

Glasgow School of Art Programme Specification
Programme Title: Master of Letters in Art Writing

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 2025-26 Academic Year.

1. Programme Details:

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| Programme Title | Master of Letters (MLitt) in Art Writing |
| HECOS Code | 100046/100059/100731/100962 |
| School | School of Fine Art |
| Programme Leader | Dr Laura Haynes |
| Minimum Duration of Study | 12 months F/T, registered study 24 months P/T, registered study |
| Maximum Duration of Study | 24 months F/T, registered study 48 months P/T, registered study |
| Mode of Study | Full Time / Part Time |
| Award to be Conferred | Master of Letters |
| Exit Awards | Stage 1: PG Cert in Art Writing Stage 2: PG Diploma in Art Writing Stage 3: MLitt in Art Writing |
| SCQF Level: | 11 |
| Credits: | 180 |

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| Academic Session | 2025-26 |
| Date of Approval | PACAAG August 2024 |

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| 2. Awarding Institution | University of Glasgow |
| 3. Teaching Institutions | The Glasgow School of Art University of Glasgow (Stage 2 course: 20 credits) |
| 3.1 Campus | Glasgow |
| 4. Lead School/Board of Studies | School of Fine Art |
| 5. Other Schools/Board of Studies | N/A |
| 6. Programme Accredited By (PSRBs) | N/A |

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|--------------------------------|---|
| 7. Entry Qualifications | |
| 7.1 Highers | 4T |
| 7.2 A Levels | 4T |
| 7.3 Other | A good undergraduate Degree (normally 2:1 or higher) in a relevant subject area (e.g. Contemporary Art Practice/Theory, Art History, Creative Writing, Literature, Critical Studies, Museum and Curatorial Studies) or equivalent professional practice. Along with the completed application form, candidates must submit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A portfolio (this may include, but not limited to, creative/critical writing [including non-published, independently accredited or self-published work], moving image work, performance, image and/or sound-based work). |

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| | <p>The portfolio may provide links to websites or blogs should this be appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A personal statement • Evidence of relevant academic qualifications • Two academic references |
| <p>7.4 English Language Requirements</p> | <p>All students will have to provide evidence of English language proficiency when applying.</p> <p>International Students 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 6.0 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 Master of Letters (MLitt) in Art Writing is a one-year taught postgraduate programme based in the School of Fine Art (SoFA) at The Glasgow School of Art. The programme offers full and part-time study, with an MLitt in Art Writing gained after 12 months/24 months of study (180 credits).

The programme is based on two principal elements: a unique understanding of art writing as interdisciplinary studio practice combining creative-critical reflexivity and hybrid forms; and the opportunity to bring new work to a public audience or readership through project-based partnerships with external venues, organisations or bodies, fostering an experimental writing community across GSA and Glasgow. With emphasis on reflexive and critical practice-based enquiry, the Programme reflects the increasing interest in the development of alternative forms of critical and theoretical writing and in the reconfiguring of the relationship between writing and artistic practice. The MLitt Art Writing is concerned with writing and making within social, cultural, political, environmental and technological contexts and encourages students to develop practice-led outputs that are reflexive of contemporary academic and socio-political concerns. Discursivity, active research and practice are championed by the Programme. Students regularly externalise work-in-progress (*Soft Shell*), reflect upon and advance new knowledge (Masterclasses and Study Days), and final stage publishing (independent publishing, the Art Writing Showcase Event and the programme-led journal, *The Yellow Paper*, published both online and in print).

The practice and study of art writing involves creative, philosophical, critical and theoretical approaches to writing *about* art, writing *with* art and writing *as* art. Drawing from disciplines including visual art, art criticism, art history and literature, this interdisciplinary field is as much about creative production as it is concerned with critical discourse. This flagship programme is part of a considerably expansive moment in the history and practice of art writing and is supported by strong partnerships with national cultural organisations in the city (for example The Poetry Club and the Centre for Contemporary Arts), fostering innovative modes of art writing grounded in practice-as-research methodological framework driven in and from an art school

environment. Emphasis is given to reflecting on the agency of writing, both in the curriculum and in supporting students to understand the context they draw from as much as the context and readerships they write into.

