

**Glasgow School of Art Programme Specification**

**Programme Title: Masters of Design (MDes) in Interior Design**

*Please note that this programme specification is correct on the date of publication but may be subject to amendment prior to the start of the 2023-24 Academic Year.*

**1. Programme Details:**

<b>Programme Title</b>	Masters of Design (MDes) in Interior Design
<b>HECOS Code</b>	100783/101316/100962
<b>School</b>	School of Design
<b>Programme Leader</b>	Patrick Macklin
<b>Minimum Duration of Study</b>	12 months, registered study
<b>Maximum Duration of Study</b>	24 months, registered study
<b>Mode of Study</b>	Full-Time
<b>Award to be Conferred</b>	Masters of Design (MDes) in Interior Design
<b>Exit Awards</b>	Stage 1: Postgraduate Certificate in Interior Design Stage 2: Postgraduate Diploma in Interior Design Stage 3: Master of Design (MDes) in Interior Design
<b>SCQF Level:</b>	11
<b>Credits:</b>	180

<b>Academic Session</b>	2023-24
<b>Date of Approval</b>	PACAAG April 2020 (updated UPC September 2020)

<b>2. Awarding Institution</b>	University of Glasgow
<b>3. Teaching Institutions</b>	The Glasgow School of Art
<b>3.1 Campus</b>	Glasgow
<b>4. Lead School/Board of Studies</b>	School of Design
<b>5. Other Schools/Board of Studies</b>	N/A
<b>6. Programme Accredited By (PSRBs)</b>	N/A

<b>7. Entry Qualifications</b>	
<b>7.1 Highers</b>	N/A
<b>7.2 A Levels</b>	N/A
<b>7.3 Other</b>	<p>Applications to the MDes in Interior Design can occur at any time during the academic year; the admissions cycle begins in late September for intake in the following September. Although there are no deadlines, early application is encouraged in order to ensure a place on the programme.</p> <p>All applicants should normally have a good honours degree in interior design, or equivalent professional practice. However, applications from individuals from other design backgrounds (graphic design, for example) will be considered on their own merits. The admissions requirements for the MDes in Interior Design are:</p> <p>a fully completed application form, including two references</p>

	<p>submission of a 500 word written text outlining personal motivation for undertaking postgraduate study, and specific reasons for applying to this programme; submission of an annotated portfolio of work, of 25–30 images</p> <p>Candidates will be selected for a place on the programme on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting the minimum entry requirements specified above</li> <li>• demonstrating the appropriateness of the programme for their personal</li> <li>• intellectual and creative development,</li> <li>• showing critical awareness, imaginative thinking, and an understanding of the challenges of postgraduate study in their personal statement;</li> <li>• the quality of the portfolio of work, which must be of a suitable standard for masters level study;</li> <li>• demonstrating the potential to contribute to the group dynamic of the programme.</li> </ul> <p>Overseas applicants who are unable to attend for interview must submit the written statement and portfolio work. In addition, a telephone interview may be required.</p>
<p><b>7.4 English Language Requirements</b></p>	<p>All students will have to provide evidence of English language proficiency when applying.</p> <p>International Students</p> <p>Students who require a Tier 4 visa to study in the UK must meet one of the following requirements in order to gain entry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IELTS for UKVI Academic with an overall score of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in all components;</li> <li>• complete an acceptable Pre-sessional English Language Programme taught from within the UK with an outcome that equates to the IELTS scores as stated above.</li> </ul> <p>Students who have a degree from an English speaking country, or are a national of an English speaking country as listed in the UKVI Guidance, may use this as proof of English language ability.</p>

**8. Programme Scope:**

Interior design can be described as being fundamentally concerned with the creation of designed content within constructed contexts, existing or proposed, one-off or multiple. The subject is rich, complex and diverse in nature, and has an increasingly important future. Designs can integrate tightly with a host building or site responding to peculiarities, and by establishing a dialogue between artefacts. Opportunities arise to embrace embedded narratives within existing building shells; respond to evidence of historic constructional methods; consider residual aesthetic traces; speculate upon the mementos of previous functions and erased locales – the interior as palimpsest. Equally, solutions may be created separately or autonomously from the specific aspects of an actual setting—other than perhaps a detailed outline of its volume—an approach often adopted in certain types of retail design. The dominant forces here may be the expression of a brand and the encapsulation of desire. Design without borders, the interior as teleport.

