

Glasgow School of Art Programme Specification

Programme Title: Master of Research

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 2024-25 Academic Year.

1. Programme Details:

Programme Title	Master of Research
HECOS Code	
School	School of Innovation and Technology
Programme Leader	Professor Lynn-Sayers McHattie
Minimum Duration of Study	12
Maximum Duration of Study	24
Mode of Study	Full-time (12 months) / Part-time (24 months)
Award to be Conferred	Master of Research
Exit Awards	Students would either be awarded a Master of Research after 1 year (2 years part time) or PhD thereafter. On successful completion of the Master of Research Programme, the student exits with a Master of Research award. We envisage that for the majority of students, the award of Master of Research would be the desired outcome. However, in order to maximise the potential of this Programme, there is the opportunity to interface the Master of Research with Year 2 of the existing PhD Programme. In this case, on successful completion of the Master of Research Programme, the student can apply to convert to Year 2 of GSA's PhD programme. In this case, the student would surrender their Master of Research award (e.g. not be awarded the Master of Research), and convert to Year 2 of a PhD programme. In order to be registered as a year 2 PhD student, the student would have to fulfil the existing criteria for the normal PhD scheme Progression
SCQF Level:	11
Credits:	180

Academic Session	2024-25
Date of Approval	PACAAG April 2020 (updated UPC September 2020)

2. Awarding Institution	University of Glasgow
3. Teaching Institutions	This is not a taught Programme. Glasgow School of Art is delivering this programme. The GSA is the primary institution to deliver supervision.
3.1 Campus	Offered across both The Glasgow School of Art campuses in Glasgow and the Highlands and Islands
4. Lead School/Board of Studies	School of Innovation and Technology
5. Other Schools/Board of Studies	NA
6. Programme Accredited By (PSRBs)	NA

7. Entry Qualifications	
7.1 Highers	NA
7.2 A Levels	NA
7.3 Other	2:1 degree – with a dissertation or equivalent component (within three years of graduation, thereafter an equivalent will be considered based on candidate’s experience).
7.4 English Language Requirements	<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"> • IELTS for UKVI Academic with an overall score of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.5 in all components; • 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. <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:

The scope of this Programme is the design, undertaking, and communication of a discrete research project. This is a 180-credit Programme.

There are research-related Formative Outputs at each Phase, which collectively go towards a Summative Portfolio, which makes up the assessment regime for the programme. Should the candidate wish to apply to convert to Year 2 of PhD study at the end of the Programme, this portfolio can also constitute evidence for candidates to align with the existing Progression process (at the end of Year 1 of the PhD).

The underpinning dimensions of the Programme include: a stress on independent research activity from the outset, location of that activity both within GSA and out with GSA (in communities, businesses, government, public sector etc.), and outputs from the activity that are reflective of the needs of research as it is currently emerging (recognising the importance of research-in-practice, knowledge exchange, and knowledge mobilisation as core researcher activities). Although primarily designed as a self-contained programme responding to demand (see below) successful students can apply to convert their research to PhD at Year 2(FT) level in a ‘1+2’ model.

On reaching the end of the Master of Research, students, having completed Research Training (as identified in Phase 1), and together with a Portfolio of work, either submit to be awarded a Master of Research by Viva, or apply for conversion to Year 2 of a PhD. There is no double counting of research, e.g. students are awarded one or progress with the other.

Two application routes are normally available:

- Application by project proposal in areas relevant to GSA, based on research interests and experience.

- Application for studentship in specified projects identified by GSA from current research programmes supported by external partners.

At the time of writing (February 2020) active examples of external partners include:

- The Digital Health Institute (DHI) Experience Lab, as part of a 4-year, £10m Innovation Centre funded by the Scottish Funding Council. Through this project, there is an opportunity for GSA to receive several funded Master of Research places annually.
- Creative Futures Partnership: a strategic partnership, led by the School of Innovation and Technology, with Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) that includes a focus on building creative collaborations for sustainable communities and is already delivering research programmes exploring this need. This is referred to in the documentation as “Creative Campus”.

This Master of Research recognises a wide range of research projects and applicant backgrounds (e.g. we welcome interdisciplinary scholars and those with previous professional experience and practice). Please see “Diagram 1: Master of Research: Example Areas of Study” below.

Research approaches by Master of Research students run on a continuum from practice-based to theoretical (x-axis). For example, on the one extreme it can be a largely practice-based research approach, or at the other extreme very theoretical (e.g. design theory). Similarly, looking at the y-axis, research topics can be quite context specific in their application, or extremely subject specific. There are opportunities across all of these elements.

