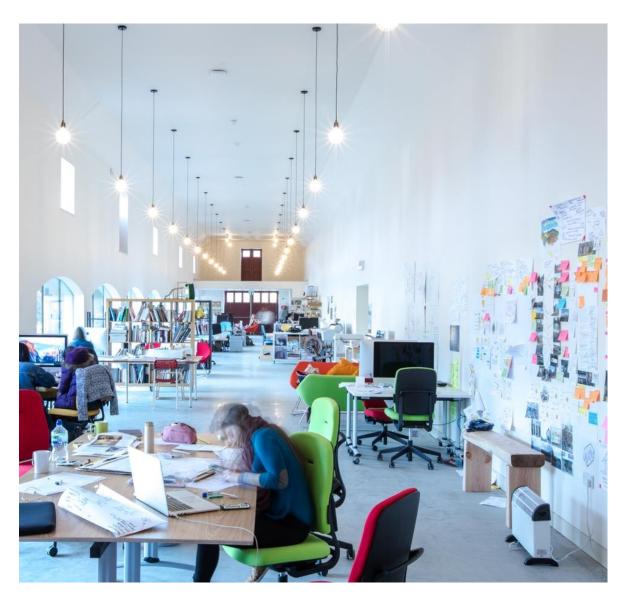**Glasgow School of Art Programme Specification**
Master of Design in Design Innovation & Circular Economy
Master of Design in Design Innovation & Citizenship
Master of Design in Design Innovation & Environmental Design
Master of Design in Design Innovation & Interaction Design
Master of Design in Design Innovation & Service Design
Master of Design in Design Innovation & Transformation Design

Studio space at Highlands and Islands Campus

1. Programme Details	
Programme Title	Master of Design in Design Innovation & Circular Economy Master of Design in Design Innovation & Citizenship Master of Design in Design Innovation & Environmental Design Master of Design in Design Innovation & Interaction Design Master of Design in Design Innovation & Service Design Master of Design in Design Innovation & Transformation Design
School	School of Innovation and Technology
Programme Leader	Dr Iain Reid, Dr. Albert Fuster, Ruth Cochrane
Award to be Conferred	Master of Design in Design Innovation & Circular Economy Master of Design in Design Innovation & Citizenship Master of Design in Design Innovation & Environmental Design Master of Design in Design Innovation & Interaction Design Master of Design in Design Innovation & Service Design Master of Design in Design Innovation & Transformation Design
Exit Awards	Stage 1: PG Cert in: Design Innovation & Circular Economy Design Innovation & Citizenship Design Innovation & Environmental Design Design Innovation & Interaction Design Design Innovation & Service Design Design Innovation & Transformation Design Stage 2: Diploma in: Design Innovation & Circular Economy Design Innovation & Citizenship Design Innovation & Environmental Design Design Innovation & Interaction Design Design Innovation & Service Design Design Innovation & Transformation Design Stage 3: Masters of Design in: Design Innovation & Circular Economy Design Innovation & Citizenship Design Innovation & Environmental Design Design Innovation & Interaction Design Design Innovation & Service Design Design Innovation & Transformation Design

SCQF Level	11
Credits	180
Mode of Study	Full-time
HECOS Code	All MDes in Design Innovation Awards 100048 / 101307 / 100962 / 100793

Academic Session	2025-26
Date of Approval	Academic Council March 2025

Awarding Institution	University of Glasgow
Teaching Institutions	Glasgow School of Art
Campus	Glasgow Campus and Highlands and Islands Campus
Lead School/Board of Studies	School of Innovation and Technology
Other Schools/Board of Studies	N/A
Programme Accredited By (PSRBs)	N/A