What we now recognise as interior design once sat awkwardly somewhere between the realms of shop-fitting, interior decoration and architecture. Arguably, in the period since the early 1980's it has become recognised as a distinct specialist field of design, with trained practitioners and informed clients. Forgivable casual comparisons with architecture are less common and increasingly, more useful connections with diverse parallel disciplines are acknowledged. The MDes in Interior Design at GSA reflects this context. As for the undergraduate counterpart, the programme operates on a subject-centred basis. Unlike the UG programme – where the intention is specialist immersion across a range of projects – the Masters programme aims to explore both the existing territory and the hinterland of the discipline, asking why interiors are produced, rather than how. Operating in a rigorous academic environment, and free from the constraints of practice, it encourages reflective, and analytical approaches to subject-centred themes grouped around the core areas of Context (Stage 1) and Scope (Stage 2) and draws from territories such as: Recent histories of UK interior design, Retail (high street/online), brand palette – visual, tactile and auditory, materials and persuasion, augmented retail and presence; Design in transit: convergence and distribution, security, way-finding, technologies, dislocation, utopias; Enclosure: exploring the domestic and the residential, re-purposing buildings; user-centred design; the psychology of enclosure; people, places and things; surrogate space; virtual and actual; hard and soft methods of visualisation—analogue and digital representation of constructed space; archaeology of the recent past, re-imagining erased space; place and memory; four dimensional design: the interior in cinema and theatre; Materiality: bricks and pixels; five senses – visualising the unseen.

By acting as a bridge between the delineated and the uncharted, the programme encourages investigation into emerging aspects of the discipline and engages departmental staff and their practice and research interests to feed course content; focusing on areas such as the designers role in shaping relationships to technology, process, the market, sustainability, digital and augmented realities, the high street, accessible design and the 21st Century Design Studio.

The importance of disciplinary autonomy and inter-disciplinary dialogue is reflected in the rich mix of studio-based practice, cross-school elective courses and the location of the programme within a supportive and diverse postgraduate community. At postgraduate level, the importance of both formal and informal cross-design dialogue: directly within the context of Stage 1 Core Research Methods for Design; Stage 2 Design Electives; and across the five Schools that make up GSA is recognised and broader collaboration with external partners is consistently being explored and developed.

Programme delivery is via tutorials, seminars, lectures and workshops alongside core and elective projects. In addition to participating in taught elements of the programme, students will be expected to engage in a high level of self-directed learning, research and independent critical reflection, with an emphasis on the current status, value and meaning of contemporary interior design, the identification of emerging aspects of the discipline and the positing of designs future roles and responsibilities.

The programme prepares students for entry into a professional design environment; work as an independent designer; consultancy across disciplines and further academic study by research. Opportunities can be accessed within the Glasgow School of Art or in the greater academic community and will be driven by the ethos of research underpinning the programmes. Further professional development will be enabled through seminars made available from Student Services.

Finally, it asserts that the subject is ripe for critical and theoretical description. Students are encouraged to position themselves relative to the broad creative arc of the discipline, in order that they may emerge as advanced practitioners with a hand in shaping its central tenets, and with a deep understanding of said, facilitating either professional migration/consolidation, or further research at PhD level.

### 9. Programme Structure:

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<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>SCQF Level</b>
PIND103 Interior Design 1 - Interface Context And Cooperation	40	11
PCXS106 Core Research Methods for Design*	20	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	
Exit Award		PgCert
<b>Stage 2</b>		
PIND204 Interior Design 2 - Critical Surveying Scope And Intention	40	11
PGT Elective	20	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	
Exit Award		PgDip
<b>Stage 3</b>		
PIND322 Interior Design - Research Project	60	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	
<b>Exit Award</b>		MDes
*In exceptional circumstances it may be possible in the early stages of the programme to consider an alternate Core Research Methods course in Stage 1		

### 9.1 Programme Structure – Exchange In/Exchange Out/Study Abroad:

N/A

### 10. What are the requirements for progressing from each stage?

A student will be permitted to progress to Stage 3 only if they have obtained a grade point average of C3(12.0) or above in the taught courses (Stage 1 & 2) with at least 75% of the credits at grade D3(9) or above and all credits at grade F3(6) or above.