Master of Research: examples

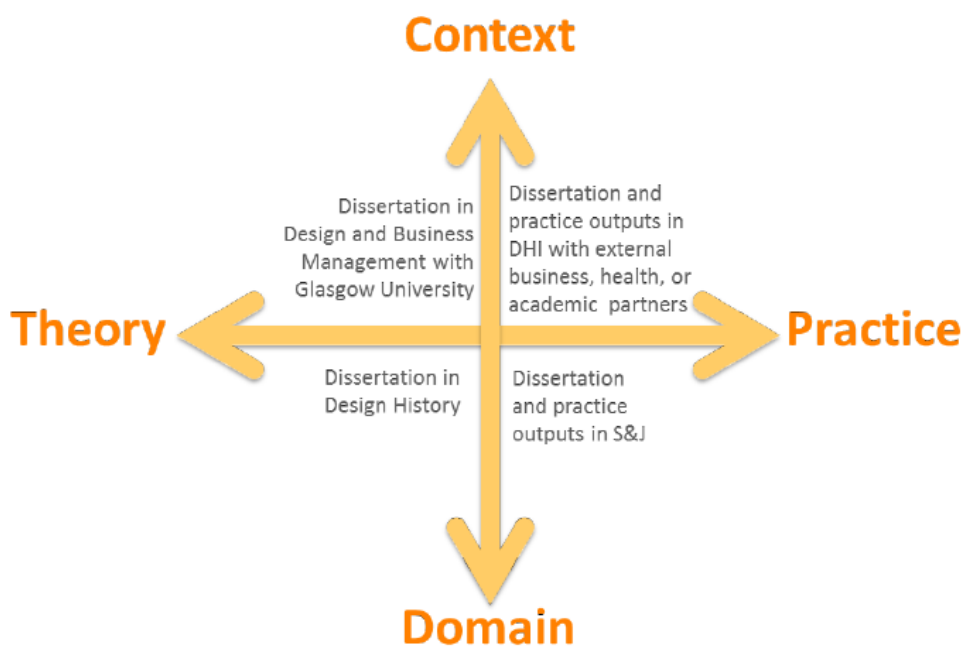


Diagram 1: Master of Research: Example Areas of Study

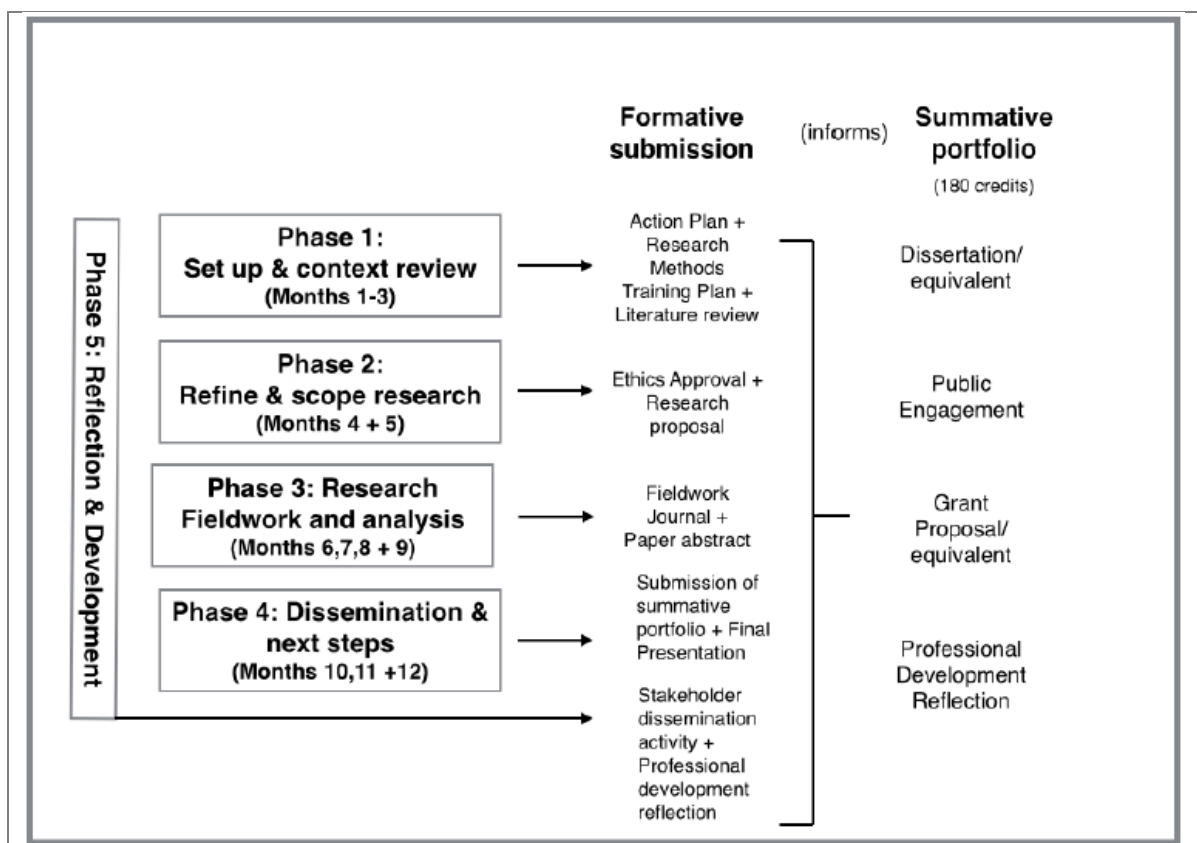
The Master of Research programme is designed to respond to GSA's desire to build its research community and research degree portfolio. It is designed to take advantage of funding available, so that we are able to immediately draw down funded places – and to allow us to make the most of any funding we have in the future. It responds to expressions of interest from a variety of external organisations (e.g. The Scottish Government, Skills Development Scotland, The Glasgow City Council and designers working in industry), for a research-based Masters, which recruits students who would like to continue working part-time and study, for a qualification but do not have the time commitment of a PhD. GSA has an extensive network, which frequently offers to fund student projects and research, but has not had a suitable pathway to direct this kind of funding. The Master of Research addresses this need, allowing external organisations to fund student places and work collaboratively. It is designed to recruit inter-school students who would like to do a practice-based, or a theoretical PhD. For example, Silversmithing and Jewellery have already expressed an interest to direct their students to this Programme.