The MLitt Art Writing critically engages with a broad spectrum of approaches to art writing. Actively challenging received values and hierarchies in its attention to divergent forms of theory, criticism and creativity, the Programme supports students to develop the skills to write effectively from a position of curiosity, knowledge and purpose and to publish and present to a professional standard within the expanded field of art criticism and experimental writing. Forms of digital publishing, experimental and divergent readers are incorporated throughout the curriculum asking how we might work with traditional fine art skills (printmaking, typesetting, engraving and the artist book) while interacting with new technologies and modes of engagement (interactive digital readers, performance and AI writing). Each stage of the Programme challenges students to consider art writing as an emergent field and to examine its cultural and literary forms, histories, content and contexts. Encouraging self-directed exploration and practice and supported by valuable peer-learning situations, students will focus on the development of their own creative critical writing, reading, editorial and research practices in courses Writing Practice I, II and III. These courses are supported by three 4-credit courses ('Research Methods and Methodologies in Practice' and 'Art Writing: Histories, Theories and Methodologies' in Stage 1 and 'PGT Elective' and 'UoG Core Course' in Stage 2). Each student is invited to present final project work as part of the School of Fine Art and Programme specific Postgraduate Showcase and as part of *The Yellow Paper: Journal for Art Writing*, the programme-led publication.

9. Programme Structure:

The MLitt in Art Writing is a 12-month/24-month taught postgraduate programme. The programme offers full and part-time study, with an MLitt in Art Writing gained after 12 months/20 months of study (180 credits).

The programme runs September to September and students undertake core courses and an elective course over two semesters followed by a major masters project in the final semester.

Semester 1 includes three core courses: Writing Practice I (20-credits), Art Writing: Histories, Theories and Methodologies (20-credits) and the SoFA Core Research Methods (20-credits). Semester 2 comprises of Writing Practice II (20-credits), Core Course (20-credits, delivered by School of Critical Studies, University of Glasgow), and a PGT Elective (20-credits). Semester 3 includes Writing Practice III: Masters Project (60-credits). All courses are assessed formatively with a summative assessment at the end of each Stage. This means it is possible for students to exit the programme at the end of each Stage: Stage 1, Postgraduate Certificate; Stage 2, Postgraduate Diploma; Stage 3, Master of Letters.

Regulations:

This programme will be governed by the GSA Code of Practice, and the relevant regulations published in the GSA section of the University Calendar.

| Stage 1 | Location | Credits | SCQF Level |
|---|----------|---------|------------|
| PLAW101 Writing Practice I | GSA | 20 | 11 |
| PLAW102 Art Writing: History, Theories and Methodologies | GSA | 20 | 11 |
| PCXS101 Core Research Methods: Research Methods and Methodologies in Practice | GSA | 20 | 11 |

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|---|-----|----|----|
| Total | | | |
| | | | |
| Stage 2 | | | |
| PLAW201 Writing Practice II | GSA | 20 | 11 |
| UoG Core Course | UoG | 20 | 11 |
| PGT Elective | GSA | 20 | 11 |
| Total | | | |
| | | | |
| Stage 3 | | | |
| PLAW301 Writing Practice III: Masters Project | GSA | 60 | 11 |
| Total | | | |

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

N/A

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

A student will be permitted to progress to Stage 3 if they have obtained a grade point average of C3(12.0) or above in the taught courses (Stage 1 & 2) with at least 75% of the credits at grade D3(9) or above and all credits at grade F3(6) or above.

11. Programme Aims:

The Programme offers a 12-month/24-month Masters qualification aimed at graduates with a relevant artistic or academic background keen to cultivate an art writing practice informed by new approaches in writing and criticism. Students are provided with the opportunity to develop unique and rigorous critical art writing research projects under specialist supervision. The Programme support students to pursue self-directed practice in addition to offering valuable career development opportunities. This includes access to internationally renowned organisations and preminent experts working in the field, enabling students to acquire key skill sets and attributes as well as forge the peer networks that are vital to successful career progression.

