

# THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

### POLICY DETAILS:

Date of approval	September 2019
Approving body	
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Date of next review	
Author	Head of Student Recruitment Head of Academic Registry
Responsible Executive Group area	
Related policies and documents	All GSA Academic Policies All GSA Student Policies Complaints Handling Procedure
Benchmarking	UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Chapter B2 Admissions & Recruitment

# THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

### 1 Scope

This Policy has been approved by the Academic Council to help staff and applicants understand and apply the correct process for the recruitment, admission and induction of students.

The policy and associated procedures comply with relevant legislation and are designed to ensure that GSA takes into account the principles outlined by the Recruitment, Selection and Admission of Students to Higher Education Review (Schwartz) (2004). The precepts of the UK QAA Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education and Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) Good Practice Guideline Admissions Policies: Guidance for Higher Education Providers.

All GSA recruitment, selection and admissions activities take into account GSA's ambitions for 2025, for example, the enhancement of the professional and continuing education programme as a route to degree level study and also diversification of the educational programmes and modes of delivery in response to the changing educational and employment landscape.

This Admissions Policy should be read in conjunction with the [Curriculum for Excellence Statement](#).

GSA recognises that there are varying models of delivery of the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) in Secondary Schools in Scotland and that the curriculum aims to provide flexibility for learners. GSA aims to be appropriately supportive to all applicants, irrespective of their particular learner journey. Key aspects of GSA policy in relation to the Curriculum for Excellence agenda are contained in GSA's published statement.

### 2 Admissions Process

#### 2.1 Governance and Monitoring

This policy is regularly reviewed by the Registrar, the Head of Student Recruitment and the Head of Academic Registry to ensure that it is operating successfully, meets GSA's overall strategic objectives and remains current and valid in the light of external circumstances, such as changes to qualification frameworks, subject benchmark statements and legislative requirements. Any amendment to this policy will be considered and approved by the appropriate GSA committee(s).

GSA recruitment, selection and admissions procedures will also be kept under regular review by School Boards of Studies, reporting annually via their Admissions Coordinators to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee (UPC) and as part of their Programme Monitoring and Annual Reporting (PMAR) process.

Members of the GSA Executive Group have overall responsibility for the management of the admissions process within their own area.

GSA Registry is responsible for the institutional application management processes in partnership with Schools.

Academic selection is the responsibility of Schools in line with agreed GSA policy.

**i. Monitoring of Statistics and Applicant Satisfaction**

Applicant and student statistics are produced and analysed as part of GSA's PMAR process. Application rates are monitored in relation to equal opportunity key performance indicators, including geographic and demographic profiles.

Registry and Marketing and Communications also conduct regular surveys of applicants to solicit views on a range of recruitment and admissions processes. This will include a survey of Open Day participants.

**ii. Admissions Targets**

GSA's Executive Group sets optimum admissions targets to sustain its funding and therefore the quality of the education it provides. GSA's Directorate, in consultation with Heads of Schools and the Head of Research, determines targets that are incorporated into the Institutional Strategic Plan for submission to the Scottish Funding Council.

Heads of Schools are responsible for recruiting to target and, through the Admissions Target Group, determine the number of offers to be made relative to the number of places available.

The Admissions Target Group has a monitoring role in relation to admissions targets and is responsible for highlighting any potential problems to GSA's Executive Group.

**iii. Promotional Material**

Marketing and Communication is responsible for developing and delivering an institutional strategy for home and overseas recruitment in partnership with Schools and aligning with GSA's strategies and priorities. The provision of information to allow applicants to make informed choices available on GSA's website and other appropriate and available formats.

**iv. Outreach**

GSA is committed to an annual programme of external School Liaison activity and Widening Access and Participation activities with a range of school, college and community partners. This is based within Open Studio and links to each of the Board of Studies to ensure a strategic and operational link across GSA. Targets and objectives are agreed with the Scottish Funding Council set out within the GSA Outcome Agreement.

**2.2 Entrance Requirements, Selection Criteria and Timescales**

**i. Assessment of applicant**

All applications to undergraduate full time study will be made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) at <http://www.ucas.ac.uk/> with the exception of

recognised partnership agreements. Guidance on how to apply will include information on the ways in which the desired characteristics might be demonstrated by the applicant.