The Master of Research enables GSA to capitalise on such opportunities, through a flexible research qualification. The Programme is self-directed, and as such, during Phase 1 of the Programme, each candidate identifies their Research Training needs in collaboration with their supervisory team, and locates the opportunities to resolve these needs. At the end of the Master of Research, they will have undertaken appropriate Research Training as necessary, such that they are sufficiently supported to successfully deliver the research project. There is a diverse range of training opportunities that the student may draw upon. As well as external provision to fulfil training needs, GSA has a wealth of research training opportunities to offer. Examples of current provision includes:

- Research Methods training provided by University of Glasgow;
- Specific elements of the current PhD Research Training Programme at GSA as relevant to M.Res. students;
- The Virtual Learning Environment (CANVAS) at GSA, which will be used to support access to Open Educational Resources. We have current research training material on CANVAS, and the Programme Leader will add to this with appropriate materials.

This Master of Research allows students to identify their own development trajectory, under the direction of a supervisory team. This helps to better prepare graduates for impact-rich academic interactions in the future, encouraging independent learning and collaboration. They develop skills in honing their own research, and learn how to reach out to the external and academic community to drive their own future learning in their chosen career.

9. Programme Structure:



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

N/A

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

While there is no formal progression for each stage of the Master of Research programme, Supervisors are able to closely monitor the progress of each student at each phase of Formative Submission. To be eligible for Conversion to Year 2 of the PhD Programme, students will be subject to the standard Progression process to Year 2 of the PhD.

11. Programme Aims:

The aims of the programme are:

- To provide researcher development through the experience of a substantial research project at Masters level;
- To acclimatise students to a process of self-managed, professional researcher development;
- To extend knowledge of a particular subject and research methods, at a depth or breadth (through interdisciplinarity) greater than that achieved in undergraduate study;
- To encourage the independent and original analysis of a complex range of appropriate source materials, knowledge domains and professional practices;
- To prepare students for further graduate study of an advanced kind e.g. to PhD. level;
- To support students to develop the practical, organisational and presentation skills necessary for the successful reporting of research to relevant external audiences and stakeholders.

N.B. The phases described below will be followed for all projects. Although we have suggested notional timescales for the phases, to give an idea of how this Programme operates, these are notional – and we emphasise that the actual timescales may vary depending on the nature and requirements of the research project. It is possible that, particularly if the research project is specifically aligned with a delivery of activity already underway, milestones and timescales will be strongly influenced by the deliverables required for that programme of work. As such the specific timescales are agreed on a case-by-case basis to link directly to the project timescales and external needs.