### 11. Programme Aims:

The aims of the programme are:

to enable students to:

- Engage with the theoretical underpinnings and the language of interior design through lectures, seminars, viewings and project work and develop an understanding of the contextual and historical evolution of interior design practice and techniques and relate these to current philosophies and best practice in the field;

- Investigate the conceptual and aesthetic basis of current interior design methodologies through the evolution and realization of work, both individual and group-based;
- Develop and demonstrate an understanding of research methodologies and realisation processes within the field of interior design;
- Expand the existing disciplinary boundaries of design practice through the application of design-led innovations in technology, social interaction and industrial practice through the development and realisation of challenging, concept-driven research projects;
- Develop a research project that allows exploration of individual research interests, theoretical debates and professional models of contemporary design activity;
- Acquire and demonstrate an understanding of professional practice within the field of interior design across a variety of subject fields and articulate this through a practical research project and/or thesis submission.

### **11.1 Stage 1 Aims:**

Stage 1 (Pg Cert) – Semester 1 Weeks 1 to 15: 60 Credit points

The programme aims at Stage 1 are designed to allow students the opportunity to acquire and understand the key principles of theory, research and practice within the field of interior design. Students successfully completing this stage of the programme can advance to Stage 2 (PG Dip).

The Postgraduate Certificate in Interior Design aims to offer each student the opportunity to:

- develop an understanding of the key principles of interior design through the investigation of contemporary design practice and its context;
- acquire, develop and contribute to knowledge of the key theoretical principles of interior design and articulate this through the production of a small scale practical project(s);
- acquire knowledge of the principles of interior design from a user-centred perspective and articulate this through the management of a small scale practical project(s) in relation to contemporary economic models and practice;
- achieve an understanding of the key principles of interior design as a collaborative process through the generation of research data and documents;
- attain core skills in advanced critical and theoretical debates as they pertain to contemporary socio-economic models of technology;

Stage 1, The Core Research Methods for Design course aims to:

- provide students with opportunities to critically develop disciplinary research methods;
- enable students to autonomously design their own research project/object/practice with a critical grounding in appropriate research methods both relevant to their disciplinary specialization and, where relevant, enabling of trans, multi, or inter-disciplinarity;
- provide students with rigorous understanding of research ethics as relevant to their research/practice;
- facilitate critical reflection on the relationship between forms of research and modes of practice in order to encourage robust and/or innovative applications of existing modes.

### **11.2 Stage 2 Aims:**

Stage 2 (Pg Dip) – Semester 2 Weeks 1 - 15: 60 Credit points

The programme aims at Stage 2 are designed to build upon and develop a greater understanding of the production processes and craft skills as well as the conceptual and research components acquired in Stage 1. Students will be expected to develop a proposal of study outlining their intended area of research at Masters Level. Students successfully completing this stage of the MDes can advance to the Masters stage, Stage 3.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Interior Design aims to offer each student the opportunity to:

- develop critical knowledge of interior design, its theory and principles, articulated through the production of individual or group practical project(s);
- attain an understanding of interior design as a tool for creative collaboration and the generation of social and economic value;
- develop reflective understanding of interior design as a method of group working, research focused activity and problem solving through practical project(s);
- acquire a critical knowledge of the history and cultural context of interior design as a means of reflecting upon personal creative practice stimulating shared learning experience;
- generate through a research proposal a suitable project for Masters level, Stage 3, in relation to interior design as a contemporary social, economic or technological practice.

Stage 2, Electives aims:

The stage 2 electives are provided across GSA and support students to further deepen and explore their areas of research interest. This will enable an intensification of discipline oriented-research methods and also foster interdisciplinary learning which is one of the areas of focus in stage 2

### **11.3 Stage 3 Aims:**

Stage 3 programme aims are designed to offer the student the opportunity to develop a practice-led project that demonstrates a conceptually considered, research-driven understanding of the theory, methodologies and practicalities of interior design within a real world context. Students at this stage of the programme, in consultation with design staff, can elect to work either individually, in a group or with an external organisation.

Students undertaking Stage 3 of the MDes in Interior Design will be able to negotiate the weighting of their final research project. This project contains two elements: an illustrated presentation and verbal report of research and project work; and a project submission. The second element – the project submission – may be delivered as a research report/thesis of 5,000 – 6,000 words or as a research portfolio/presentation/display accompanied by a research report of 3,000 to 4,000 words. (Students may also negotiate an alternative weighting via consultation with course tutors and the programme leader).