Applicants have responsibility for ensuring that information contained in their admissions application is accurate at the point of submission and that any supporting documents such as transcripts are genuine. GSA will not admit applicants where information is believed to be fraudulent or plagiarised. GSA reserves the right to reject or cancel an application under these circumstances and may terminate a student's enrolment if he/she is found at a later stage to have submitted a fraudulent or plagiarised application to GSA.

Prospective students are assessed on the basis of their academic and creative potential, creative ability, academic achievement, motivation and artistic and professional career goals. This is normally carried out by way of portfolio assessment and interview with full details and guidance on how the desired characteristics might be demonstrated by the applicant being provided prior to either a portfolio upload or interview.

From receipt Registry aims to process all applications and forward to admissions selectors for their consideration within 48 hours. Application turnaround times within departments will vary, depending on the number of applications and the process adopted for decision making, for example the operation of a gathered field. GSA aims to make a decision on all appropriate UCAS applications by 31 March.

GSA is committed to ensuring that any interaction with an applicant is conducted in a professional, courteous and respectful manner and it expects that any communication from an applicant is conducted in the same way.

Staff induction and training is compulsory for all GSA staff involved in admissions selection.

GSA staff membership of the UCAS Scottish Standing Group and the Scottish Universities Admissions Practitioner Group ensures that GSA staff involved in admissions are kept informed of admissions sector developments. Attendance at UCAS and Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) workshops and seminars is encouraged.

Admissions tutors apply common criteria to evaluate the ability of applicants to fulfil the objectives of Programme Specification requirements, using the evidence of:

- school , college and university qualifications
- supporting visual material (where applicable, see also 2.2.v)
- personal statement
- references
- an interview where applicable

Applicants should be made aware that, for programmes leading to professional qualifications or accreditation, the relevant professional body may specify additional entry requirements.

The indicative requirements for programmes are outlined in the appropriate and available publication formats. The PMAR process will reflect on the continued appropriateness of entry requirements when it reviews the admissions cycle. Amendments to entry requirements

should be recommended by the Board of Studies to UPC which will advise on whether the suggested amendments comply with sector best practice. Any changes to published entry requirements require the approval of GSA's Academic Council.

Admissions and selection criteria will be applied consistently throughout the admissions cycle, including offers made at overseas recruitment events and during clearing.

Information on applying to Postgraduate Programmes is available from the GSA website and Academic Registry. For research applicants, consideration will also be given to whether the proposed programme of work can be completed in the designated timescale and whether appropriate supervision can be provided and maintained. The application process for research degrees is set out in full on the GSA website. Applicants may also seek additional oral guidance from the Postgraduate Research -Coordinator. All applicants are encouraged to send a draft application for feedback prior to final submission and may discuss their application in person or by telephone call.

UCAS Clearing vacancy information is published on the GSA website following the admissions confirmation period. This information includes vacancy information, guidance on applicant eligibility for those applying through clearing, information required by GSA to make a decision, and details of the process the application will follow when received. GSA programmes available through clearing are also listed on the UCAS website.

Requests for information on applications to GSA will only be shared with written permission from the applicant.

## **ii. Tuition Fee Status**

Tuition fees are based on the applicant's fee status. All applicants are required to self-assess their residential category as part of their application. In most cases the provisional residential category will enable GSA to make the final decision on the fee status of an applicant. If GSA considers an applicant's fee status to be unclear from the information provided in the application, the applicant will be asked for further information. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide any additional information required in a timely and accurate manner. Final decisions on applications cannot be made until the fee status is set. Any incorrect or incomplete information may delay decision making and may affect the opportunity for securing a place.

## **iii. Applications from International Students**

Qualification Equivalencies:

Using a variety of sources – UKNARIC; UCAS; In-country visits; Local qualification authorities; Other relevant sources – GSA will seek to establish a suitable level of qualifications and grade required for each of its International fee-paying countries, using the following principle:

- The qualification is deemed to provide an adequate academic input for the point of entry sought by the candidate such that the candidate would have a reasonable expectation of success in achieving the learning outcomes of the programme.

