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

| Course Code | HECOS Code | Academic Session |
|---|---|---|
| | | **2025-26** |

| Course Title | **Masters Research Project** |
|---|---|
| Course Contact | **Dr Michael Pierre Johnson** |

| Credits | **60** |
|---|---|
| SCQF Level | **11** |
| When Taught | **Stage 3** |

| Associated Programmes | **M.Sc International Management and Design Innovation** |
|---|---|
| Lead School | **School of Innovation & Technology** |
| Other Schools | **Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow** |
| Date of Approval | PACAAG August 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 Design Innovation in the context of International Management.

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 Stages 1 and 2.

**Course Aims**

The aim of the course is to enable students to develop, manage and conduct an individual project of research in the field of design innovation that demonstrates leadership, management and design competencies responding to the needs of private and public enterprises in international settings.

**Course Intended Learning Outcomes**

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

- **Critically evaluate** contextual challenges, project opportunities or unmet needs and their impact on key project actors (human, non-human) **and global design/management practice**, identified through **applying theoretical concepts** in your design research.

- Design **contextually and ethically** appropriate secondary and primary **research methods** from Design, Management and Social Sciences to explore and **identify opportunities for leadership and design innovation practice**.

- **Iteratively develop** innovative concepts towards an appropriate proposal, **independently applying design-led processes, with creative and analytical skills** in varying degrees of resolution, to address identified contextual challenges and **engage with practical issues arising in professional practice.**

- **Critically reflect** on a design-led process with people and things **to explore real world problems** in relation to an identified conceptual area of enquiry, its ethics, its validity and key implications for leadership and design innovation practice.

- **Communicate visually, orally and in writing** to professional standards of storytelling a design-led innovation project and the development of its research findings and their potential socio-economic, environmental and/or technological impact using appropriate media to evidence your proposal and your conceptual thinking.

## 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. IMDI students are placed in tutorial groups alongside students from the MDes programmes, so can gain from their enriched experience learning and applying Design Innovation full-time within their specialist disciplines.

The IMDI Masters Research Project should be viewed in context within the whole programme. It builds on work in Stages One and Two in which students have practiced and enhanced several key innovation methods and approaches and have worked in groups to research a challenge through a given brief to develop and present evidenced proposals. In turn, the IMDI Masters Research Project provides an enriched foundation for delivering their independent Design Innovation project.

## 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.

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 individual 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 from the design research process 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 | 75 | 12 |

| positioning. There should be a clearly identified response to a contextualised research question based on research and analysis. This document should include text-based and visual elements including sketchbook-evidence of an iterative creative process. | | |
|---|---|---|

| 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. |