Stage 3 of the MDes in Interior Design aims to offer each student the opportunity to:

- demonstrate through the realisation of a research project a comprehensive and professional understanding and thorough interrogation of production methodologies and techniques in the field of interior design;
- demonstrate through the production of a research-focused project an understanding of the theory, methodologies and strategies of interior design within contemporary society;
- demonstrate through a written report, critical and analytical reflection on the processes and research embodied in the research project.

### **12. Intended Learning Outcomes of Programme:**

After full participation in and successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:

- engage with the theoretical underpinnings and the language of interior design and demonstrate understanding of the contextual and historical evolution of interior design practice and techniques and relate these to current philosophies and best practice in the field;
- investigate the conceptual and aesthetic basis of current interior design methodologies through the evolution and realization of original work, both individual and group-based;

- demonstrate an understanding of research methodologies and realisation processes within the field of interior design;
- expand the existing disciplinary boundaries of design practice through the application of design-led innovations in technology, social interaction and industrial practice through the development and realisation of challenging, concept-driven research projects;
- develop a research project that allows exploration of individual research interests, theoretical debates and professional models of contemporary design activity;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional practice within the field of interior design across a variety of subject fields and articulate this through a practical research project and/or thesis submission.

### **12.1 Intended Learning Outcomes of Stage 1**

Students who successfully complete Stage 1 will be able to:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the principles and rationale for re-appraisal of previous work in order to re-evaluate existing design knowledge, skills and thinking;
- Apply the outcomes of critical re-appraisal into the planning of new work;
- Relate critical issues in their work to wider historical, critical and theoretical discourses;
- Develop the beginnings of an articulation of design sensibilities in context;
- Communicate critical self-evaluation to peers, staff and specialists using appropriate methods and respond to the views and positions of others.
- Evaluate and adapt methodologies in order to develop and progress projects and practices;
- Generate new perspectives on their practice by developing sustainable research frameworks;
- Demonstrate research vocabularies and methods relevant for their professional practice;
- Collate primary and secondary sources, effectively managing data;
- Document and communicate research experiences using visual, oral and written methods.

On successful completion of Core Research Methods for Design students will be able to:

- Evaluate and adapt methodologies in order to develop and progress projects and practices;
- Generate new perspectives on their practice by developing sustainable research frameworks;
- Demonstrate research vocabularies and methods relevant for their professional practice;
- Collate primary and secondary sources, effectively managing data;
- Document and communicate research experiences using visual, oral and written methods.

### **12.2 Intended Learning Outcomes of Stage 2**

Students who successfully complete Stage 2 will be able to:

- Demonstrate the intellectual and creative abilities necessary to identify and characterise problems and issues arising from historical and theoretical aspects of practice.
- Develop informed responses to problems and issues arising from critical analysis and apply a high level of originality and creativity in the development of knowledge and practice;
- Apply a significant range of skills and techniques associated with current developments in design;
- Work constructively with others in a variety of educational, institutional and professional situations and respond in an informed manner to the views and positions of others;
- Use a range of skills, techniques and media to communicate with peers and staff via seminar presentations.

Stage 2 Electives: Intended Learning Outcomes are detailed in the related Elective Course Specification

### **12.3 Intended Learning Outcomes of Stage 3**

Students who successfully complete Stage 3 will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the critical balance between research and practice in the planning of a significant project within design studio practice;
- Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary design theory and practice;
- Evidence independence and self-direction through the development and management of a project of research;
- Apply knowledge and understanding of research methods specific to their individual project of research;
- Demonstrate high-quality communication skills in tutorials and in project outcomes: in documents, artefacts and design work in appropriate visual, verbal, material and written formats.

### **13. Learning and Teaching Approaches:**

Students will be expected to take significant responsibility for the management of their learning. Emphasis will be placed on self-reliance and personal academic development.

The principle teaching strategies employed on this programme are:

#### Self-Directed Learning and Research

In line with other taught postgraduate programmes at GSA, significant emphasis in the Interior Design programme is placed on self-directed study, from project design and development, to gaining theoretical knowledge through traditional research methods.