In countries where the candidate is competing for a funded-place, the following principle is used:

- The qualification and grades are deemed of equal challenge to obtain as the standard admission requirement for Scottish students (currently ABBB at Scottish Higher for UG students)

These equivalencies are made available, through Academic Registry or the International Office, to Admissions Tutors for use in the review of applications.

Portfolio Equivalencies:

The majority of GSA's programmes require the submission of a portfolio – normally as digital photographs of the originals. This is used in support of the candidate's application for admission and will be viewed with reference to:

- The candidate's study environment
- Cultural norms in the production of work from the candidate's home country

The principle regarding the submission of portfolio work by international candidates will be the same as that used in assessing their academic qualifications.

International students who require a visa to study in the UK should visit <http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/>

It is essential that a student is able to understand and to communicate in both written and spoken English at a sufficient standard to follow the chosen programme. Applicants whose first language is not English are required to demonstrate a minimum level of competence prior to commencing a programme. Further information can be found on the GSA website under individual programme entry requirements.

#### **iv. Role of Supporting Visual Material**

For the majority of the School's undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes, the supporting visual material is a key component in the selection criteria. Supporting Visual Material is individually assessed against common criteria.

Requirements of Supporting Visual Material content and presentation should be clearly communicated and appropriate for all applicants, details are available from Programme Leaders and the GSA website.

#### **v. Interview**

Interviews on campus will normally be conducted by a minimum of two appropriately trained staff. Selection panels will expect students at interview to clarify issues arising from their portfolio of work and to demonstrate that they have investigated the content and suitability of the programme to which they are applying.

Exceptional work from undergraduate applicants may result in the offer of a place without an interview, where the evidence provided sufficient information on which to make an informed judgement.

International applicants and those living or working outside the UK on a temporary basis (e.g. on a gap year) may not be required to attend for interview in person. These candidates will normally be required to take part in a telephone/online or in some cases an off campus interview and can expect to be given advanced notice of the timing and format.

### **2.3 *Alternative Routes to Admission***

GSA recognises that applicants to its programmes come from a wide variety of social, educational and cultural backgrounds. In assessing applicants GSA may take a number of factors into consideration, including educational and social context. The following alternative routes to admission are also available:

#### **i. *Recognition of Prior Learning***

##### *Introduction*

The Recognition of Prior Learning Policy relates to applications for admission to undergraduate programmes by those who do not have the published conventional qualifications for admission, who wish to gain recognition for formal or informal study undertaken elsewhere and, in some cases, contextual information. The principles of the policy are clearly signposted for the benefit of applicants on GSA's website.

##### *Making Applications*

Responsibility rests with the applicant to make a claim for recognition of prior learning and to support it with documentary evidence. The Head of Student Recruitment or the Head of Academic Registry can provide initial advice to Admissions Coordinators on the nature of the documentation required.

The recognition of prior learning concerns the evaluation of an educational or professional qualification achieved by an applicant prior to their application that is not listed in the published entry requirements or equivalency tables.

Applicants seeking recognition of prior certificated learning must present evidence in the form of an original certificate, transcript or similar document and, where relevant, must also present details of the syllabus and form of assessment for a formally assessed programme of study that they have completed, in whole or in part.

Assessment of recognition of prior certificated learning will be made by programme leaders in consultation with the Head of Student Recruitment and the Head of Academic Registry.

The recognition of prior experiential learning describes the process that takes place when an applicant wishes to have other work or life experiences taken into account in lieu of formal study, together with relevant contextual information.

Applicants seeking recognition of prior experiential learning are required to provide evidence that will enable tutors and Admissions Coordinators to make informed judgements about the level of learning, knowledge and skills that they have acquired through life experience, employment, work experience or study that is not formally recognised. The documentation shall normally include:

- a statement describing and providing evidence of the learning achieved and experience acquired in the life/work/employment situation;
- written references testifying to the applicant's achievement and learning, from people such as line managers, colleagues.

