Interior and Architectural Studies**

The Interior and Architectural Studies pathway apply interior design and architectural methodologies to examine contemporary challenges through research, analysis, investigation, and creative exploration. Students build their skills and knowledge through a structured approach that combines theory, research, design practice, and critical evaluation. Students will generate innovative design proposals and outcomes integrating and synthesising complex environmental, social, and spatial issues.

Programme Delivery

The programme is led by a team of experienced and dedicated creative practitioners and researchers who provide a dynamic, inclusive, and supportive learning experience that centres on a personalised approach to practice-based learning. This approach encourages students to explore their personal interests, experiences and contexts, fostering experimentation and critical reflection. Through subject-specific learning, peer support, and collaborative opportunities, students are supported to push the boundaries of their chosen discipline and explore ethical, sustainable, and socially responsible practices, integrating these principles into their work.

The programme commences with three weeks of intensive in-person, on-campus learning at the GSA Glasgow campus. This immersive period provides an essential foundation, supporting students' transition into the programme. Drawing on Glasgow's rich cultural, artistic, and design heritage, the city serves as a backdrop, providing a context for initial exploratory making, research and critical engagement within a supportive community of students, tutors and technical staff.

Following this initial three-week period, all course delivery is online, combining synchronous and asynchronous learning. This flexible online format allows students to participate in learning activities, effectively manage their studies, and balance personal commitments without having to relocate. While students take an active role in managing their learning, a variety of online teaching methods are used to promote confident participation, foster respectful and supportive critical discussions, and encourage peer learning and collaboration. As learning is primarily remote and online, students will need access to a computer, high-speed internet, space, materials and equipment appropriate to their creative practice.

Progression Opportunities

The Graduate Diploma in Art, Design and Creative Practice programme supports students in building their skills, creative practice, and portfolio needed for postgraduate study or future careers in the creative industries, developing their agility, imagination, and confidence as responsible, creative thinkers, makers and collaborators.

Students who complete the Graduate Diploma in Art, Design and Creative Practice programme, achieving 120 credits at level 10 with an overall Merit or above, are guaranteed an offer for

progression to stage 1 of a GSA Postgraduate Taught programme aligned with their pathway of study.

Students who complete the Graduate Diploma in Art, Design and Creative Practice programme, achieving 120 credits at level 10 with an overall pass, will be guaranteed consideration for progression to stage 1 of a GSA Postgraduate Taught programme aligned with their pathway of study.

Progression to PGT study is conditional on students meeting English Language requirements for postgraduate study. Additionally, for progression to Architecture programmes, students must meet the Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements, where applicable.

4. Programme Aims

The programme provides students, through the context of their chosen pathway, with the opportunity to:

- Develop the skills and knowledge to effectively plan and manage complex projects and confidently pursue academic ambitions and professional growth.
- Cultivate and develop a sustainable creative practice through research, experimentation, and making within a supportive and critically engaged community.
- Enhance their critical thinking, evaluative, and reflective skills through participation and engagement in independent and collaborative learning experiences.
- Develop advanced communication skills, processes, and practices, including spoken, visual, written and digital formats, to effectively engage diverse audiences.
- Explore, develop, and integrate ethical, sustainable and socially responsible methods and approaches relevant to their creative practice.

5. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

After full participation and successful completion of the programme, and through the context of their chosen pathway, students will be able to:

- Plan, develop and execute creative practice-based projects and pursue academic and professional ambitions, demonstrating initiative, problem-solving and adaptability.
- Interrogate ideas and creative practice through rigorous research, experimentation and making, developing innovative, insightful and impactful outcomes.
- Use feedback and self-reflection to critically evaluate their work, identify areas for future development, and position their practice within academic and contemporary cultural and creative industry contexts.
- Effectively communicate, present and situate complex ideas and practice-based work, adapting strategies, media and approaches to different audiences, contexts and objectives.
- Critically evaluate and integrate ethical, sustainable, socially responsible methods and practices into their creative work, making informed decisions, choices and actions.

6. Description of Learning and Teaching Approaches

The Graduate Diploma in Art, Design and Creative Practice offers a comprehensive and innovative learning experience emphasising creativity, community and personal academic development. Throughout the programme, learning and teaching approaches are designed, structured and timetabled to give students flexible control over their learning, offering dynamic opportunities to engage in meaningful experiences and enabling them to balance their studies with personal commitments.

As the programme progresses, students take on significant and increasing responsibility for managing their learning, with learning and teaching methods transitioning from taught and structured elements to supervised and independent student-led study. All students are expected to commit an average of 40 hours per week to their coursework, including teaching hours, guided learning, and independent study. The diverse range of learning and teaching methods employed within and across pathways support students in taking increased responsibility for their learning and ensure they are equipped with the tools, skills, and confidence to achieve their academic and creative goals.

Key methods to support learning and skills development are structured as follows:

Live Learning (Synchronous):

- Interactive live sessions provide opportunities for real-time engagement with tutors and peers. These include group discussions, one-to-one tutorials, collaborative workshops, and project development activities. A flipped learning model allows students to prepare for live synchronous sessions and maximise engagement and participation. All live sessions are recorded, audio captioned, and available for later access, ensuring flexibility and inclusivity.
- Guided Learning (Asynchronous):
Structured activities such as project briefs, individual and collaborative tasks, peer reviews, and discussion groups support dynamic learning. Students are encouraged to engage with theoretical and practical content, participate in group activities, and provide and receive peer feedback. Independent learning skills, including conducting research, experimenting with ideas and processes, and preparing for assessments, are fostered and supported through these guided activities and learning resources available on Canvas, GSA's dedicated virtual learning environment. Canvas will play a significant role in facilitating learning and providing access to key course communications and documentation, learning technologies supporting students to engage in guided and student-led peer discussion groups, digital online learning resources, and signposting to other relevant resources.
- Student-led Independent Learning:
Throughout the programme, students are actively encouraged to engage in research, exploration, and reflection, fostering the development of their creative practice independently. They are empowered to manage their time and resources flexibly, crafting a personalised schedule that effectively balances their academic studies with personal commitments.