To achieve this, the programme divides into several phases: The diagram in section 9 outlines the programme design.

Phases 1-4 are chronological; Phase 5 runs concurrently across the programme. Each phase normally involves the submission of a piece of Formative work as outlined below. At the end of Phase 4, the Summative Portfolio is submitted.

11.1 Phase 1 Aims:

Phase 1: Set Up and Context Review (Months 1, 2 and 3)

Aims of phase 1 – Provide opportunities to engage in the:

- Induction at Winter School: Research Training including initiation of research project, overall action plan and research scope;
- Identify reading lists and technical services requirements of the project, which will be fluid depending on the nature of the research topic. Applicants will be expected to identify and state their potential training and development requirements in this initial phase (which will be reviewed at each Phase);
- Establishment of project milestones through negotiation with Supervisor(s) and, where applicable, external stakeholders;
- Identification and critique of the relevant literature (literature review);
- Reflection of student development needs and an action plan to address these needs.

This phase is concluded through the submission of i) a succinct critical literature review, ii) an Action Plan for the research project agreed with stakeholders/clients communities and iii) a Research Training Plan to address development needs and Research Training (to interface with the requirements for PhD entry, should the candidate wish to apply and has been accepted for conversion to PhD study and ratified by the RDSC).

11.2 Phase 2 Aims:

Phase 2: Refine and Scope (Months 4 and 5)

Aims of phase 2 – Provide opportunities to engage in the:

- Research Training in Spring School including theoretical positioning, methodology, methods, conducting fieldwork and analytical frameworks;
- Development of ethics approval and risk management as necessary;
- Articulation and receipt of feedback on the research project;
- Identification and use of appropriate research methodologies, methods, and approaches for analysis.

This phase is concluded through the submission of a Research Proposal Presentation (iv), which encapsulates methodology, methods and approaches for analysis, and ethical considerations)

11.3 Phase 3 Aims:

Phase 3: Research Fieldwork and Analysis (Months 6, 7, 8 and 9)

Aims of phase 3 – Provide the opportunities to:

- Undertake a Mock Viva held during Autumn School;
 - Undertake the research and maintain a reflective journal;
 - Analyse and report on research findings;
 - Submit Mock Thesis/Portfolio.
- This phase is concluded through the submission of an internally-reviewed Thesis/Portfolio submission(v)

11.4 Phase 4 Aims:

Phase 4: Dissemination and Next Steps (Months 10, 11 and 12)
 Aims of phase 4 – Provide opportunities to:

- Recognise the factors involved in successfully bringing a research project to completion;
- Understand and manage the requirements of producing a written Thesis of 20,000 words or Portfolio, 10,000 words and a portfolio of practice;
- Identify areas and/or funding for further research;

This phase is concluded by the submission of the Thesis/Portfolio and examined by Viva, usually during Winter School.

11.5 Stage 5 Aims:

Phase 5: Reflection and Development
 Aims of Phase 5 (This runs concurrent to phases 1-4 e.g. throughout the programme) – Provide opportunities to:

- Undertake initial and subsequent professional development reviews and identify/access training/mentoring/practical experience for gaps;
- Experience and reflect upon managing peer and expert networks in the management and completion of a research project;
- Work with a range of stakeholders to ensure research outcomes align with stakeholder needs;
- Demonstrate participation in the Master of Research online community via CANVAS.

This phase is concluded by the completion of the public/stakeholder dissemination activity, the submission of a professional development reflection demonstrating the identification and resolution of development and training needs across the programme. We also expect candidates to show their fieldwork journal, kept from the outset.

12. Intended Learning Outcomes of Programme:

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

- Design and undertake a discrete research project within an academic, industrial, or community context;
- Demonstrate critical, original, creative approaches to research-based enquiry in situated contexts through conceiving and applying a range of research methods and techniques of enquiry;
- Critically reflect on the ethical issues as they relate to the questions, research approach and methods identified;
- Outline potential research outputs from a given area of research activity;
- Adapt in-depth disciplinary research for diverse audiences in intellectual, creative ways;
- Identify research training needs and locate opportunities to respond to these;
- Evaluate potential areas for further research.

12.1 Intended Learning Outcomes of Phase 1

Knowledge and Understanding

- To demonstrate a growing in-depth knowledge of the key features, boundaries, terminology and conventions of the relevant disciplinary and professional literature;
- To critically recognise trends in the relevant academic and professional literature, of importance to the given project.