#### *Considering applications*

All applications shall be evaluated in the first instance in accordance with the criteria specified in the GSA's published procedures and shall, in addition, consider the evidence of the applicant's previous study or experience;

- whether the learning and achievement is appropriate for entry to higher education, relevant to the GSA programme and point of entry sought;
- in respect of applications for entry to year 2 or year 3 on the basis of recognition of prior certificated learning, whether the learning outcomes of the previous learning are similar to those of the GSA programme;

In considering applications for admission on the basis of prior experiential learning, Admissions Tutors will normally hold an interview and also may set a practical or written assignment to gauge an applicant's potential. Further information may be sought from applicants, if tutors and Admissions Coordinators are unable to make a judgement using these measures.

Applicant offers with recognition of prior experiential learning shall be accompanied by a proforma completed by the relevant Admissions Tutor. Programme Leaders will formally report these to the Boards of Studies. This will also be reported to the Head of Registry, who shall inform applicants of whether or not they have been successful, using the normal UCAS and related process.

Without naming students, Programme Leaders will be asked to comment on their Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning students in their Annual Programme Report.

#### **ii. Advanced Point of Entry**

Applicants who can demonstrate that they have already fulfilled some of the progression and attainment requirements of the programme elsewhere and that there is a reasonable



expectation that they could successfully complete the programme at GSA are eligible to apply for an advanced point of entry.

**iii. Gap year and deferred offers**

GSA is happy to consider, at the discretion of Programme Leaders, a limited number of applications from candidates who wish to take a year out between leaving school or college and commencing at GSA or who wish to defer their application. A deferral will only be granted for a maximum of one year.

**iv. Re-admission to GSA**

A student who elects to leave the programme prior to completion of the award for which they have enrolled and accepts an award appropriate to the part of the programme which has been successfully completed (e.g. Cert HE, Dip HE etc), shall be entitled to seek readmission to the programme at a later date. This will be no later than 3 years following their date of withdrawal or graduation.

The terms of any re-admission shall be at the discretion of the Programme Leaders, and specifically shall take into account any changes in the content of the programme which have been made since the applicant's previous attendance.

Where such an applicant is re-admitted and subsequently satisfies the requirements for the higher level of award in the programme concerned, they shall be eligible to receive the award only on agreeing to relinquish the lower level award previously accepted.

**v. Non-graduating students**

GSA has a number of programmes for non-graduating students: Visiting Research Students; Exchange Students and Study Abroad Students. GSA only accepts endorsed applications for Incoming Exchange Students from established exchange partners. There are established protocols for the consideration of all applications from non-graduating students. For visiting and exchange students information on the application process, entry requirements and selection criteria is published by the International Office (entry does not lead to an award of the University of Glasgow).

**3 Equality of Opportunity**

**3.1 *Applicants with Disabilities and Additional Needs***

GSA is committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all of its students and actively encourages potential students who may be disabled or have an additional need to make an application to study here. The School continues to ensure that disabled students meet their full academic potential and are not subject to unlawful discrimination during the admissions process or in their subsequent time as students at GSA by reason of being disabled or having an additional need.

Applicants should ensure that they have sufficient information about the programme to which they are making an application and the support available to enable them to make an informed decision

about the acceptability of a programme to them. Programme requirements vary and whilst every effort will be made to accommodate individual needs, in exceptional circumstances it may not be possible to make reasonable adjustments to enable a programme to be accessed.

### **3.2 Equality**

All applications are assessed in accordance with the GSA's equality commitments and obligations and in line with the latest professional guidance. Its robust and equitable admissions procedure takes account of all relevant academic and personal circumstances as outlined in applications submitted to UCAS or direct to GSA.

## **4 Access and Inclusion**

GSA normally takes a holistic or contextualised approach to applications, ensuring that the educational and social context is taken into consideration during the application process. This approach is supported by evidence that educational and social context may have adversely affected academic achievement or the quality of e-portfolio submissions. This will include applications from a number of Scotland's most deprived neighbourhoods, protected characteristic groups, and applications from those who have time spent in Local Authority care. We also consider applications from those who have participated in Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP), Access to Creative Education in Scotland (ACES) Project and similar targeted outreach activities.