The MLitt in Art Writing supports students to:

- Foster independent practices through the support of a body of or long form work;
- Cultivate knowledge of, and expertise within, the expanded field of art writing, including myriad forms of writing (criticism, essaying, writing for moving image, performance etc.) and the spectrum of platforms for distribution;
- Critically and creatively propose theoretical and practical topics and their inter-relationships;
- Develop student research skills, including visual literacy, library and archival skills, in order to contribute knowledge and practice to publication, exhibition, conference and other appropriate dissemination platforms in other sectors;
- Nourish the application of a range of active-learning and interpersonal skills (whether working independently, collaboratively or with a venue, institution or organisation) in order to debate effectively and advance independent thought;
- Establish an advanced level of student autonomy and initiative in professional, practical and academic situations

11.1 Stage 1 Aims:

Stage 1 (60-credits, PG Cert) *Form & Field*, enables students to:

- Initiate and plan for a significant independent practice through the development of a self-directed programme of study, including defining research questions where appropriate;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the critical discourse on art writing through an engagement with key debates, platforms for practice and research in the field;
- Develop an understanding of research methodologies and identify a range of appropriate resources, including sources for research and practice alongside identifying appropriate modes of distribution;
- Demonstrate criticality and reflexivity in the application of knowledge, understanding and/or practices to research questions or modes of practice;
- Be open to new ideas, methods and approaches in the field of art writing, challenging established working methods and valuing peer and specialist critique;
- Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to the study, practice and presentation of art writing and its cognate fields of practice and research

11.2 Stage 2 Aims:

Stage 2 (60-credits, PG Dip) *Purpose and Context*, develops practice and research skills acquired in Stage 1 and enables students to:

- Develop an ambitious independent project through a self-determined body of work and programme of study, including defining research questions where appropriate;
- Propose appropriate forms of distribution, questioning how and where writing meets a readership or audience;
- Develop and demonstrate a critical knowledge of art writing modes and methods as well as relevant debates in the field;
- Advance an appreciation of the diverse, transdisciplinary nature of art writing and an ability to make links between areas of the field;
- Advance skills of critical analysis, evaluation, editing and synthesis in the study, practice and presentation of art writing and cognate fields of practice and research;
- Further develop criticality and reflexivity in the application of knowledge, understanding and/or practices to research questions or modes of practice;
- Be open to new ideas, methods and approaches in the field of art writing, challenging established working methods and valuing peer and specialist critique;
- Develop an engagement with the visual arts and publishing sector locally, nationally and internationally;
- Develop key contact with appropriate experts in the field, and forming peer networks

11.3 Stage 3 Aims:

Stage 3 (60-credits, MLitt) *Consolidation*, enables students to:

- Realise a significant independent project or body of work for Masters Project;
- Articulate and refine a specialist area and select an appropriate mode of delivery and/or publication for project work;
- Evidence a critical understanding of the diverse, transdisciplinary nature of art writing and an ability to make links between areas of the field;
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of how one's practice contributes to practical, scholarly, critical or theoretical areas of the field;
- Refine and apply the various key skills and attributes developed over the course of the programme, including organisation, communication, research skills and critical effectiveness;

- Demonstrate confidence, autonomy and initiative in determining an independent practice, alongside valuing reflexivity and being open to constructive peer critique

12. Intended Learning Outcomes of Programme:

After full participation in and successful completion of the programme, students will have obtained:

- A critical understanding of the theories and practices, both historical and contemporary, which define the contemporary field of art writing, and will also have engaged with contemporary debates in the development of the field;
- The ability to define one or more specialist areas relevant to the field of art writing, informed by research and/or by practice-based developments in the studio and/or appropriate professional organisation;
- A critical understanding and testing of how one's practice contributes to practical, scholarly, critical or theoretical areas of the field;
- An independent approach to learning through critical self-reflection, self-evaluation and self-development;
- A knowledge of the visual art, art writing and experimental literature sector in Glasgow and Scotland, informed more widely by UK-wide and international contexts;
- The ability to apply a range of active-learning and interpersonal skills whether working independently, collaboratively or with an institution, including being able to work with others, debate effectively and modify one's own ideas in order to support and develop independent thought;
- An advanced level of autonomy and initiative in professional, practical and academic situations