Learning experiences in this programme are tailored to the pathways through project briefs and specialist teaching and enhanced by inter and cross-disciplinary core learning opportunities, such as tutorials, workshops and critiques, bringing students together from across the pathways to research, discuss ideas and support the development of creative practices as part of a critically engaged creative community. Running through all pathways is a curriculum that encourages

students to explore their personal interests, experiences and contexts using learning and assessment methods that enable flexible engagement and choice.

Lectures and seminars are delivered online within and across pathways covering a range of issues, including theory and professional practice, offering students the opportunity to broaden their knowledge, contextualise practice and develop their critical and analytical skills. All lectures are pre-recorded, audio captioned, and available for access before interactive live sessions, ensuring flexibility and inclusivity.

Tutorials are offered as one-to-one tutorials and group sessions in various sizes, with tutors providing specialist academic support, feedback and guidance. Group tutorials encourage peer learning through exchanging ideas and critical engagement with the work of others. Group critiques are generally arranged at the mid and endpoint of studio projects and courses to encourage critical and collaborative discussion and support personal evaluation and reflection on learning.

Technical skills, including digital, analogue and material skills, are introduced through inductions and workshops and supported through access to digital resources, guides and online technical drop-in sessions. Students will also have access to an extensive range of digital software, with support provided through online workshops and digital resources to enable them to develop their digital skills and proficiency. Communication and presentation skills, including digital skills, are developed and nurtured through workshops, tutorials, critiques and assessment methods.

In addition to the learning and teaching offered in the Graduate Diploma in Art, Design and Creative Practice programme, students have access to a comprehensive range of support and digital resources to enhance and progress their learning. Students can access GSA Student Support Services online, including English Language Learning support, study skills workshops and resources, counselling, welfare and language support. Access to GSA Careers Service and Technical Services Department support is also available through bookable online consultations and digital guides. GSA Library Services provides access to high-quality and extensive online resources, including eBooks and journals, Planet eStream, and additional online workshops in research skills and learning technologies.

7. Description of Assessment Methods

Assessment within the programme is undertaken in each course and through formative and summative tasks. Students are provided with detailed assessment briefs and supported in exploring assessment tasks through one-to-one and group tutorials.

Students receive ongoing feedback from tutors and peers throughout the development of their work, offering constructive feedback to help them identify strengths, address weaknesses, and shape their future learning and development. Formative tasks are embedded into live synchronous and asynchronous activities, such as workshops, reviews, and tutorials. These activities provide students with continuous opportunities to refine their ideas and practice as they progress through each course.

Formative assessments are scheduled at the mid-point of courses, allowing students to present the progress of their work to staff and peers within their pathway and receive detailed formative feedback, helping students understand and develop strategies for refining their work towards submission for summative assessment.

Summative assessment encourages students to review, organise, and communicate their work in response to project briefs and learning activities. The methods of summative assessments vary

across courses and are designed to support students' digital and communication skill development, demonstrate their learning, and align their work with the intended learning outcomes of the programme. All summative assessment submissions are completed digitally and uploaded to Canvas.

All summative assessments are marked and graded in line with the GSA's Code of Assessment, which ensures consistent standards and outlines reassessment opportunities for students who do not initially pass a course.

8. Programme Structure

The Graduate Diploma in Art, Design and Creative Practice comprises three compulsory courses totalling 120 SCQF Level 10 credits.

The first two courses of the programme launch during the 3 weeks intensive in-person, on-campus learning experience at the GSA Glasgow campus and then continue across semester 1 through online synchronous and asynchronous learning.

These courses introduce the fundamental principles of research, practice and communication. Through working within and across pathways, students develop their creative identity through skills development, experimentation in technical and material exploration, critical dialogue and presentation while gaining a comprehensive and critical approach to research and contextualising practice.

Semester 2 offers a single 60-credit course delivered online through synchronous and asynchronous learning. Students undertake a self-initiated project integrating research, idea development, and making. Through this approach, students develop a sustained independent body of work aligned with their postgraduate study ambitions and future goals, fostering a critically engaged personal practice.

The programme concludes with students presenting their work on the 'digital graduate showcase', a platform that enhances professional opportunities, supports career development, and connects with a global audience.

Courses	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Exploring and Developing Practice	40	10	1	
Situating and Communicating Practice	20	10	1	
Expanding and Presenting Practice	60	10	2	
Total Credits	120			

9. Outgoing Exchange and Visiting Student Arrangements

The programme does not offer any exchange opportunities.

10. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and Other External Reference Points

Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas. For further information relevant to this programme see:

QAA (2019) Subject Benchmark Statement: Art and Design. Gloucester: QAA. Available from: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-art-and-design-17.pdf?sfvrsn=71eef781_22

11. Programme Regulations and Requirements for Progression

All GSA Degree programmes are validated by the University of Glasgow and the GSA's Programme Regulations are published in the [University of Glasgow University Regulations](#).

These regulations include the requirements in relation to:

- (a) Award of the degree
- (b) Progression requirements
- (c) Early exit awards

In referring to regulations for degree programmes, students should consult the University Regulations which were in force in the academic session in which they first registered for the degree programme in question.