

Glasgow School of Art Course Specification

Course Title: Studio Work 4



Image Credit: Cameron Young, Mackintosh School of Architecture, Year 4, 2023-24

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
		2025-26

Course Title	Studio Work 4
Course Contact	Kirsty Lees

Credits	60
SCQF Level	Level 10
When Taught	Semester 1 and 2

Associated Programmes	Bachelor of Architecture with Honours, Diploma in Architecture
Lead School	Mackintosh School of Architecture
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	PACAAG April 2025

Course Introduction

The Studio Work 4 course is concerned with the relationships between architecture and the city, using Glasgow as the particular model for study within the Studio projects.

The course is designed to refine students' design processes, professional skills, research methods, communication skills, architectural knowledge and representation skills required to create safe, sustainable, and efficient design proposals, while expressing architectural character and meaning. Students refine their critical thinking and design methodology, supported by specific knowledge delivered through subject specialist courses in professional studio, and architectural technology.

Two principal projects, Urban Housing and Urban Building, both set in the city of Glasgow, offer related opportunities to explore the nature of urban architecture from the strategic to the detail. The nature of these two projects is intended to allow students to develop an understanding of the physical and spatial framework of the city and urban environments as well as their corresponding social, political, cultural, and environmental conditions.

Students are taught through a combination of group and individual tutorials, visits, talks and skills workshops. Through formative feedback, peer reviews, and formative assessment, students apply their learning on the course across the two studio projects. Each studio brief is accompanied by selected texts which situate the design projects within a wider architectural discourse.

The Studio course offers students the opportunity to integrate the specialist knowledge delivered in the Architectural Technology (AT) course refining specialist technical knowledge for application through their individual design projects.

Throughout the course, students are supported to develop and demonstrate the professional competencies and graduate attributes required to meet the standards for Exemption from the ARB and RIBA Part 2 Examination in Architecture.

Course Aims

The aims of the course are to:

professional: refine a student's ability to use knowledge of professional behaviours and ethics to produce an individually defined architectural position evidenced through complex architectural design proposals

design/create: refine a student's ability to use a creative design process in the production of complex architectural design proposals

research: refine a student's ability to use advanced design led research skills in the production of a range of complex architectural design proposals

communication: refine a student's ability to use advanced analogue and digital media to visually and verbally communicate a range of complex architectural design proposals

skills: refine a student's ability to use communication and a clear methodology, with analogue and digital tools, in the production of a range of complex architectural design proposals

knowledge: refine a student's ability to use architectural theories, concepts, and techniques to address social, ethical and climate change challenges in the production of a range of complex architectural design proposals

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

professionalism: professional behaviours and ethics in terms of collaborative, inclusive, sustainable, and safe design principles to produce an individually defined architectural position evidenced through complex architectural design proposals in multiple contexts in Glasgow

design/create: a creative design process in the production of a range of complex architectural design proposals in multiple contexts in Glasgow

research: advanced design led research skills in the production of a range of complex architectural design proposals in multiple contexts in Glasgow

communication: the ability to use advanced analogue and digital media to visually and verbally communicate a range of complex architectural design proposals in multiple contexts in Glasgow

skills: a clear methodology, with digital and analogue tools, in the production of a range of complex architectural design proposals in multiple contexts in Glasgow

knowledge: knowledge of architectural theories, concepts, and techniques to address social, ethical and climate change challenges in the production of a range of complex architectural design proposals in multiple contexts in Glasgow

Indicative Content

Students are encouraged to articulate and appraise their past architectural and educational experiences in order to develop rigorous design methodologies through studio conversations that explore the challenges and opportunities of contemporary architectural practice together, and in dialogue with the urban context of Glasgow.

In semester 1, this dialogue begins with a thorough analysis of the urban context in tandem with group research that relates to a studio theme advocating for retrofit first, sustainable or regenerative design solutions. The fabric of the city is explored as much through the history of making and construction as the history of urban design. Research topics focus on the role of design in responding to climate change by considering mitigation and adaption strategies. Topics include, but are not limited to, biodiversity, landscape and amenity, circular economy, material cultures and the relationship between social sustainability, social justice and environmental sustainability.

A range and depth of investigation is achieved through a balance of group and individual investigation. In semester one, initial group analysis is used to inform proposals of a strategic nature for presentation informing the subsequent development and testing of individual design proposals for high density, multi-floored housing, represented across a variety of scales.

In semester two, individual positions evolve to shape a vision of belonging and collective shared experience through a contemporary public building. Through discussion, speculation, drawing and making and a detailed focus on the integration of Architectural Technology, an understanding of the value judgements necessary to support creative, sustainable, design proposals are developed and tested in relation to the architectural intent, their impact on the urban realm and environment as well as the implications on the comfort, security, health, safety, and privacy of the occupants.

During the course students will:

- Engage in individual research and collaborative practice to appraise multiple perspectives of the challenges and opportunities posed by the project briefs, resources, studio input and discussion
- Integrate the breadth, depth and interconnectivity of individual and collective research to articulate personal critical positions in response to the project briefs
- Appraise design decisions of scale, volume, proportion, circulation, spatial organisation and material selection through an iterative design process that employs a rigorous design methodology
- Critically evaluate and evidence the impact design decisions have on embodied carbon, resources, the urban realm and individuals
- Present their design proposals at various stages of development to various audiences in a range of settings and be curious, open to discussion, and declarative about their ideas

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 subject areas, Architectural Technology, History and Theory and Professional Studio, and enacted through design projects. The course is intended to develop students' command of iterative and reflective design practices while defining their critical, ethical, and professional position as an architect and designer.

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 are core to the student learning experience, enabling students to both work productively with others while contextualising the role of the architect in relation to other disciplines and practices. Studio tutors 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 projects, enabling staff and students to enter a dialogue around contemporary architectural issues. A hybrid approach to learning through in-person 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 design forums at the end of the projects.

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
60	600

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

Formative activities are provided during the course, offering students the opportunity to obtain ongoing staff and peer feedback through presentation, discussion, and review of design projects. This course is taught over two semesters, as such formative work will be marked with an indicative grade and feedback will be given at an appropriate mid-way point. Written feedback will be provided via Canvas.

Formative assessment and 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
Students are required to submit a Portfolio of work which will be holistically assessed. The Portfolio will incorporate the presentation of their design projects, comprising of a curated physical exhibition and a Design Report (2000 words).	100%	Semester 2 Week 12

Exchange/Study Abroad

Can this course be taken by Exchange/Study Abroad students?	No-Yes
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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.