2. Entry Qualifications	
Highers	N/A
A Levels	N/A
Other	An undergraduate Degree with minimum Honours degree or equivalent in any subject area or equivalent professional practice. Additional entry requirements: Applicants are normally required to submit a portfolio of work, a video supporting their application, along with satisfactory academic references and a personal statement as parts of their applications. Applicants may also be required to attend an interview as part of their admissions assessment.
English Language Requirements	Applicants who are not a national of, nor have obtained a degree in one of the countries on the approved UKVI exemption list or those who require a Student Visa, will need to provide evidence of their English language ability. GSA's preferred test is the IELTS for UKVI (Academic) test taken at a UKVI approved test centre. GSA require all students, who require a student visa, to meet the following requirements to gain entry: IELTS for UKVI Academic with an overall score of 6.5 with a minimum of 6 in all components; An alternative Accepted English Language Test which can be found on the Postgraduate 'How to Apply' page of the GSA website.

3. Programme Introduction

The Master of Design (M.Des) in Design Innovation programme provides an academic framework for postgraduate students to engage with the craft of people and planet-led and co-created innovation in design practice across a variety of fields and in widely differentiated social, economic, environmental, and technological contexts. The programme responds to the changed context within which design practice occurs in the 21st century; a context within which the discipline-based skills of the product designer, visual communicator or textile designer, for example, must sit alongside the working practices and expertise of a professionally diverse and often globally-dispersed workforce.

Students on the Design Innovation programmes (suite of named awards) will become trans-disciplinary practitioners who can respond in a reflective and meaningful manner to the demands, constraints and opportunities of a variety of contexts within which design innovation practice occurs (from local communities to multi-national corporations).

The programme encourages students to identify contexts in which the complexity of contemporary life threatens to overwhelm any existing systems, services or design responses, and deploy design innovation strategies and creative thinking to pioneer collaborative and people and planet-led proposals of artefacts, services, strategies, and/or experiences that respond to the aspirations of diverse stakeholders. This requires that contemporary design innovation practitioners become adept in conceiving, conceptualising and communicating complex problems, and in identifying the social and contextual dimensions of the interactions between people, planet, materials and technology, and the opportunities afforded by such engagements.

The M.Des in Design Innovation places a strong emphasis on the interplay between theory and practice, and aims to provide the resources and expertise to equip students with the requisite research skills and methods for stimulating design-led innovation through a combination of taught workshops, tutorials, lecture and seminar-based sessions, and autonomous design innovation and research projects. Students are expected to engage in high level self-directed learning, research and independent critical reflection which are central to the development of a final research project/thesis.

Students are asked to locate their developing professional and personal practice within a specialist pathway (ex: Service Design, Interaction Design, etc.) that responds to the circumstances and challenges offered by contemporary society, and contribute to transforming the experience of those who utilise, interact with or depend upon designed artefacts, services, strategies, and/or experiences.

The programme enables students to work in 'real world' complex contexts through collaborative partnerships with academic, civic and industry partners, preparing our students for employability. Graduates from this programme are equipped to develop strategic, interdisciplinary and evidence-led work across a variety of fields. The practice of Innovation is in constant change responding to the complexity of 21st century life, making it difficult to limit our graduates destinations to a list of industry sectors. However, there are possible future directions our students can pursue: entry into work as an 'in house' designer within organisations across public, private and third sectors, entry into a professional design consultancy environment in the private and public sectors; work as an independent designer/consultant; or further academic study by research. Opportunities for further research (MRes, PhD) 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 programme.

Our Campuses
The MDes programms are delivered across two campuses, one in Glasgow and one in Forres (Highlands), with each programme having a campus-specific delivery.