#### Lectures and Seminars

Lectures and seminars are used to disseminate theoretical, contextual and historical knowledge and address specific issues underpinning practical studio work. Lectures also have the broad aim of generating further debate in seminars, tutorials or studio sessions or further enquiry in self-directed learning or research.

#### Design Workshops / Studio Sessions

Design workshops are practical classes in which ideas from lectures and seminars may be tested out, or new concepts introduced and explored. These may vary from IT sessions in which students are introduced to particular pieces of software, to practical modelling classes in which prototypes are designed and roughed. Depending on the focus of the workshop, students may work independently or in groups.

#### Critiques

The critique (or 'crit') is an important learning device used to generate peer debate regarding the overall success of concepts, and their practical realisation within the context of a project brief or proposal. Students present work to their peers and tutors through appropriate visual and verbal means (models, portfolios, screen based presentations and so on). The crit enables the development of key presentation skills, and encourages students to give constructive feedback on others' work. Although facilitated and guided by staff, critiques allow students to fully explore all aspects of practical submissions.

#### Tutorials

The tutorial system is designed to provide academic support through individual meetings with staff. At these one-to-one meetings, individual projects and pieces of work are discussed, as well



as progress on the programme overall. Tutorials are also a means where feedback from students concerning all aspects of the programme can be raised.

#### Assessment

Formative and summative assessment strategies are employed through the Interior Design programme. (For a full breakdown of these, please see below). Formative and summative assessment feedback operates to guide students in improving their work, including interpersonal skills, formal presentation abilities, and academic writing and research.

#### Guest Speakers

Input from visiting lecturers and guest speakers will enable Interior Design students access to, and understanding of, relevant contemporary practice, research and commercial contexts

#### Enrichment of Learning Experience

Students on the Interior Design programme will be taught and supervised by research active staff. Staff research interests will directly inform curriculum content, enhancing research-teaching linkages. Although the School of Design has considerable staff expertise in the field of interior design, guest speakers and visiting lecturers – academic researchers, industry professionals, practicing designers – will be brought in to run sessions covering other relevant and allied areas.

Students on the programme may negotiate access to the research activities and projects within the School of Design. From time to time it is recognised that student involvement in these projects is desirable for the following reasons:

Access to leading-edge research germane to their programme of study

Experience with businesses involved in interior design broader understanding of industrial contexts

It is also recognised that student involvement in live research projects has the potential to clash with course work and introduce unnecessary pressure. To ensure this does not happen, the following conditions will apply to ensure that such work is appropriate to the general area of study and properly managed academically within the framework of the course.

The work involved should be in the general subject area of the programme and have direct relevance within course descriptors.

- The work should serve as a direct equivalent for the course work it is replacing. No additional requirements are added to course work or the assessment process.
- The time taken to undertake the work should be agreed in advance through discussion with programme staff.
- Proper recording of the tasks involved should be made in a manner consistent with normal course monitoring processes.
- Regular meetings with students and the programme leader will be held to monitor progress and ensure an appropriate and balanced workload.
- While it is noted that such work will be of benefit to students, it might also be the case that it will require additional periods of time.

All of the above should be the subject of a document signed by the student concerned and the programme and/or course leader.

Students will be contacted in the pre-arrival period and provided with additional material about their programme.

#### **14. Assessment Methods:**

The criteria of assessment are linked directly to the learning outcomes for the PgCert, PgDip and Masters stages of the programme.

The programme provides two forms of assessment, formative and summative. Formative assessment will take the form of seminars, tutorials, and so on, which provide the opportunity to refine and develop key principles in fields of enquiry, and to prepare for submission in the summative assessments, i.e. in assessed projects and coursework, and in the final submission for the Research Project, or in the case of those exiting at Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma level, for the assessed projects and coursework.

Engagement with formative assessment is a mandatory requirement.

For all three stages of the programme, students will normally be assessed on the presentation of practical work, written submissions and/or verbal presentations. Each course will be examined against its specific Learning Outcomes as outlined in the curriculum section.

#### **15. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and Other External or Internal Reference Points:**

GSA Strategic Plan  
GSA Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy  
SCQF Level 11 Descriptor

#### **20. Additional Relevant Information:**

Please refer to the University Calendar for the full PGT regulations:  
<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/senateoffice/policies/uniregs/regulations2019-20/gsa/genericpgt/>