12.1 Intended Learning Outcomes of Stage 1

Knowledge and Understanding

- Establish a critical understanding of the theories and practices, both historical and contemporary, which define the contemporary field of art writing, and engage with contemporary debates in the development of the field;
- Begin to identify an independent area of expertise and situate this in relation to a range of contexts, platforms and research in the field

Applied Knowledge and Understanding

- Identify, conceptualise and define complex issues in the field of art writing and contemporary art practice;
- Develop the ability to transfer knowledge, learning and skills from one context to another, including an ability to synthesise practice and theory

Professional Practice: Communication, Presentation, Working with Others

- Develop effective communication skills in order to negotiate and collaborate with others, valuing diversity and equality including different ways of thinking, experience and skills;
- Identify and develop skills needed for various means of communication including written, digital and visual discourse

12.2 Intended Learning Outcomes of Stage 2

Knowledge and Understanding

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the theories and practices, both historical and contemporary, which define the contemporary field of art writing, and engage with contemporary debates in the development of the field;
- Demonstrate an awareness of applications and implications of art writing theories and research;
- Identify and develop an independent area of expertise and situate this in relation to a range of contexts, platforms and research in the field

Applied Knowledge and Understanding

- Develop an understanding of the social, cultural, political and philosophical issues relating to art writing, criticism and related fields;
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of how one's practice contributes to practical, scholarly, critical or theoretical areas of the field

Professional Practice: Communication, Presentation, Working with Others

- Develop an engagement with the visual arts and publishing sector locally, nationally and internationally;
- Communicate, using appropriate methods, to a range of readerships and audiences with different levels of knowledge/expertise, as well as diverse contexts

12.3 Intended Learning Outcomes of Stage 3

Knowledge and Understanding

- Initiate and realise a significant independent project or body of work for Masters Project and situate this in relation to a range of contexts, platforms and research in the field;
- Consolidate a critical understanding of the theories and practices, both historical and contemporary, which define the contemporary field of art writing, and engage with contemporary debates in the development of the field

Applied Knowledge and Understanding

- Articulate and refine a specialist area and select an appropriate mode of delivery and/or publication for project work;
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of how one's practice contributes to practical, scholarly, critical or theoretical areas of the field

Professional Practice: Communication, Presentation, Working with Others

- Refine and apply the various key skills and attributes developed over the course of the programme, including organisation, communication, research skills and critical effectiveness;
- Demonstrate confidence, autonomy and initiative in determining an independent practice, alongside valuing reflexivity and being open to constructive peer critique

13. Learning and Teaching Approaches:

The Programme presents unique opportunities for project work in collaboration with national venues and organisations, a series of visiting lectures and workshops from leading experts, and a dynamic framework for creative and intellectual development.

Delivered according to a range of pedagogical approaches, the MLitt Art Writing integrates studio practice and humanities-based methods, allowing students to develop innovative and impactful strategies for the development and dissemination of diverse practices of writing and criticism. In

line with other masters-level programmes in the SoFA, the MLitt Art Writing comprises of three stages: Stage 1: *Form & Field* (including Writing Practice I [20-credits], Histories, Theories & Methodologies [20-credits] and Research Methods and Methodologies *in Practice* [20-credits]), where students are encouraged to critically and creatively evaluate and develop their methods and practices; Stage 2: *Purpose and Context* (including Writing Practice II [20-credits], UoG Core Course [20-credits] and PGT Elective [20-credits]), where students are required to map their own research and practice inquiry and test in the field; and Stage 3: *Consolidation* (including Writing III [60-credits]), involving the realisation of a significant project, dissertation or body of work for Masters Project. The programme supports and advances individual, and potentially collaborative, writing and bibliographic practices in accordance with an art school studio pedagogy. Students routinely participate in cohort critiques, workshopping and project space activities as well as one-to-one tutorials.

MLitt Art Writing's distinctive teaching methods include: lecture, seminar and brief or theme-led symposia; one-to-one or group tutorial; studio critique and writing workshops; reading group and slow study; independent study and studio practice; fieldwork, somatic and site-based writing; collaboration, partnership and work-in-progress presentations.