Haldane Campus, Glasgow:
The Haldane Building is a recently refurbished facility containing open-plan studio spaces, staff rooms and meeting areas that form the heart of The Innovation School. Originally constructed in 1897, it has a rich history as a drill hall used by several infantry battalions prior to its conversion for academic use in 1967. The building is located within the Garnethill Campus in Glasgow city centre, close to amenities including The Glasgow School of Art's Reid Building and library. The programmes delivered at Haldane Campus, Glasgow, are:
- Master of Design in Design Innovation & Service Design
- Master of Design in Design Innovation & Transformation Design
- Master of Design in Design Innovation & Citizenship

Highlands and Islands Campus, Forres
GSA's Highlands and Islands Campus, 170 miles from Glasgow. The campus occupies a stunning cluster of heritage-listed buildings near the town of Forres which is home to 12,000 people.
The Italianate buildings, constructed in the 1830s on the Altyre Estate, have been converted into a world-class creative campus, providing inspiring studio, workshop and exhibition spaces, as well as state of the art areas for research, teaching, prototyping and flexible lab work.
The campus is a centre for research and postgraduate study, where dedicated staff deliver Masters and PhD programmes that engage with complex issues facing the region and beyond. Learning opportunities are supported by digital and remote teaching methods. Students benefit from proximity to researchers based in the [Digital Health & Care Innovation Centre (DHI Scotland)](#).
The programmes delivered at the Highlands and islands Campus, Forres, are:
- Master of Design in Design Innovation & Circular Economy
- Master of Design in Design Innovation & Environmental Design
- Master of Design in Design Innovation & Interaction Design

4. Programme Aims

The aims of the programme are to develop design innovation graduates to be able to:

1. Engage with the theoretical underpinnings, language, and contextual and contemporary evolution of design innovation practices and techniques to identify and explore emerging areas of (specialist) practice in response to the opportunities, demands and constraints of social, economic, environmental and technological developments in 21st century life.

2. Use and adapt research methodologies, methods and specialist approaches related to the field of design innovation to explore a variety of contexts and interactions that contribute to the development of people and planet-led artefacts, services, strategies, policies, and/or experiences.

3. Explore and expand their practice to a high level of technical and creative ability within individual and collaborative research projects that are thought-provoking, people and planet-led and evidence-driven.

4. Operate in contemporary collaborative working environments, utilising and bridging the skills and knowledge of others and responding in a reflective, ethical and meaningful manner to the demands, constraints and opportunities afforded by the contexts within which design innovation practice occurs.

5. Develop, bridge, and articulate project processes, outcomes, knowledge and impact to/with a variety of project actors and audiences through a practical research project and/or thesis submission.

5. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

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

1. Critically evaluate and apply contemporary research methods, methodologies and practices within the field of design innovation.

2. Design, deliver and evaluate individual and group design innovation projects to generate proposals, opportunities and challenges within a given context.

3. Apply and advance creative and collaborative design-led innovation methods and specialist approaches to explore and respond to identified project opportunities, demands, and constraints within a given context.

4. Critically reflect on project processes and outcomes in relation to a specialist field (such as Service Design), including ethical and collaborative practices within a given context.

5. Communicate to professional standards adequate to different audiences, a personal research process and outcome within the context of design innovation professional practice.

6. Description of Learning and Teaching Approaches

In this programme the modes of learning and teaching are predominantly in-person with a blended approach and online delivery of resources at key points of the programme to ensure a prompt response to unexpected life/world events, a wider access to international speakers and scholars, and bridge geographically distanced campuses. Examples of online delivery include some of the offerings in the suite of Elective Courses provided by GSA in Stage 2. Electives are normally offered to all GSA Postgraduate taught students with some exceptions where electives are delivered only in person on a specific campus or limited to students within a specific School. The offer is reviewed yearly with a clear aim to update contents, to be open to cutting-edge topics, and to promote a wide range of learning opportunities for the students.

An emphasis on studio-based learning and teaching is supported by lectures, seminars, workshops, tutorials, and guest speakers who will bring added expertise and insights into leading-edge research, and industry practices related to design innovation. Curricular devices and activities that directly contribute to student employability include live projects and guest speakers. Live projects are course-based practical projects with external partners and/or thematic experts allowing students to gain a proximity with current professional standards and practices associated with design innovation. Visiting lecturers, guests from industry and research staff offer students access to, and an understanding of, relevant contemporary practice, research and commercial context. Guests often include professionals from our global alumni community to aid students in developing their own professional practice and prepare for employment, contributing with expert knowledge

to their courses through the sharing of knowledge, professional paths, case studies, projects, and where practical and applicable will offer critical input to ongoing project work.

