

Glasgow School of Art Programme Specification
Programme Title: BA (Hons) Communication Design



Image: Iris Nicholson

Please note that this programme specification is correct on the date of publication but may be subject to amendment prior to the start of the Academic Year.

1. Programme Details	
Programme Title	BA (Hons) Communication Design
School	Design
Programme Leader	Steve Rigley
Award to be Conferred	BA (Hons) Communication Design
Exit Awards	Stage 1 Certificate of Higher Education Stage 2 Diploma of Higher Education Stage 3 BA Communication Design Stage 4 BA (Hons) Communication Design
SCQF Level	7-10
Credits	480
Mode of Study	Full-Time
HECOS Code	

Academic Session	2026-27
Date of Approval	PACAAG April 2026

Awarding Institution	University of Glasgow
Teaching Institutions	The Glasgow School of Art
Campus	Reid Building, Garnethill
Lead School/Board of Studies	School of Design
Other Schools/Board of Studies	N/A
Programme Accredited By (PSRBs)	N/A

2. Entry Qualifications.	
Highers	Standard: ABBB, including a literate subject Minimum: BBCC, including a literate subject
A Levels	Standard: ABB and GCSE English at A/7 grade or above Minimum: BBC and GCSE English at A/7 grade or above
Other	International Baccalaureate: 30 points overall in the Diploma, including 18 at Higher Level, normally including English and Maths. Irish Leaving Certificate: Four Highers at H2 or above - subjects required as per Scottish Highers. Other eligible qualifications for entry include Foundation Diplomas in Art & Design, Higher National Certificates (HNC), Higher National Diplomas (HND), Foundation Degrees, Level 3 Diplomas, and other Further Education and Higher Education qualifications in related subjects. Entrants may begin their studies in Stage 2 or Stage 3 depending on the level of prior qualifications and other entry criteria. Detailed information about the required

	<p>grades for individuals holding or studying these qualifications can be access on the website.</p> <p>Applicants from outside the UK and Ireland should also consult our International student pages for details of accepted qualifications from specific countries.</p> <p>Applicants who do not meet entry requirements through formal qualifications but can demonstrate experience, skills and abilities at the appropriate level can also be considered.</p> <p>Additional entry requirements: Applicants are normally required to submit a portfolio or work and may be required to attend an Interview as part of their admissions assessment.</p>
<p>English Language Requirements</p>	<p>Applicants who are not a national of, nor have obtained a degree in one of the countries on the approved UKVI exemption list or those who require a Student Visa, will need to provide evidence of their English language ability.</p> <p>GSA's preferred test is the IELTS for UKVI (Academic) test taken at a UKVI approved test centre. GSA require all students, who require a student visa, to meet the following requirements to gain entry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IELTS for UKVI Academic with an overall score of 6 with a minimum of 5.5 in all components; • An alternative Accepted English Language Test which can be found on the Postgraduate ‘How to Apply’ page of the GSA website.

3. Programme Introduction

The BA (Hons) Communication Design programme provides a dynamic, inclusive, and supportive learning environment that fully equips graduates as 21st-century designers, whether in professional studio practice or further academic study.

The curriculum consists of an exciting range of project-based practical and theoretical courses, which vary in length within and across the two academic semesters each year. During stages 1 and 2, particular emphasis is placed upon building a dynamic and inclusive community of learners, along with providing a solid, broad-based platform in research, experimentation and critical thinking ahead of choosing a specialist pathway for Stages 3 and 4. Community-building is an important feature of semester 1 and so each entry level delivers a range of short, collaborative projects and activities this semester. Stage 2 also contains two Bridging Projects that allow students to experience briefs and teaching from within the pathways, which include Photography (including Lens-based practice), Graphic Design and Illustration. In addition to the Bridging Projects, assessment feedback and the regular input of visiting speakers and lecturers from a broad range of

Industry practices helps students to build an informed and nuanced understanding of the professional landscape they may enter following graduation.

The programme supports students in developing knowledge and understanding to undertake sophisticated research and visual problem-solving. Students acquire appropriate skills to contribute to the broader international contexts and territories of communication design and the ability to respond sensitively to complex ethical, societal, and environmental challenges.

The programme promotes a culture that recognises collaboration, interdisciplinary peer learning, and independence as essential elements in the effective practice of Communication Design. The research, scholarly activity, and professional practice of staff directly inform the contemporary relevance of the programme.

Within the programme, Studio courses provide a series of incremental project-based experiences with opportunities to reflect upon learning as it develops towards building a critical practice. Design History and Theory courses explore critical and contextual perspectives, and courses shared with other programmes, including Co-Lab and Design Domain, foster expanded perspectives by connecting broader domains of learning and knowledge. Opportunities for student international exchanges, collaborative learning, industry projects, and careers and enterprise experiences help support how students develop graduate skills and attributes.

