

Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Studio Work 1A



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
	100122 (50%); 100583 (50%)	2026-27

Course Title	Studio Work 1A
Course Contact	Tilo Einert

Credits	20
SCQF Level	Level 7
When Taught	Semester 1

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

Course Introduction

The Studio Work 1A course, delivered in sequence with the Studio Work 1B course, introduces students to the contemporary challenges and opportunities of architectural design in the context of rural Scotland, normally in the form of an island setting. The course is designed to develop students' ability to analyse, evaluate and respond to architectural contexts in making the value judgements necessary to support creative and regenerative design proposals. Through Studio Work 1 A & B, students learn the fundamental drawing and making skills required to represent, explore, develop, and communicate architectural proposals. The focus is on hand-drawing and the making of physical models, grounding students in the world of materials and craft. Students study existing buildings from across the globe to understand how culture, materials, and environment shape architecture, and use that developing knowledge to inform their design proposals.

Students are introduced to professionalism, design and creative processes, research methods, communication, and the architectural knowledge and representational skills required to create safe, sustainable, and efficient design proposals, while expressing the architectural character and meaning of their design outputs. Students explore their critical thinking and design methodology, supported by specific knowledge delivered through subject specialist courses in technology and history:

Architectural Technology (AT) provides specialist technical knowledge for application through design projects.

History and Urban Studies (HAUS) informs studio discourse.

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

Course Aims

The aims of the course are to:

professional: introduce students to the use of the principles and practices of legal, regulatory and statutory compliance in relation to basic architectural design projects

design/create: introduce students to the requirement to address the environmental, socio-economic, cultural and aesthetic demands of architecture through a creative design process in the production of basic architectural design proposals in relation to a small-scale rural settlement

research: introduce students to the use of design-led research skills and tools required to analyse, design, and construct buildings and spaces that are safe, efficient, and sustainable

communication: introduce students to the methods of communicating architectural intent visually and verbally through a range of analogue and digital tools

skills: introduce students to design methodologies, architectural communication and the use of analogue tools to produce architectural design proposals

knowledge: introduce students to the use of architectural theories, concepts, and techniques in the production basic architectural design projects

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the Course students will be able to **examine and demonstrate:**

professional: professional ethics in terms of collaborative, inclusive, sustainable and safe design principles in the production of basic architectural design proposals in relation to a small-scale rural settlement

design/create: a creative design process in the production of basic architectural design proposals in relation to a small-scale rural settlement

research: design-led research skills in the production of basic architectural design proposals in relation to a small-scale rural settlement

communication: the ability to visually and verbally communicate their ideas and to present basic architectural design proposals using a range of media in relation to a small-scale rural settlement

skills: the use of digital and analogue tools in the production of basic architectural design proposals in relation to a small-scale rural settlement

knowledge: knowledge of architectural theories, concepts, and techniques in the production of basic architectural design proposals in relation to a small-scale rural settlement

Indicative Content

Students develop their knowledge and understanding of the contemporary challenges and opportunities of designing for a rural setting. Following an introductory project which asks students to analyse a range of vernacular architectural typologies, students develop design proposals for the adaptive re-use of an existing vernacular building, exploring notions of place, adaptive re-use, craft, and ecology. The rural context demands a broad understanding of the physical and societal issues both specific to the selected landscape and settlement, alongside more generic conditions of rural life.

During the course students will:

- complete an introductory survey of vernacular architecture to better understand the fundamentals of architecture and the importance of place, ecology, and material resources
- undertake fieldwork and desktop research to enable recording, analysis, and evaluation of a rural landscape / small-scale settlement
- develop spatial and planning strategies in response to programmatic briefs, site context and available technologies
- produce a comprehensive design project with a live/work programme supported by a range of design investigations
- explore regenerative design through a range of processes including the adaptive re-use of existing buildings, material selection and environmental performance
- collaborate with peers in a range of groups sizes to produce design outputs
- use analogue tools to both represent the landscape and to evaluate their designs in relation to notions of place, craft, and ecology.
- present their design proposals at various stages of development to various audiences in a range of settings

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/ HAUS/ Professional Studio, and enacted through design projects. The course is intended to enable students to develop iterative and reflective design practices while enabling their critical, ethical and professional position as an architect and designer. Student learning is 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 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 course.

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 project, enabling staff and students to create 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 studio 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
20	200

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

Formative feedback is delivered during the course, offering students the opportunity to obtain ongoing staff and peer feedback through presentation, discussion and review of design projects.

As such Formative 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.

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 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. Students are supported in preparing their submissions with feedback and provided with example submissions. 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
Portfolio Students are required to submit a digital Portfolio of their studio design work for assessment.	100%	Week 8

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	
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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.
