MACKINTOSH SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATION GUIDELINES



Image: Irma Douglas, *The right to the night: a civic lantern for Glasgow* (MSA Stage 4, 2026)

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

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ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD ACADEMIC ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO YEAR 1

Scottish Highers — 4 Highers at ABBB including a literate subject* and Maths or Physics

A Levels — BBB including Maths or Physics, and GCSE English at Grade A/7

Other equivalent qualifications at SCQF Level 6 (EQF Level 3) such as UAL Level 3 Diploma

- **International Baccalaureate (IB)**
  28 points overall in the Diploma, including 15 at Higher Level, normally including English and Maths. Students not presenting English at grade 5 or above at Higher Level will be required to submit an IELTS.
- **Irish Leaving Certificate** — Four Highers at H2 or above, subjects required as per Scottish Highers.
- **International qualifications** — People with qualifications from outside the UK should contact admissions@gsa.ac.uk for more information.

MINIMUM ACADEMIC ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO YEAR 1 (FOR ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS ONLY)

- **Scottish Highers** — BBCC including a literate subject* and Maths or Physics.
- **A Levels** — BCC, including Maths or Physics and GCSE English at A/7 Grade or above

NOTE For applicants whose exam results are pending, conditional offers will be made at the standard or minimum tariff where eligible.

*literate subjects include English, Business Management, Classical Studies, Economics, ESOL, Geography, History, Media Studies. Modern Studies, Philosophy, Politics, Psychology, Religious Studies, Sociology

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) is committed to working to widen access, including fair admissions for applicants from a wide range of backgrounds.

The minimum entry requirements apply to applicants from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 20/40 postcodes, as well as applicants who declare via UCAS that they are care experienced, estranged from their parents or legal guardians, have caring responsibilities, are a refugee or currently receive free school meals.

More information is available at www.gsa.ac.uk/wp



ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

We expect all students to demonstrate proficiency in the English language, which for UK students is normally evidenced by a pass in Higher or GCSE English or other literate subject*.

Applicants who require a Student Visa, and who are not a national of, nor have obtained a degree in one of the countries on the approved UKVI exemption list, will need to provide evidence of their English language ability through the use of a standardised test.

The GSA's preferred test is the IELTS for UKVI (Academic) test. A full list of English Language tests that may be presented can be **found here**.

Applicants who successfully enrol and complete GSA's Pre-Sessional English for Creative Disciplines programme can also use those test results to satisfy English language conditions.

Our current requirement for Mackintosh School of Architecture programmes is IELTS for UKVI (Academic) with 6.5 overall and no less than 5.5 in each component.

For guidance, please email admissions@gsa.ac.uk.

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The Reid Building

COST OF STUDY

FEES, FINANCE & HELP

The annual cost of your study will depend on a range of factors including your tuition fee status, programme of study, accommodation arrangements and lifestyle. We understand, however, that for your effective planning it is really important that you have a good idea of how much studying at art school is likely to cost, and what kinds of costs you are likely to incur over and above tuition fees.

You'll find information on costs associated with your chosen programme (called 'Indicative Programme Costs') on each programme page on the website.

TUITION FEES

Your annual tuition fee will depend on whether you are a Scottish student, Rest of the UK student or international student, as well as the subject (programme) and level (undergraduate/postgraduate) of study.

You can find current information on Fees and Finance pages on the GSA website **here.**

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APPLICATION TIMELINE

In order for your application to be considered complete, you must complete the two steps outlined by the relevant deadlines:

STEP 1

UCAS APPLICATION FORM
DEADLINE - 18:00 (UK Time) January 13, 2027

The first step is ensuring you complete your UCAS application via **www.ucas.com**

We suggest that you begin the UCAS application form as soon as possible. You don't need to complete the UCAS application form in one sitting. You can save your progress and return to the form as often as you need to. However, please ensure you submit this before the deadline.

Read the advice from UCAS to help you through their application process, step by step, **here.**

STEP 2

DIGITAL PORTFOLIO & PORTFOLIO STATEMENT
DEADLINE - 13:00 (UK Time) January 20, 2027

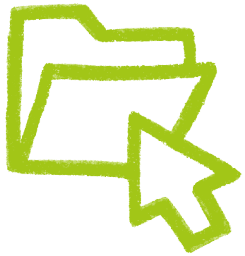
After the GSA receives your completed application form from UCAS, you will receive an email from the Admissions team at the GSA with an acknowledgement of your application and instructions on how to upload your Digital Portfolio and Portfolio Statement to the GSA Digital Portfolio Site. You can find a link to Digital Portfolio examples at the end of this guide.

You are welcome to upload your Digital Portfolio as soon as you receive your invitation email from Admissions, but no later than the deadline given to you.

The Digital Portfolio site will open to new submissions from the end of October each year.