Throughout the programme, 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.

Students will have access to studio facilities and technical facilities required to support their studies and in the particular case of our Highlands and Islands Campus, these facilities will replicate those available in Glasgow as closely as is reasonably possible (and where replication is not possible additional access/resource/support will be provided to ensure parity of experience is provided), with extended opening hours at appropriate times of year.

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

A distinctive mark of these programmes is the Winter School. The Winter School is an extracurricular course, that gives students the opportunity to meet with other students and faculty from international partner institutions such as Köln International School of Design, University of Central Asia in Kyrgyzstan, or Elisava Barcelona. Students are promoted to engage in discussions through a series of talks and collaborative briefs, and develop a studio-based design-led innovation outcome. The briefs for the Winter School project vary from year to year with the aim of connecting to relevant and timely themes.

7. Description of Assessment Methods

Assessment is undertaken through both formative and summative tasks. Each course comprises both formative review and summative assessment. The assessment vehicles vary by course, but would encompass essays, presentations and crits, interim reviews, project work and portfolio for example.

Formative assessment offers students the opportunity to obtain ongoing tutor and peer feedback through ongoing formative activities, and the development of work in preparation for summative submissions. Engagement with formative assessment is encouraged as a key learning moment.

All summative assessments are marked and graded in line with GSA's Code of Assessment. Summative assessment tasks include presentations, portfolio, written work and practice focused outputs related to each course. Students are also able to access one to one or small group tutorials upon request with course tutors to explore assessment tasks and seek further feedback.

8. Programme Structure

Study is organised by Stage, with each Stage comprising 60 Credits at SCQF Level 11 (Masters), achieved through Courses weighted in multiples of 20 credits (e.g. 20, 40, 60).
The Programme Portfolio comprises a variety of specialist pathway awards, which allow students to direct their studies towards personal and professional goals and explore specific contexts of practice:

Circular Economy envisions and works towards more sustainable and equitable society. One that eliminates waste while creating social, economic and ecological value. Achieving circularity requires

working collaboratively and recognising the roles governments, industry and citizens can play in a more environmentally conscious future.

Citizenship helps people take control and exert influence on problems and decisions that affect them. In challenging the purpose, methods and ambitions of current design practice, you will identify opportunities for new design activity, pioneer innovative forms of engagement and collaborate with citizens to generate responses to emerging problems, political issues and social phenomena.

Environmental Design focuses on ways of using design to explore our experience of the physical, cultural and ecological landscape, so that we can reimagine the potential and possibilities of places and communities.

Service Design focuses on the societal impact of service design, as well as its economic importance. It is about addressing real issues that affect real people, by understanding them from each stakeholder's point of view in an evidence-led and purpose-driven process that makes a positive contribution to society.

Interaction Design focuses on human interaction to improve quality of life, community wellbeing, and interpersonal communication. This may be facilitated by technology – but it may also use low-tech approaches.

Transformation Design focuses on change-oriented approaches to design, which engage with complex social or systemic issues by working with stakeholders using participatory processes that trigger transformation.

The pathway specialism is identified during the application process – prior to admission – to improve staff engagement with the application and portfolio submitted, and to identify the appropriate fit between student, specialism and programme.

Students are normally permitted to transfer between Specialisms before the end of the second week of Studio 2 following:
- A conversation with the Specialism Subject Leader of the current programme (to ensure any issues with the current choice can be addressed)
- A conversation with the proposed Specialism Subject Leader (to advise the student on whether their choice is appropriate to their interests, if cohort size permits additional recruitment, and if they will encounter any issues with successfully completing Studio 2)
- Approval of the Programme Leader (including consideration of any funding/scholarship implications)
- A transfer request will not be accepted if during the application process the student was rejected by the programme they wish to transfer to.

