Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Service Design: An Introduction to Service Design: Learning Through Doing

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:
PDIN232		2025-26

1. Course Title:
An Introduction to Service Design: Learning Through Doing

2. Date of Approval:	3. Lead School:	4. Other Schools:
PACAAG August 2025	School of Innovation and Technology	This course is available to students on PGT programmes which include a Stage 2 elective.

5. Credits:	6. SCQF Level:	7. Course Leader:
20	11	Lizzie Abernethy

8. Associated Programmes:
This course is available to students on PGT programmes which include a Stage 2 elective.

9. When Taught:
Stage 2, Taught online only

10. Course Aims:
The overarching aims of the stage 2 electives are as follows: • Encourage interdisciplinary, critical reflexivity from within an open set of choices; • Foster deep investigative approaches to new or unfamiliar areas of practice and theory; • Cultivate self-directed leadership and initiative-taking in both applied and abstract modes of practice/ study not necessarily associated with a student's particular creative specialism; • Enable flexible, ethical exploration and connection of diverse knowledge and understanding within a specialist programme of study. This Service Design course responds to the increased complexity of human-centred design and the interactions and experiences it affords. It does so by offering an introduction to the theory and principles of Service Design as well as the tools, frameworks and soft skills necessary to

understand, engage with– and define the interplay of people, products, processes, and products of a Service. This is achieved by focusing upon stakeholder research and the collaborative co-development and live testing of tangible and intangible project outcomes with live stakeholders.

This course aims:
- To develop students' awareness and knowledge of Service Design as an academic discourse and creative practice for user-centred design;
- To extend the understanding of contemporary design practice to encompass non object-based activities, experiences, interactions and services;
- To equip students with a methodological framework and design processes capable of supporting the design and innovation of systems, services and the experiences that these deliver for users, service providers and citizens;
- To expose postgraduate students to real life constraints and challenges of designing services for everyday life.

11. Intended Learning Outcomes of Course:

By the end of this course students will be able to:
- Demonstrate critical understanding of context and people and identify opportunities for innovative services within the context of a service design project;
- Develop, iterate and deliver a design proposal for a service informed by insights gathered from project collaborations and research to address demands, constraints, opportunities or challenges within a given context;
- Critically apply and justify the use of research methods specific to a service design project including an evaluation of their outcome and value;
- Communicate to professional standards and with supporting evidence, a design proposal for a service (i.e. Service Design proposal) and its potential impact in a given context, using appropriate media for a variety of audiences.

12. Indicative Content:

The course content is designed to develop an understanding of Service Design through the analysis of service design activities and by developing and communicating a Service Design Proposal in collaboration with acontextual partner.
The course will cover:
- Services and immaterial relationships;
- Visualising service design research;
- Identifying and applying insights;
- Service mapping;
- Prototyping and evidencing;
- Systems thinking;
- Ethical Considerations on the impacts of Service Design.

13. Description of Summative Assessment Methods:

Assessment Method	Description of Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week (assignments)
Sketchbook/Project Document (individual)	Text-based and visual document identifying and analysing existing Services, methods, tools and	60%	Week 11, Stage 2

	frameworks and critically reflecting on theory in practice (both material and immaterial practices). Text-based and visual document discussing existing Services, and critically reflecting on theory in practice (material and immaterial practices) including methods, tools and frameworks pertaining to Service Design.		
Project Presentation "Act of Service" (group)	As a team present a well-considered service design that clearly references and responds to the identified needs and experiences of your contextual partner	40%	Week 11, Stage 2

13.1 Please describe the Summative Assessment arrangements:

For this course, assessment of student work will consist of two components:
- Individual submission of a sketchbook/project document including:
  - An analysis of a contextual partner's experience using appropriate methods, detailing the user journey, service touchpoints, relationships and challenges (;
  - A critical understanding of service design approaches and principles through evidence of practice and reflections.
  - Evidence of a practical process leading to the delivery of a Service Design proposal , tested and iterated upon in collaboration with a contextual partner in response to their identified insights and opportunities);

- Group presentation of project outcome: A video presented using appropriate storytelling c to the course participants and examiners detailing the proposed service 'in action' with a contextual partner.

Written feedback will be given to students. Reassessment opportunities where a student has not passed the course are outlined in the Code
 of Assessment.

14. Description of Formative Assessment Methods:

Formative feedback is an ongoing process undertaken through reviews and tutorials with staff, and includes interim review video presentations.

14.1 Please describe the Formative Assessment arrangements:

Students will receive supervisory support in the form of group tutorials online. In addition, students are expected to attend online group sessions (peer-assisted learning (PAL) groups. Students will also engage with a contextual partner throughout the term.

Tutorial notes will be recorded by a tutorial buddy for review and discussion between the students involved in the tutorial.

Peer review and feedback will also be used during presentations to provide additional formative feedback and to encourage the development of critical sensibilities relating to the practice of service design.

15. Learning and Teaching Methods:	
Formal Contact Hours	**Notional Learning Hours**
20	200
15.1 Description of Teaching and Learning Methods:	
This course offered over 10 weeks, 2 hours a week. Delivered on Wednesdays or Fridays. Teaching sessions follow the pattern - Workshop/Seminar Followed by Tutorial each week.	

16. Pre-requisites:
Successful completion of PGT Stage 1

17. Can this course be taken by Exchange/Study Abroad students?	Yes
18. Are all the students on the course taught wholly by distance learning?	Yes
19. Does this course represent a work placement or a year of study abroad?	No
20. Is this course collaborative with any other institutions?	No
20.1 If yes, then please enter the names of the other teaching institutions:	
N/A	

21. Additional Relevant Information:
N/A

22. Indicative Bibliography:
• Stickdorn, M & Schneider, J. This is Service Design Thinking, 2010, BIS Publications, Amsterdam • Andy Polaine, Lavrans Løvlie, Ben Reason Service Design: From Insight to Implementation ISBN: 9781933820330 • Cottam, Hilary (2019) Radical help : how we can remake the relationships between us and revolutionise the welfare state , Radical help : how we can remake the relationships between us and revolutionise the welfare state. London: Virago. • Downe, Lou (2020) Good services : how to design services that work., Good services : how to design services that work. Amsterdam: BIS publishers.