

Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Professional Studio 4



Image Credit: Rory Thomas, 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 Academic Year.

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
PS4104	100078 (80%); 101278 (20%)	2026-27

Course Title	Professional Studio 4
Course Contact	Katherine McNeil

Credits	10
SCQF Level	Level 10
When Taught	Semester 1

Associated Programmes	Bachelor of Architecture with Honours BSc in Environmental Architecture with Honours BSc in Interior Architecture with Honours Diploma in Architecture
Lead School	Mackintosh School of Architecture
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	Programme Approval September 2025

Course Introduction

The Professional Studio 4 course develops a student's application of the business and professional competencies required within architectural practice. The competencies are applied to case studies and the wider social, political and ethical contexts. Students explore the impact of change and risk through the case studies. The role and responsibilities of the architect in providing appropriate, informed solutions are explored, expanding a student's capacity in the application of professional judgement.

The course develops a student's application of professional skills and knowledge relative to broader external influences. Students appraise professional values and articulate how these can respond to client needs, inform alternative design and procurement options and promote effective management of adaptation and change.

To prepare students for working in architectural practice and the construction industry, students develop and define their position as future architects within the profession and construction industry. Students are encouraged to articulate the role of the architect as an advocate of professionalism within the collaborative working environment of the construction industry and legislative frameworks.

Students are taught through a combination of seminars and a series of workshops which utilise case studies in which the principles of working in practice, business management and the application of core statutory and regulatory processes are applied.

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:

professionalism: refine a student's ability to apply the principles and practices of professionalism in terms of behaviour, business and contractual competencies, and statutory and regulatory frameworks in relation to the agency of the architect

design/create: refine a student's ability to apply an iterative design process informed by professional values, competencies, and statutory and legislative frameworks

research: refine a student's ability to use advanced research skills to inform arguments in relation to the business and contractual competencies required for architectural practice supported by appropriate evidence

communication: refine a student's ability to present informed arguments verbally and visually in a professional manner

skills: refine a student's use of analogue and digital tools to express the agency of the architect in relation to a design project

knowledge: refine a student's knowledge of statutory processes, competencies, the role and relationships of built environment professionals within the construction industry relative to wider social, political, ethical and financial contexts

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the Professional Studies 4 course students will be able to **appraise, integrate and articulate:**

professionalism: the principles and practices of professionalism in terms of behaviour, business and contractual competencies, and statutory and regulatory frameworks in relation to the agency of the architect

design/create: an iterative design process informed by professional values, competencies, and statutory and legislative frameworks

research: advanced research skills informing arguments in relation to the business and contractual competencies required for architectural practice supported by appropriate evidence

communication: the presentation of informed arguments verbally and visually in a professional manner

skills: the use of analogue and digital tools to express the agency of the architect in relation to a design project

knowledge: knowledge of statutory processes, competencies, the role and relationships of built environment professionals within the construction industry relative to wider social, political, ethical and financial contexts

Indicative Content

Students engage with the concepts of change, alternative solutions and risk assessment in the design and procurement of architectural projects. The influence and impact of wider social, political, financial and ethical contexts are explored in greater depth.

During the course the students will:

- undertake research to identify the wider contexts which influence the design and procurement of a project
- define the project stakeholders and their requirements

- analyse and assess the priorities for client needs and requirements including:
 - health and safety
 - risk management
 - sustainable design solutions
 - building performance
- explore alternative strategies for pathways in the development of the design and procurement processes
- consider the impact of change on time, quality and cost
- establish and present project strategies derived from the ARB/RIBA professional competencies

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

Pedagogy:

Students explore the agency of the architect in relation to professional practice through a series of tasks relating to case studies, conditioned by the wider social, political and ethical contexts.

Delivery:

The course is delivered using a range of learning and teaching activities, including group seminars and workshops which are designed to foster collaboration, enhance communication skills and promote knowledge sharing. Staff-directed study is complemented by independent student-directed study. Students are supported in preparing groupwork through briefings on strategies for collaboration and provided with example submissions.

Timetable:

Weekly lectures and group workshops.

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
10	100

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

Formative activities are provided during the course, offering students the opportunity to obtain staff feedback.

The lectures and workshops provide students with the opportunity for staff feedback during the sessions. Students are offered the opportunity for staff feedback on the outline of their individual written submission. The Formative assessment and feedback provided fosters reflective learning while supporting the Summative graded assessment and feedback process, which generally happens at the end of the course. During the academic session, staff deliver assessment workshops with students, clarifying both the Formative and Summative assessment processes delivered within the Programme.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

Summative assessment is generally undertaken at the end of the course. Students' work is assessed against the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for each course which are aligned with the professional competencies required for architectural practice. Summative assessment is undertaken through an individual 2000 word written submission based on the course group workshop. 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.

During the academic session, staff deliver assessment workshops with students, clarifying the assessment process delivered within the Programme.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Students are required to submit an individual illustrated written Report (2000 words) based on the course group workshop.	100%	Semester 1 Week 12

Exchange/Study Abroad

Can this course be taken by Exchange/Study Abroad students?	Yes
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 online 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.