Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Independent Research Project - Intermediate
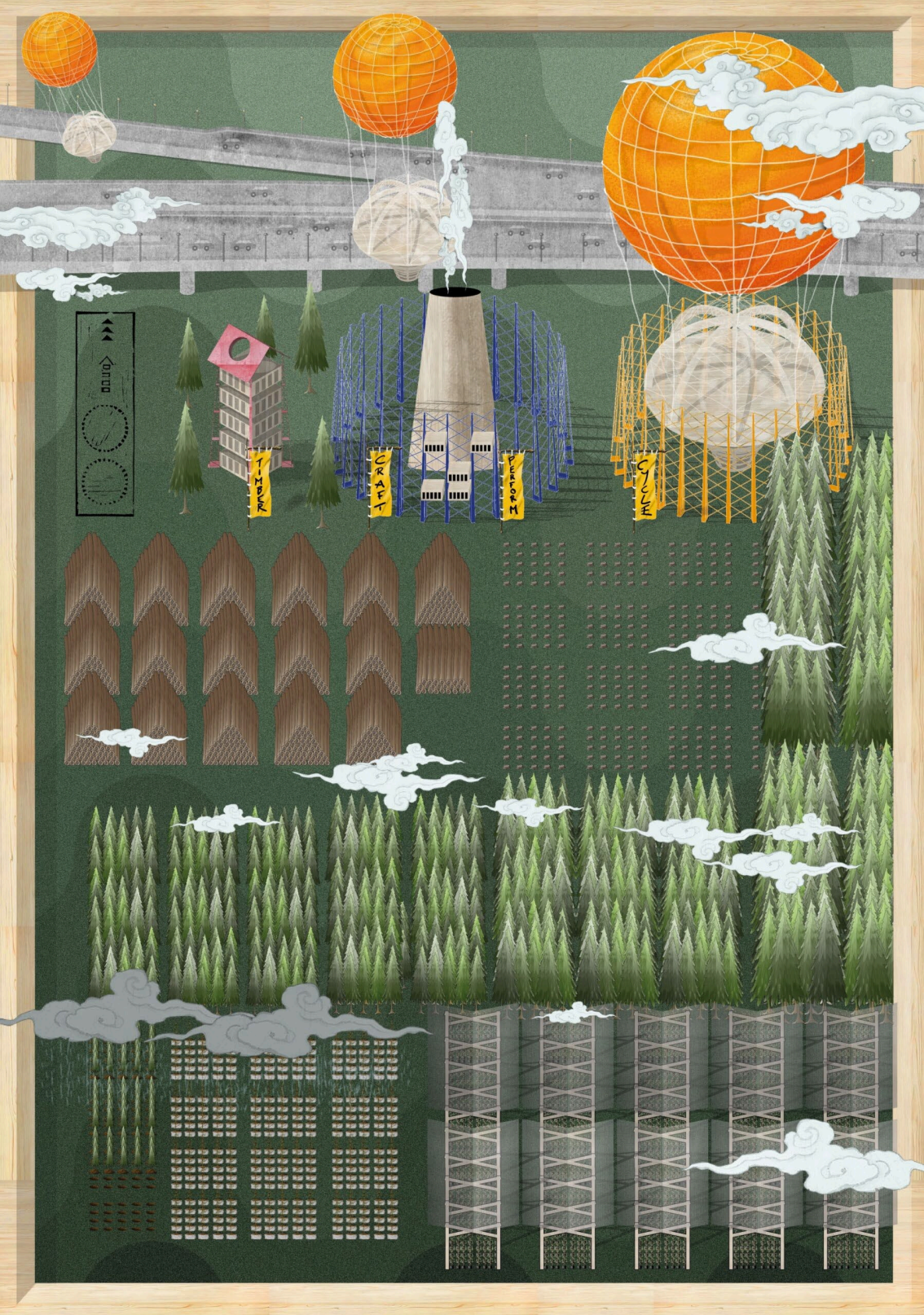
Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
		2025-26

Course Title	Independent Research Project - Intermediate
Course Contact	Isabel Deakin

Credits	20
SCQF Level	11
When Taught	Semester 2

Associated Programmes	Master of Architectural Studies
Lead School	Mackintosh School of Architecture
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	Programme Approval March 2024

Course Introduction

The Independent Research Project- Intermediate Course is the second course supporting the student's Independent Research Project, which is delivered across PGT Stages 1, 2 and 3 through three interrelated courses.

This course is designed to give students the skills to develop, evaluate, test and refine their individual proposal established in Semester 1 in an area relating to their Specialist Pathway, and to provide evidence of the feasibility of their proposal through a series of strategic and detailed design studies, research methodologies and investigations.

The investigative studies and design strategies undertaken in Semester 1 offer a foundation for this development and testing of a proposed output in Semester 2.

As this is a supervised independent research project, students are expected to operate with professionalism, self-direction and manage their own time.

Students are taught through a combination of group and individual tutorials, visits, talks and skills workshops. Through formative feedback, peer sessions and interim and final reviews, students apply their learning on the course across the semester.

Throughout this course students continue to develop and advance their own research interest and test outputs in anticipation of the realisation and communication of their Independent Research Project- Advanced in Semester 3.

