Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Masters Research Project

Degree Show 2021-22

Please note that this course specification is correct on the date of publication but may be subject to amendment prior to the start of the 2025-26 Academic Year.

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
PDIN323		2025-26

Course Title	Masters Research Project
Course Contact	Dr. Iain Reid, Ruth Cochrane

Credits	60
SCQF Level	11
When Taught	Semester 3

Associated Programmes	M.Des in Design Innovation and Circular Economy M.Des in Design Innovation and Citizenship M.Des in Design Innovation and Environmental Design M.Des in Design Innovation and Future Heritage M.Des in Design Innovation and Interaction Design M.Des in Design Innovation and Service Design M.Des in Design Innovation and Transformation Design
Lead School	School of Innovation and Technology
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	Programme Approval February 2024

Course Introduction

This course supports students to design, develop and deliver an individual research project aligned with their personal interests that allows them to explore a context within which they aspire to operate in the future.

Supported by a tutor and a peer group students will initiate and pursue independently a research project that will allow them to further develop and demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding of the field of Design Innovation and their chosen specialism.

The self-directed research project should be carried out in association with an institution/organisation *or* a set of contextual experts as a 'live' piece of work that allows the practical evidencing of skills and the theoretical knowledge acquired during Semesters 1 and 2.

Course Aims

The aim of the course is to guide and enable students to develop, manage and conduct an individual project of research in the field of design innovation and specialist pathways.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate critical understanding of relevant theories, global and local debates, and project directions afforded by a context, and their potential socio-economic, environmental and/or technological impact.

2. Plan and critically apply appropriate secondary and primary research methods from Design Innovation and other relevant academic disciplines (e.g. Social Sciences) to explore and interpret project contexts and themes, and support project development.

3. Develop and iterate and test innovative and appropriate proposals in varying degrees of resolution (from exploratory prototypes to finalised outcomes) and diverse media to address identified demands or opportunities within a given context.

4. Critically reflect on project interactions and its ethics, personal practice, and collaborative processes responding to project aims and activities, and the potential impact of a design-led innovation outcome/approach in a given context.

5. Communicate to professional standards using appropriate media to reach specialist and non-specialist audiences, research insights, proposals, outcomes and their potential socio-economic, environmental and/or technological impact in a given context.

Indicative Content
By applying the knowledge and skills developed throughout the programme, students will be conducting and managing their individual projects of research under the guidance of their supervisors and with the support of their peers.

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods
In this course students are supported with supervisory sessions timetabled at key moments of the semester, additional peer-review discussions, interim review presentations, and appointment-based support with faculty members. Students are expected to engage in self-directed learning and research, in line with other taught postgraduate programmes at GSA, from project design and development, to gaining theoretical knowledge through traditional research methods. This emphasises autonomy, and critical reflection upon personal learning and self-directed work in collaboration. Visiting lecturers/guests from industry and research staff enabling students access to, and 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 the course through the sharing of knowledge, professional paths, case studies, projects, and where practical and applicable will offer critical input to ongoing project work. The course uses Canvas, a virtual learning environment tool, for the dissemination, discussion and access to relevant course information, and signpost to other relevant teaching and learning platforms used by GSA.

Indicative Contact Hours	**Notional Learning Hours**
30	600

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods
Formative feedback is an ongoing process undertaken through reviews and supervisory sessions, and appointment-based tutorials with staff.

At a mid-way point in the course, students submit a formal presentation of their work in progress. Tutors offer oral feedback on how best to improve and build upon existing work to date with the support of peer notetaking to expand upon and consolidate the received feedback.

Due to the nature of the innovation process, formative assessment does not result in a predicted grade. However, students who appear to be at risk of failure will be offered individual tutorials as appropriate to provide targeted support.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

Students can choose between two modes of individual submission (a research project or a thesis) which will be negotiated with the course leader. During the supervisory process, students will be asked to decide on and agree to a submission mode. For both modes of submission students are expected to conduct fieldwork and engage with contextual experts.

Each submission has two components detailed below. Students are awarded an aggregate grade based on the weighted grades of the two components (25% Presentation, 75% Project document/Thesis) and are not required to pass both separately for the award of credit. Submissions will be assessed and moderated in line with the Code of Assessment.

Reassessment opportunities where a student has not passed the course are outlined in the Code of Assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Presentation of research project outcome: presentation to faculty and peers of a project outcome/findings, it's rationale and expected impact in the explored context, with supporting materials when applicable.	25	12
Project Document: 5,000-6,000 word visual document offering a reflective, evidenced and critical narrative of project process, decisions, outcomes and its evaluation. There should be a clearly identified response to the identified context based on research and analysis. This document should include text-based and visual elements including sketchbook-evidence of an iterative creative process.	75	12
Or		
Presentation of research outcome (individual): presentation to faculty and peers of a project outcome/findings, it's rationale and expected impact in the explored context, with supporting materials when applicable.	25	12
Thesis/Essay: 8,000-10,000 words piece of referenced and evidenced academic work including methodological and theoretical positioning. There should be a clearly identified response to a contextualised research question based on research and analysis.	75	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	N/A

Reading and On-line Resources
Not applicable: students will identify relevant literature based on their choice of project.