

Trusted Contact FAQ

What is a Trusted Contact?

A Trusted Contact is someone Glasgow School of Art (GSA) can reach out to if there are concerns about a student's health or wellbeing or you are not responding to repeated contact attempts. This individual is nominated by the student and is someone they trust to manage sensitive information about them, ideally English speaking and living within the UK if possible. A Trusted or Emergency Contact may need to work with the School and statutory or emergency services (e.g. health services) to act in the student's best interests, such as in the event of the student becomes unwell.

The student should explain to their Trusted Contact about their role and explain that the School may reach out to them if we have concerns about that student's health or wellbeing. It is the student's responsibility to ensure their Trusted Contact is aware of and prepared to take on this important role.

Why do students need to have a Trusted Contact?

At Glasgow School of Art, we are a community that cares deeply about our students' wellbeing. We are dedicated to providing all that we can do support our students, which includes partnering with our students and, when appropriate, members of their support network.

To help us in this mission, we ask all students to provide contact details for their Trusted and Emergency Contacts. These contacts may be called upon if we need their assistance and support. Trusted contact details are optional and can be used in situations that may not escalate to using your Emergency Contact

The transition into and through university life can be exciting but also challenging at times. Students often arrive with a support network, whether it be family, friends, or other supporters. It can be incredibly helpful for our students to have a Trusted Contact and, when necessary, other members of their support network available to offer support and reassurance.

What do I need to do if I am a student?

Each year during enrolment, we ask students to provide the contact details for their Trusted Contact.

New students will do this along with providing Emergency Contact details; for continuing students, this involves reviewing and deciding whether the student is satisfied with their current Trusted Contact or if they would like to update these details.

Should no Trusted Contact be provided, your Emergency Contact will be utilised.

Throughout the academic year, students can contact Academic Registry (studentrecords@gsa.ac.uk) to update their Trusted Contact information at any time.

Students should make sure they have the permission of their Trusted Contact before adding or updating their details to the students records. We encourage students to share a link to these webpages so the Trusted Contact understands their role and when we might need to reach out to them.

What do I need to do if I am a Trusted Contact?

If a student has chosen you as their Trusted Contact, it means they trust you to be the person the School contacts if there are concerns about their health, safety and/or wellbeing or they are not

responding to repeated contact attempts. At GSA, our contact with Trusted Contacts will be infrequent, and we will strive to involve our students in any decisions when considering reaching out to their Trusted Contact.

If you have any concerns about a student's wellbeing and/or safety, please do not hesitate to contact the School. The School's Security team in the Reid building is available 24/7 and can be reached at 0141 353 4500. For non-urgent matters, please contact our Student Support team by emailing welfare@gsa.ac.uk or calling 0141 353 4509 .

When might Glasgow School of Art consider contacting Trusted Contacts?

We will not normally contact a student's Trusted Contact without their consent. The Trusted Contact we use will be the most recently identified person in the student record and who remains the named Trusted Contact at the time support is needed. If we need to contact this person, we will typically discuss it with the student first. Examples might include:

- When the student agrees with a student support professional that their Trusted Contact should be contacted.
- When the student asks a staff member to contact their Trusted Contact, perhaps because they are unwell or unable to make the contact themselves.

There are exceptional circumstances where we may contact a student's Trusted Contact without their consent. This will follow a risk assessment when we have had no contact or engagement with the student and have serious concerns about their safety and/or wellbeing.

Examples of such circumstances include (but are not limited to):

- Being admitted to the hospital in an emergency
- Suffering a serious physical injury, including self-harm
- Ceasing to engage with studies and/or professional support and not responding to repeated contact attempts
- Not being seen recently in accommodation/halls of residence and not responding to repeated contact attempts
- Having a serious ongoing illness and appearing to deteriorate
- Experiencing a mental health crisis with serious concerns for their welfare

Every circumstance is considered on a case-by-case basis. The School will not contact your Trusted Contact without authorisation from two members of staff; e.g. your Programme Leader/Head of Department and a member of Student Support, and typically, this will be done with the student's consent.

What is the difference between Emergency Contact and Trusted Contact?

For many students, it may be that the same person is Emergency Contact and their Trusted Contact. This won't be the case though for everyone.

A student's Emergency Contact will be used very rarely and only in the most serious of circumstances. This would usually be where there is an immediate need and where it is in the vital interests of the student. This would also likely be where Emergency Services have raised a concern and have requested this information because of serious concerns and/or an emergency situation. Providing details of an Emergency Contact is a mandatory part of the enrolment process.

A Trusted Contact may be contacted to support students prior to an emergency occurring if GSA believe their involvement could help reduce risk of harm for students. This will only happen when the School has serious concerns that students are at significant and imminent risk, and the School believe the student or others may be in danger of serious or lasting harm.

Do I have to provide a Trusted Contact?

Students are not legally obliged to provide a Trusted contact to us. However, it is in their best interest and we strongly recommend that they do so.

What if my Trusted Contact does not speak English or live in the UK?

While we would recommend that a Trusted Contact is able to speak English, we will attempt to make contact regardless.

While we would recommend that a Trusted Contact lives within the UK, we will accept all nominated Trusted Contacts.

Can I change my Trusted Contact?

It is important students take ownership of their nominated Trusted Contact. Students can change their nomination at any time by emailing Academic Registry at studentrecords@gsa.ac.uk.