Applied Knowledge and Understanding

- To demonstrate a sophisticated ability to extract and synthesise key principles from relevant literature and professional practices that can be utilised within the research project through the completion of a literature review;
- To demonstrate the realistic scoping of project milestones and activities at the outset of the project.

Professional Practice: Communication, Presentation, Working with Others

- To be able to identify and discuss the ethical implications and associated risks of field research, and mitigation strategies where necessary;
- To be able to identify focused development needs in line with the four domains of the Early Career Researcher Framework.

12.2 Intended Learning Outcomes of Phase 2

Knowledge and Understanding

- To demonstrate a growing awareness and detailed understanding of a range of inter-disciplinary research methodologies, methods and creative approaches.

Applied Knowledge and Understanding

- To identify appropriate methods from which to design the research project activities, and to communicate these in a well-considered and scoped research proposal/presentation.

Professional Practice: Communication, Presentation, Working with Others

- To be able to communicate the research proposal elements to academic, non-academic/ external stakeholders/professional audiences (industry, communities, public services etc.).

12.3 Intended Learning Outcomes of Phase 3

Knowledge and Understanding

- To demonstrate a critical awareness of research fieldwork approaches and analysis approaches.

Applied Knowledge and Understanding

- To demonstrate mastery in planning and executing a research project;
- To be able to communicate progress regularly with supervisors and other relevant communities.

Professional Practice: Communication, Presentation, Working with Others

- To be able to discuss research progress and findings with relevant professional, academic and diverse external audiences (industry, communities, public service, etc.);
- To collaboratively scope research output(s) (the form of which will be decided by the supervisory team, appropriate to the project context).

12.4 Intended Learning Outcomes of Phase 4

Knowledge and Understanding

- To be able to discuss research findings in a sophisticated manner, and identify subsequent areas for further research.

Applied Knowledge and Understanding

- To be able to identify appropriate dissemination routes and target audiences.

Professional Practice: Communication, Presentation, Working with Others

- To demonstrate leadership and initiative, and to make identifiable insights to the field.

12.5 Intended Learning Outcomes of Phase 5

Knowledge and Understanding

- To be able to discuss development review needs and pursue these independently.

Applied Knowledge and Understanding

- To demonstrate critical reflection of the learning journey and development opportunities through the research project;
- To demonstrate critical awareness of their research approach to appropriate audiences, and what could have been done differently.

Professional Practice: Communication, Presentation, Working with Others

- To be able to work creatively and professionally with the project team to align research outcomes with stakeholder priorities;
- To be able to discuss how to capitalise on research networks in the future, beyond the research project.

13. Learning and Teaching Approaches:

This Interdisciplinary Master of Research combines a programme of supervised and directed research exploration and preparatory research training alongside a substantial component of individual research. It is aimed at those who work within a professional or commercial environment where research plays a significant role and those who have already developed strong research skills at undergraduate level. The Master of Research enables students to develop practical knowledge and research skills experience in preparation for a research career. The programme offers an opportunity for suitable students to convert their Masters research to PhD, entering PhD at Year 2 (FT).

As this is a supervised programme of research training, rather than a taught programme, the structure of the Master of Research is necessarily weighted towards research. The Master of Research programme provides through Seasonal Schools (Winter, Spring and Autumn) an introduction and orientation to research methodologies and methods, focusing on key research practices. This initial orientation phase (Phase 1) provides a framework to help inform students' selection of appropriate approaches to the research that they are expected to undertake. In parallel with this orientation phase and in consultation with the students appointed supervisor(s), the student has the opportunity to review the latest literature on their chosen subject and become familiar with emerging research developments. Students arrange a series of meetings; the number and duration of formal meetings should be prescribed with their individual supervisors at agreed points during the phases of the year. This will comply with current regulations. However, due to the project-based nature of the Programme, students will have regular contact with their peers and research colleagues (other than the supervisory team) who are working on research projects.

As this Master of Research aims to provide an authentic experience of undertaking a research project, the key learning and teaching method is supervision. However, equally central to the development of the candidate's learning is engagement in peer networks, professional networks, and researcher networks related to particular projects.