Course Aims

The aims of the course are to:

professionalism: facilitate a student's command of knowledge of professional ethics in terms of collaborative, inclusive, sustainable and safe design principles to refine a response to a research-based design problem and evidence this through a developed independent design led research output within their specialist pathway

design/create: facilitate a student's command of a creative design process in the production of a developed independent design led research output within their specialist pathway

research: facilitate a student's command of research skills to refine a response to a research-based design problem and evidence this through a developed independent design led research output within their specialist pathway

communication: facilitate a student's command of the integration of analogue and digital media to visually and verbally communicate structured thinking, to a research-based design problem and a developed independent design led research within their specialist pathway

skills: facilitate a student's command of critical reflection, communication and a structured methodology, with analogue and digital tools, to refine a response to a research-based design problem and a developed independent design led research output within their specialist pathway

knowledge: facilitate a student's command of the creative use of advanced architectural theories, concepts, and techniques to address social, ethical and climate change challenges to refine a response to a research-based design problem and a developed independent design led research within their specialist pathway

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the Course students will be able to **appraise, integrate and articulate:**

professionalism: knowledge of professional ethics in terms of collaborative, inclusive, sustainable and safe design principles to refine a response to a research-based design problem evidenced through a developed independent design led research output within their specialist pathway

design/create: a creative design process to refine a response to a research-based design problem and evidence this through a developed independent design led research output within their specialist pathway

research: enhanced research skills to refine a research question evidenced through a developed independent design led research output within their specialist pathway

communication: the integration of analogue and digital media to visually and verbally communicate structured thinking to refine a response to a research-based design problem evidenced through a developed independent design led research output within their specialist pathway

skills: critical reflection, communication and a structured methodology, with digital and analogue tools, to refine a response to a research-based design problem evidenced through a developed independent design led research output within their specialist pathway

knowledge: the creative use of advanced architectural theories, concepts, and techniques to address social, ethical and climate change challenges to refine a response to a research-based design problem evidenced through a developed independent design led research output within their specialist pathway

Indicative Content

The Independent Research Project Intermediate course is designed to give students the opportunity to refine their individual architectural interests and builds on the work undertaken in PGT Stage 1, in the context of their chosen Pathway. Students prepare an illustrated Design Report which evidences the response to this self-directed research-based design problem through developed design, testing, research and analysis.

During the course students will be supported to:

- Refine their own research interest and research question
- Refine and develop their literature review
- Develop responses to their research-based design problem with consideration to the social, cultural, environmental and political factors as appropriate to their specialist Pathway
- Produce a developed response to their research-based design problem related to their specialist Pathway
- Evidence their chosen methodology and the iterative process used to analyse their research and developed response
- Critically reflect and draw conclusions from their outputs to facilitate the Independent Research Project- Advanced in PGT Stage 3

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

Pedagogy:
Studio is both a learning space and a form of reflective practice where knowledge, skills and attributes are transformed into design competencies. Integration of the six learning domains enables design work to be grounded in specialist knowledge relating to the student's chosen Pathway and enacted through their independent research project. The course is intended to develop students' mastery of iterative and reflective design practices while deploying their critical, ethical and professional position. Student learning is developed through the course, supported by staff and student field trips, which enable students to address real-world issues in the context of specific communities and places. Groupwork and collaboration with other Pathways are core to the student learning experience, enabling students to work productively with others while contextualising the role of the architect in relation to other disciplines and practices. Specialist Pathway Leaders along with visiting guests offer students insights into the constantly changing world of architectural practice. Independent learning is fostered throughout the year.

Delivery:
The course is delivered through regular studio sessions, using a range of learning and teaching activities, including individual and group tutorials, design reviews, seminars, workshops and lectures by staff and invited guests. Design forums offer the opportunity for critical discourse around issues raised by the studio project, enabling staff and students to enter into a dialogue around contemporary architectural issues. A hybrid approach to learning through in-person sessions and on-line support offers students access to flexible and inclusive learning. Private study consists of both staff-directed study and independent student- directed study.

Timetable:
Studio tutorials are delivered on a weekly basis either in groups or individually with pin-up tutorials and design reviews at set points throughout the session concluding with a design forum at the end of the project.

Canvas:

The virtual learning environment tool Canvas is used for the dissemination, discussion, and access to relevant course information, and to signpost students to other relevant teaching and learning platforms used by GSA.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
20	200

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods
Formative activities are provided during studio courses, offering students the opportunity to obtain ongoing staff and peer feedback through discussion and review in relation to the course. As such Formative feedback provided throughout the course fosters reflective learning while supporting the Summative graded assessment and feedback process, which generally happens at the end of the course.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements
Summative assessment is undertaken at the end of the course and is designed and delivered to support student learning through evaluation of the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for each course, aligned with the professional competencies required for architectural practice. Summative assessment in studio courses is undertaken through coursework assignments in the form of studio design projects. Coursework assignment submissions involve visual and text-based submissions utilising both digital and physical tools and formats. Written feedback is provided on all summative assessments. All submissions will be assessed and moderated in line with the GSA Code of Assessment. Reassessment opportunities where a student has not passed the course are outlined in the GSA Code of Assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Written Design Report Students are required to submit an illustrated Design Report (3000 words) including a developed design led research output and contextual research supported by a bibliography	100	Semester 2 Week 12

Exchange/Study Abroad	
Can this course be taken by Exchange/Study Abroad students?	No
Are all the students on the course taught wholly by distance learning?	No
Does this course represent a work placement or a year of study abroad?	No
Is this course collaborative with any other institutions?	No
If yes, then please provide the names of the other teaching institutions	

Reading and On-line Resources
Supporting the course, an indicative reading and on-line resource list is accessible via Resource Lists. This list will be reviewed and updated annually. Supervisors, tutors and peers will provide further recommendations appropriate to student's chosen research subject.