Master of Design in Design Innovation & Circular Economy				
Stage 1				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
Core Research Methods: People and context	20	11	1	PCXS107
Studio 1 – Design Innovation Practice	40	11	1	PDIN108

Master of Design in Design Innovation & Circular Economy				
Stage 1				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
Total Stage Credits	**60**			
Stage 2				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
PG Elective	20	11	2	TBC
Studio 2 – Circular Economy	40	11	2	PDIN250
Total Stage Credits	**60**			
Stage 3				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
Masters Research Project	60	11	3	PDIN323
Total Stage Credits	**60**			

Master of Design in Design Innovation & Citizenship				
Stage 1				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
Core Research Methods: People and context	20	11	1	PCXS107
Studio 1 – Design Innovation Practice	40	11	1	PDIN108
Total Stage Credits	**60**			
Stage 2				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
PG Elective	20	11	2	TBC
Studio 2 – Citizenship	40	11	2	PDIN239
Total Stage Credits	**60**			
Stage 3				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
Masters Research Project	60	11	3	PDIN323
Total Stage Credits	**60**			

Master of Design in Design Innovation & Environmental Design				
Stage 1				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
Core Research Methods: People and context	20	11	1	PCXS107
Studio 1 – Design Innovation Practice	40	11	1	PDIN108
Total Stage Credits	**60**			
Stage 2				

Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
PG Elective	20	11	2	TBC
Studio 2 – Environmental Design	40	11	2	PDIN247
Total Stage Credits	**60**			
Stage 3				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Masters Research Project	60	11	3	PDIN323
Total Stage Credits	**60**			

Master of Design in Design Innovation & Interaction Design				
Stage 1				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Core Research Methods: People and context	20	11	1	PCXS107
Studio 1 – Design Innovation Practice	40	11	1	PDIN108
Total Stage Credits	**60**			
Stage 2				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
PG Elective	20	11	2	TBC
Studio 2 – Interaction Design	40	11	2	PDIN248
Total Stage Credits	**60**			
Stage 3				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Masters Research Project	60	11	3	PDIN323
Total Stage Credits	**60**			

Master of Design in Design Innovation & Service Design				
Stage 1				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Core Research Methods: People and context	20	11	1	PCXS107
Studio 1 – Design Innovation Practice	40	11	1	PDIN108
Total Stage Credits	**60**			
Stage 2				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
PG Elective	20	11	2	TBC

Studio 2 – Service Design	40	11	2	PDIN249
Total Stage Credits	**60**			

Stage 3				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
Masters Research Project	60	11	3	PDIN323
Total Stage Credits	**60**			

Master of Design in Design Innovation & Transformation Design				
Stage 1				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
Core Research Methods: People and context	20	11	1	PCXS107
Studio 1 – Design Innovation Practice	40	11	1	PDIN108
Total Stage Credits	**60**			
Stage 2				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
PG Elective	20	11	2	TBC
Studio 2 – Transformation Design	40	11	2	PDIN252
Total Stage Credits	**60**			
Stage 3				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
Masters Research Project	60	11	3	PDIN323
Total Stage Credits	**60**			

9. Outgoing Exchange and Visiting Student Arrangements
N/A

10. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and Other External Reference Points

Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas. For further information relevant to this programme see:
 	
QAA statement regarding Masters level education:
  https://www.qaa.ac.uk//en/the-quality-code/characteristics-statements/characteristics-statement-masters-degrees
 	
Level 11 Descriptors provided by the SCQF governing attainment during Masters level study:
  https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/SCQF-LevelDescriptors.pdf

11. Programme Regulations and Requirements for Progression
All GSA Degree programmes are validated by the University of Glasgow and the GSA's Programme Regulations are published in the University of Glasgow University Regulations.

These regulations include the requirements in relation to:

(a)   Award of the degree

(b)   Progression requirements

(c)   Early exit awards

In referring to regulations for degree programmes, students should consult the University Regulations which were in force in the academic session in which they first registered for the degree programme in question.