To promote an authentic experience, candidates are encouraged to reflect explicitly with their supervisors regarding their needs in terms of research methodology, methods, personal and professional development. In this they are encouraged to use a reflective personal development plan clarifying these needs and demonstrating how they accessed the relevant training/researcher development. This discussion is focused on the four domains of the early career researcher framework:

- Domain A: The knowledge, intellectual abilities and techniques to do research
- Domain B: The personal qualities and approach to be an effective researcher
- Domain C: Knowledge of the professional standards and requirements to do research
- Domain D: The knowledge and skills to work with others to ensure the wider impact of research

See: <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework/researchers-how-you-can-use-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework>

In terms of the learning and teaching methods, the Master of Research places significant emphasis on the value of peer learning and the sharing of knowledge and professional expertise that participants bring to the programme, including professional networks. Through Seasonal Schools, studio days and peer presentations, students are encouraged to share and exchange their research interests and concerns as well as issues and approaches to research design. Thus, the development of a research community among members of the cohort is a central feature of the programme, which is supported by structured opportunities to interact within the physical environment as well as through GSA's Virtual Learning Environment (CANVAS).

14. Assessment Methods:

The Assessment comprises of a portfolio of activities designed to map against research project needs, while fulfilling the academic requirements of substantive research. The Summative Portfolio, is designed to constitute a standalone body of work for a Master of Research, while constituting evidence for Conversion to Year 2 of the PhD Programme, should students wish to apply.

Each phase of the Programme includes a Formative piece of work to be reviewed, which all build and contribute to the final Summative portfolio. The final Summative Portfolio would also be submitted in the event of a student applying for conversion to PhD year 2 (as evidence of equivalence to GSA's standard PhD registration documentation at the end of the first year).

Examples of pieces which could constitute evidence include:

Phase 1: Set Up and Context Review

- Literature Review (i);
- Action Plan (ii) for research project agreed with stakeholders'/clients communities;
- Research Training Plan (iii) to address development needs.

Phase 2: Refine and Scope

- Research Proposal/Presentation (iv), including Ethics Approval and risk management assessment.

Phase 3: Research Fieldwork and analysis

- Fieldwork journal;
- Report summarising outline findings (in the form of an interim report, abstract, or equivalent (v)).

Phase 4: Dissemination and Next Steps

- Dissertation tailored for the appropriate audience (Master's thesis, final full report, exhibition etc.);
- Final presentation of documentation/presentation, or other artefact;
- Outline of opportunities for further research.

Phase 5: Reflection and Development

- Ongoing reflections from fieldwork journal;
- Reflections at final phase.

The Summative Portfolio will be agreed with the supervisor and tailored to best reflect the nature of the research project, but may include:

1. A dissertation drawing together and re-crafting as necessary Formative work undertaken through the phases of the programme. N.B. In this context, a dissertation is not just text. As per GSA guidance (see <http://www.gsa.ac.uk/study/graduate-degrees/doctoral-study/> 'Students are able to choose, according to their individual programme of research, a mode of submission that best articulates their original contribution to knowledge' appropriate to Masters level study. This may include a wide range of visual and textual elements, which may be in physical and/or digital formats.' We would envisage (as with PhDs) that at the commencement of the programme a written element would comprise of at least 50% of the submission. Students can opt to submit by dissertation of 20,000 words, or a combination of written submission of 10,000 words and accompanying artefact/s proportionally equivalent ensuring both components are closely aligned;
2. Final examination by Viva Voce comprising two Examiners and a Convener, if numbers are sufficient to conduct multiple Viva's the External Examiner will moderate via selective sampling.

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

The programme accords with the QAA statement regarding Research degrees (including Masters level education): https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance-research-degrees.pdf?sfvrsn=b424c181_2

Furthermore, the programme is aligned with the Level 11 Descriptors provided by the SCQF governing attainment during Masters level study, available here: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

16. Additional Relevant Information:

Please note that a supporting statement from the Library entitled IMPLICATIONS FOR LIBRARY 150115" is included in the Appendices.

There will be cohorts of Master of Research students undertaking study each year and as such engagement in the development of a community is encouraged. This may be the Master of Research community within GSA across a range of research topics, and also with other Master of Research students in different institutions also researching under the same theme (e.g. Digital Health Institute). The sharing of experience in these communities in a multidisciplinary environment is an additional opportunity for learning with this programme.

The Virtual Learning Environment (CANVAS) is used to support access to Open Educational Resources such as research methods training and other relevant material (e.g. podcasts, videos and journals, journal articles, books and websites) as well as to support structured interaction between the cohort of students and the Master of Research supervisory team.

Additionally, CANVAS is key in providing a central repository for the collation of links and information to external partners, organisations, and stakeholders. Students are encouraged to add to this 'pool' via the wiki tool as they develop their research agendas and that this pool of resources is continuously added to throughout the course of the year (and will be used for subsequent years).