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APPLICATION TIMELINE



DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

Your Digital Portfolio is a selection of images of work that you have made, laid out clearly. It demonstrates your skills, ideas, interests and your suitability for the programme you are applying to.

The Digital Portfolio must include no more than 15 slides and should be in PDF format Remember, you can include more than one image on each slide.



PORTFOLIO STATEMENT

In addition to your Digital Portfolio, you are required to submit a Portfolio Statement, which is in addition to your previously submitted UCAS Personal Statement. The Portfolio Statement you submit should not be the same as your UCAS Personal Statement.

Your portfolio statement must not exceed 3000 characters (approx. 500 words). Please do not include links to external websites within the Portfolio Statement as they will not be reviewed.

A guide to writing your portfolio statement can be **found here.**

APPLICATION KEY DATES

01

1
SUBMIT APPLICATION FORM TO UCAS

13 JANUARY 2027
18:00 (UK Time)

Apply via UCAS at www.ucas.com

UCAS Code **G43**

02

2
UPLOAD DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

20 JANUARY 2027
13:00 (UK Time)

GSA Portfolio Deadline

You will receive instructions on how to upload your digital portfolio and accompanying portfolio statement after you have submitted your UCAS application. You are welcome to upload your digital portfolio as soon as you receive your invitation email from admissions, but **no later** than the deadline given to you.

03

3
GSA STAFF ASSESS APPLICATIONS

FROM EARLY FEB TO MID APRIL 2027

GSA Staff will assess your application.

04

4
FINAL DECISIONS

12 MAY 2027

The outcome of your application will be communicated through UCAS.

05

5
REPLY TO OFFER

When you have received decisions from all of your UCAS choices, UCAS will send you an email to let you know all your decisions have been received and you can now reply to any offers you've been given.

If you receive your last decision on or before 12 May 2027, your reply date is 2nd June 2027.

HOW WE ASSESS YOUR APPLICATION

ASSESSMENT

Admissions staff access your UCAS Application Form, Digital Portfolio, and Portfolio Statement all together.

Your application will be numerically scored against your chosen programme's specific assessment criteria (see OUR CRITERIA). The scoring is between 1-7 (7 being 'excellent evidence of' and 1 being 'unsatisfactory evidence of').

On the basis of your application score, you will either be:

Unsuccessful
– This decision will be processed as a '**Rejection**' via UCAS

or

Offered a Place
– This decision will be processed as either '**Conditional**' or '**Unconditional**' via UCAS

OUR CRITERIA

It is important to know what the assessment criteria are for your programme.

You should try to respond to these criteria when creating your **Digital Portfolio** and writing your **Portfolio Statement**.

SEE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR CRITERIA.

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DIGITAL PORTFOLIO & PORTFOLIO STATEMENT

DIGITAL PORTFOLIO AND PORTFOLIO STATEMENT

1 Ability to communicate ideas:

– The presentation of the portfolio should be well considered, with images carefully arranged and cropped, along with titles, captions, and succinct explanations of the work where necessary. Both finished pieces and work in progress can be included and you should aim to provide a balance in your portfolio of work undertaken through school or college, as well as your own self-initiated projects that describe your skills and interests.

2 Engagement with design process and project development

– The portfolio should include evidence of your working process, including initial inspiration and starting points, how your ideas have evolved, and how you have developed your work into a final piece. Experimentations, series of samples and studies can be presented through extracts from sketchbooks and design journals.

3 Awareness of developments in the wider context of the built environment

– Expand on your interest in architecture to demonstrate how you have researched the subject – which architects inspire you, or have you visited any buildings that you particularly liked, and how you have tested or explored your interests through the work you choose to include in your portfolio? Themes around built environment, such as material testing, the climate emergency, or social/political issues can also be explored.

4 Evidence of creative skills

– The portfolio should be varied, personal and interesting. Hand-drawing skills and your ability to represent 3D form are of particular interest to us, but we would like to see a portfolio that demonstrates a diverse skill range. You could include observational drawing, sketches, painting, photography, model making, print making, woodwork, textiles, or collages.

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MORE INFORMATION

Start Early
Give yourself plenty of time to prepare your UCAS application, your **Digital Portfolio**, and refine your **Portfolio Statement**.

The Digital Portfolio site will open to new submissions from the end of October each year.

Reach Out
Don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions. If you need help with your application:

- For any queries about the application process or issues with our application site, contact admissions@gsa.ac.uk
- Remember if you're in education currently, you can speak to your teachers or lecturers for support with your application.
- If you are interested in applying to the **GSA as a Study Abroad** student (single semester or one year study) you can contact international@gsa.ac.uk for information.
- Join us for on campus and online events throughout the year through our GSA Open programme. You can find more information about Open Days and events **here.**

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DIGITAL PORTFOLIO EXAMPLES

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Here you can find sample portfolios by our current students, taken from their original application to study at the GSA.

You shouldn't use these as examples to follow in terms of style but do look at how they've presented their work and their making process.