## **5 Offers**

Offers will be made in accordance with the entry requirements published on the GSA website. Admissions publications are accurate at the time of going to press, but occasionally changes have to be made after the publication date.

For full time undergraduate programmes, the formal offer and acceptance process is administered by UCAS, followed by an offer issued electronically by Registry (for joint programmes other arrangements may apply). GSA's offer will provide links on information on the following:

- How accept or decline the offer
- How to request a deferral of the offer
- The action to take if they do not meet the conditions specified in the offer
- Information on enrolment, induction, residential accommodation, fees, financial support available
- Special arrangements for international students
- Special arrangements for students with disabilities
- UK Visa and Immigration requirements

All applicants to a particular programme are informed at the earliest opportunity of any significant changes to that programme between the offer of a place and when enrolment is completed. For example, if a programme has not met its admissions target and therefore won't be offered that session, Registry would normally inform applicants within five days of the decision being notified to Registry and every effort would be made to advise them of the options within GSA available in the circumstances.

GSA may decide to make an offer for an alternative programme. In this situation GSA will communicate this information to the applicant, either in writing or through UCAS Track (for undergraduate applicants). The applicant will then confirm if they wish to accept the offer for the alternative programme.

[Academic Policies](#) are published on the GSA's website.

### **5.1 *Recording decisions***

Admissions tutors are required to use the institutional electronic pro-forma to record admissions decisions against selection criteria: the supporting visual material, the personal statement, the applicant's academic achievement, the personal references, the interview (where applicable) and, in some cases, a portfolio commentary.

All final decisions will be lodged with Registry and will be treated as confidential.

## **6 Programmes Run In Collaboration with Other Institutions**

A number of GSA programmes are operated in collaboration with other institutions or organisations. The admissions processes for these collaborations are published on the GSA website.

## **7 *Feedback to Unsuccessful Applicants***

GSA aims to provide informative feedback that is helpful to all applicants; however it may not always be possible to provide highly specific or tailored advice. GSA will only provide feedback to a third party, for example, parent, guardian, advisor or agent, upon receipt of written consent of the applicant. On request, Registry provides UCAS applicants with feedback in the form of GSA's scoring of an application.

## **8. Child Protection/Under 18**

Applicants have the right to appeal on decisions made on their application. Information on the eligibility criteria and how to submit an appeal is available in the [GSA Appeal Procedure for Applicants](#) published on the GSA website.

All enquiries relating to admissions appeals should, in the first instance, be referred to the Head of Academic Registry at The Glasgow School of Art, 167 Renfrew Street, Glasgow, G3 6RQ.

Please note that the conditions listed below are in conjunction with GSA's [Child Protection Policy](#) and applies to students entering full degree programmes at GSA.

- GSA is an adult environment where students are treated as independent and mature individuals. Students at GSA are normally aged 18 years or above. However, GSA occasionally admits students who are under the age of 18 years at the start of their programme of study. For the majority of these students, that status will be for a limited time period, as they will usually turn 18 in the course of their first year.

- Applications from individuals who will be under the age of 18 at the point of registration will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and GSA may require that admission be subject to the application of specific entry criteria and/or conditions. The signing of the GSA's [Parental Consent Form](#) for the Admission of Students under the Age of 18 Years will be required as a condition of any offer of admission of any student under 18
- No applicant under the age of 18 will be admitted to GSA until the [Parental Consent Form](#) has been signed by both the student and their parents/guardians, returned, and a risk assessment commenced (to include accommodation / departmental support / student support).
- No applicant under the age of 18 will be sponsored by GSA, for a student visa, until the [Parental Consent Form](#) has been signed by both the student and their parents/guardians, returned, and a risk assessment commenced (to include accommodation / departmental support / student support).

## 9. Appeals

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## 10. Complaints

From August 2013, GSA implemented the Complaints Handling Procedure issued by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The Complaints Handling procedure is available on the GSA website.

All complaints must be submitted to [Complaints@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:Complaints@gsa.ac.uk) using GSA's [Complaints Handling Procedure](#) which is available on the GSA website.