SCHOOL OF FINE ART
THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATION GUIDELINES



Ishaaq Ali, *Encounters in the Third Space* (Fine Art Photography, 2026)

FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

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ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD ACADEMIC ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO YEAR 1

- **Scottish Highers** — ABBB including a literate subject*.
- **A Levels** — BBB, plus 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.
- **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*
- **A Levels** — BCC, plus GCSE English at grade A/7.

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

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DIRECT ENTRY TO SECOND OR THIRD YEAR

This is an Undergraduate Honours Degree programme at The Glasgow School of Art comprising four years of study. Most applicants apply to start in Year 1. If you have completed, or are studying a relevant higher education qualification, you can apply to start in 2nd or 3rd year. This is known as 'Direct Entry'. Accepted qualifications include a foundation diploma in art and design, an HNC or HND or a year or more of university study. The year you apply to depends on the level of the qualifications you already have, or what you're currently studying. You must be able to satisfy us that you have undertaken a period of study equivalent to the first, or first and second year, of the degree programme. You can find more information on our website here.

Important: If you are applying for direct entry to second or third year, we will consider your application from your highest desired entry point and work backwards from there. That means that you do not need to put in an application for each potential year of entry - if you apply for Year 2 direct entry and we feel you do not meet the requirements for direct entry we will automatically consider you for Year 1 entry instead.

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 School of Fine Art programmes is IELTS for UKVI (Academic) with 6.0 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 and don't wait until the last minute as there's a lot of information required to complete the form. 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.

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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.

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



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.**

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APPLICATION KEY DATES

01 02 03 04 05

1
SUBMIT APPLICATION FORM TO UCAS

13 JANUARY 2027
18:00 (UK Time)

Apply via UCAS at www.ucas.com

UCAS Code **G43**

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.

3
INTERVIEWS

FROM EARLY FEB TO MID APRIL 2027

GSA Staff will assess your application. If you are shortlisted, you may be invited to Interview.
See Interviews.

4
FINAL DECISIONS

12 MAY 2027

The outcome of your application will be communicated through UCAS.

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.

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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 an Interview
– You may be invited to an interview by email (see **Interview**)

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, writing your Portfolio Statement, and preparing for Interview.

SEE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR CRITERIA.

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STAGE ONE: CRITERIA DIGITAL PORTFOLIO & PORTFOLIO STATEMENT

DIGITAL PORTFOLIO AND PORTFOLIO STATEMENT

1 Demonstration of practical skills

– We expect the Digital Portfolio to represent your experience with materials, methods and making. This can be demonstrated in a variety of ways including photography / drawing / filmstills / painting / objects / sculpture / installation etc. We would expect your portfolio to contain a substantial amount of work made in the media specialism/department you have made your application to. However, we also understand that many applicants will work across a broad range of media

2 Range and approaches to work

– We are also interested in the range of ideas you are exploring and different approaches to making. It's often useful to break your portfolio down into 3-5 larger projects so that you can show both sustained focus on an idea whilst still having some breadth / versatility of approach.

3 Application of analytical and conceptual skills

– We are interested in how critical analysis and reflection of your work allows it to develop and evolve. This will be evident in the sophistication and resolution of the work itself, but is also evidenced through how you write about your work in your statement.

4 Communication of interest in Fine Art and specialist area

– You will be expected to show that you understand the course you are applying to and communicate why you consider the course is the appropriate one for you. This can be demonstrated through the Digital Portfolio and also in the statement.



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STAGE TWO: INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW

If shortlisted, you may receive an e-mail inviting you to attend an interview. Interviews are held via Teams. They last 20-30 minutes.

This is a chance for staff from the programme to meet you, hear you talk about the work in your portfolio and find out more about your readiness for the programme. It is also a chance for you to get a clearer sense of the programme, find out more about the facilities available and ask any questions that you may have.

Staff will score your interview using our interview assessment criteria below. The outcome of your interview will be communicated to you via UCAS.

If you are invited to interview (see Interview) the following criteria apply:

1 Ability to show development of your work and ideas
– Practical skills are important for creative subjects. We will use the Stage 1 evaluation for this as part of the Stage 2 assessment

2 Demonstration of analytical and conceptual skills
– We want to find out more about the ideas and development of the work in your portfolio. We are interested to know about initial inspiration and starting points, how your ideas evolved and how you explored and developed your work.

3 Ability to communicate about own work and put into context
– At interview, we will discuss the journey of your work. What did you learn and what areas did you find to be the most successful or challenging and what you might do next? For work-in-progress you could describe what you hope to achieve, what sources you will be looking at, and how you hope to explore these.

4 Self-motivation and evidence of independent interests in relation to practice
– We want you to demonstrate your interest and knowledge in your chosen subject area, who or what inspires and motivates you, your personal and individual interests. This might include artists, designers, architects, mentors, exhibitions, online events, documentaries, books, journals, archives, podcasts etc.

5 Commitment to Fine Art and specialist area applied for
– You should demonstrate that you have researched your chosen programme, discuss why you have chosen to apply to this programme, communicate why you consider the programme is the appropriate one for you and why specifically at The Glasgow School of Art.

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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 FINE ART

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