Central to the course structure is an integrated model of theory and practice, where methods of teaching and assessment explore the inter-relationships of the theoretical and the practical. Writing Practice I, II and III have a flexible and developmental structure where project work is driven by independent rationale. Establishing a platform for critique, work developed and produced for formative assessment will be regularly workshopped as a cohort and discussed in one-to-one tutorials. The development of practice is underpinned by a series of core and elective courses, including the Histories, Theories & Methodologies course (20-credits) and Research Methods and Methodologies *in Practice* course (20-credits) delivered to all SoFA PGT students in Stage 1 and a self-selected postgraduate Elective course in Stage 2 (20-credits), alongside a Core Course delivered by UoG (20-credits). The momentum of the programme is further enhanced by a series of Study Days including external guest speakers. These will be organised by the Programme and supported by the SoFA's long running and highly successful Friday Event series.

14. Assessment Methods:

All components of the programme will be at SCQF Level 11 and will be assessed via a combination of formative and summative assessment methods.

The structure comprises of 100 credits of research project work, 40 credits of core theories and methods courses, one 20 credit choice elective course, plus 20 credits of research methods training. The two core methods and theories courses are designed specifically for this programme.

There are summative assessment points throughout the programme, each representing an exit qualification. Summative assessment methods include a potential range of forms as defined by the course, for example: essays, exposition and project work, often accompanied with a self-appraisal report (Critical Companion). Throughout the Programme students will receive formative feedback through their participation in workshops, peer-to-peer presentations, reading groups and seminars and through their engagement with professional practitioners and mentors. Formative assessment points also occur at mid-points in the semester.

Both the 20-credit methods and theories courses are assessed by one essay/written assignment (supported by optional formative writing opportunities). Feedback is provided in written form and supported by one-to-one feedback tutorial with the assessor.

Both the 20-credit writing practice courses are assessed by project work with an accompanying self-appraisal report. Discursive and written feedback is provided.

The 60-credit Masters Project is supervised by a SoFA member of staff, with the potential for secondary supervisory support. The dissertation/project is supported by regular supervisory meetings and feedback on draft submissions. The outcome may be a) a standard or experimental form dissertation of up to 15,000-words or b) a portfolio of practice (up to 15,000-words including 1,500-2,000-word contextual overview).

As part of their Masters Project, students will contribute to the Art Writing Graduate Programme event and publish new work in print or online in *The Yellow Paper: Journal for Art Writing*. In addition, students may exhibit or contribute as part of the SoFA Graduate Degree Show. Students will have access to a dedicated studio space and will be actively encouraged and supported to test and develop their work alongside the Art Writing cohort and SoFA PGT peers.

The Glasgow School of Art Code of Assessment aligns with the University of Glasgow's Code of Assessment. The code includes grade descriptors which assign a level of attainment in relation to the Level Learning Outcomes. The code designates eight grades, from A to H.

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

The programme corresponds to the SCQF (Level 11) benchmark descriptors and the subject benchmarks and SCQF guidelines have been a primary reference in the writing and development of this documentation.

16. Additional Relevant Information:

Accommodation and Facilities:

The cohort occupy a flexible studio space which accommodates individual desk/work space to be recomposed as a project space as appropriate. The studio is equipped with audio-visual tech for presentations.

Resources and Services:

The majority of required reading is available in digital or print via GSA Library or through JSTOR. There is an Art Writing [Subject Guide](#) available from the Library. Any required reorientation of the collection will be in consultation with the Programme Leader and would seek to serve the GSA as a whole in addition to the MLitt Art Writing cohort.

Employability:

The MLitt in Art Writing offers valuable opportunities to build transferrable professional knowledge and skills. Students are encouraged to engage with the visual arts and publishing sector locally in order to establish key skill sets and attributes for professional practice as well as forge the peer networks that are vital to successful career progression.

Professional practice workshops, for example in graphic design software, self-publishing and archival research, further support students to be prepared to navigate the cultural sector's highly competitive jobs market.

Graduates are equipped to undertake postgraduate research, for example as Masters of Research or a PhD, in Art Writing or a cognate area.