4. Programme Aims

The aims of the programme are to:

1. equip our graduating students with the curiosity and skills to sustain life-long learning
2. encourage initiative, innovation and risk-taking within their practice
3. develop technical skills and critical approaches to challenge presumptions, provoke new insights and to expand the discipline of Communication Design
4. build personal and professional skills to enable independent and collaborative learning
5. develop professional communication skills to present ideas and engage with a variety of audiencesengage with complex ethical, societal and environmental challenges
6. engage with complex ethical, societal and environmental challenges

5. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

After full participation in and successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:

1. inform and enrich their practice through primary and secondary research
2. speculate, through structured experimentation and innovation, generating ideas and employing critical reflection
3. employ the technical skills and critical approaches appropriate to their communication design interests
4. manage their time and learning, working both independently and in collaboration with peers,staff and partners
5. efficiently communicate to a range of audiences, including peers and staff, engaging with feedback
6. critically engage, through the lens of their practice, in complex ethical, societal and environmental challenges

6. Description of Learning and Teaching Approaches

A variety of teaching and learning approaches are employed to support student engagement with the curriculum and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. These include:

- short, community-building collaborative projects and activities
- briefings
- inductions and demonstrations
- technical workshops
- studio activities
- individual and group tutorials
- talks, lectures, seminars, and study visits
- group critiques and reviews, peer review, and presentations
- presentations and writing
- reflection and self-evaluation

Skills, including digital, material and technical resources, are introduced through inductions, demonstrations, and workshops.

Independent learning skills will be developed and supported through guided activities and digital online learning resources available on Canvas.

A variety of teaching and learning approaches, including in person, blended and online learning and delivery, are employed to support student engagement with the curriculum and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

7. Description of Assessment Methods

Formative Assessment offers students the opportunity to obtain ongoing tutor and peer feedback throughout the development of their summative submissions over the length of each course. Students are supported in their learning through a range of formative activities with staff and peers, such as workshops, reviews and tutorials offering ongoing formative feedback as they progress through each course within this programme.

Summative Assessment is designed to support students in reviewing, collating, and communicating work produced in response to project briefs and learning and teaching activities associated with the program and its courses. Submissions will be assessed and moderated in line with the Code of Assessment, which outlines reassessment opportunities where a student has not passed the course.

The summative submissions vary according to the course. For example, submissions to the Studio courses will include an annotated digital portfolio, which will feature work from the range of workshops and studio projects undertaken. Work submitted in the digital portfolio might include sketchbooks, working prototypes and final outcomes, along with supporting written annotations. The digital submission can be supplemented with supporting physical artefacts and a reflective self-assessment. In place of written annotations in the digital portfolio, students may opt to submit a short film and/or an audio recording. Submissions to each course are assessed by the relevant staff teams, with written feedback delivered online. Both Formative and Summative assessments are supportive and constructive, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and offering guidance to inform future learning and direction.

8. Programme Structure				
Stage 1				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio 1A	40	7	1	
Co-Lab	20	7	1	
Studio 1B	40	7	2	
Design Objects, Ideas, Contexts, Histories	20	7	2	
Total Stage Credits	120			

Stage 2				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio 2A	40	8	1	
Design History & Theory 2A	10	8	1	
Design Domain 2A	10	8	1	
Studio 2B	40	8	2	
Design History & Theory 2B	10	8	2	
Design Domain 2B	10	8	2	
Total Stage Credits	120			

Stage 3				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio 3A	40	9	1	
Design History & Theory 3A	10	9	1	
Design Domain 3A	10	9	1	
Studio 3B	40	9	2	
Design History & Theory 3B	10	9	2	
Design Domain 3B	10	9	2	
Total Stage Credits	120			

Stage 4 Option 1				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio 4	80	10	1 & 2	
Design History and Theory 4 (40)	40	10	1 & 2	
Total Stage Credits	120			

Stage 4 Option 2				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio 4	80	10	1 & 2	
Extending Design: Reflective Encounters	20	10	2	
Design History and Theory 4 (20)	20	10	1	
Total Stage Credits	120			

9. Outgoing Exchange and Visiting Student Arrangements				
BA (Hons) Communication Design students may apply to undertake a period of exchange with one of our international partner institutions. International exchanges will normally take place in Stage 3 of				

study and be for the duration of one full semester, either Semester 1 or Semester 2. BA (Hons) Communication Design welcomes incoming exchange students studying at a registered exchange partner who may apply to GSA for a period of exchange, usually one full semester, either Semester 1 or Semester 2.

Study Abroad (Visiting Students) is open to applications for full-year, Semester 1, and Semester 2 entry on Stage 2 and Stage 3 of the BA (Hons) Communication Design programme. Study Abroad students will be entered into the most appropriate year entry point based on their portfolio and application.

Stage 2 Exchange and Visiting Student Courses

Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio 2A	40	9	1	
Design History and Theory 2A	10	9	1	
Design Domain 2A	10	9	1	
Studio 2B	40	9	2	
Design History and Theory 2B	10	9	2	
Design Domain 2B	10	9	2	

Stage 3 Exchange and Visiting Student Courses

Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio 3A	40	9	1	
Design History and Theory 3A	10	9	1	
Design Domain 3A	10	9	1	
Studio 3B	40	9	2	
Design History and Theory 3B	10	9	2	
Design Domain 3B	10	9	2	

10. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and Other External Reference Points

Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas. For further information relevant to this programme see:

QAA *Subject Benchmark Statement: Art and Design*. Gloucester: QAA. Available from: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement--art-and-design>

11. Programme Regulations and Requirements for Progression

All GSA Degree programmes are validated by the University of Glasgow and the GSA's Programme Regulations are published in the [University of Glasgow University Regulations](#).

These regulations include the requirements in relation to:

- (a) Award of the degree
- (b) Progression requirements
- (c) Early exit awards

In referring to regulations for degree programmes, students should consult the University Regulations which were in force in the academic session in which they first registered for the degree programme in question.