

**Glasgow School of Art Course Specification  
Developing Practice (Self-Initiated)**



*Image Credit: Erlend Prendergast 2019*

*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 2026-27 Academic Year.*

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
		2026-27

<b>Course Title</b>	Developing Practice (Self-Initiated)
<b>Course Contact</b>	Kirsty Ross

<b>Credits</b>	60
<b>SCQF Level</b>	10
<b>When Taught</b>	Stage 4, Semester 2

<b>Associated Programmes</b>	BDes Product Design
<b>Lead School</b>	School of Innovation and Technology
<b>Other Schools</b>	N/A
<b>Date of Approval</b>	

#### Course Introduction

This course focuses on developing a greater degree of creative autonomy and professional competency in the practice of product design and design-led innovation approaches.

In addition to the core skills gained in the studio courses across Years 1 and 2, and the experiences of exploring future systems and self-directed practice within Year 3 studio, this course encourages students to develop an individual design identity, define their practice and style of curatorship.

Students will work towards developing a creative and reflective design practice capable of demonstrating proficiency in 'design for society' approaches to product design through engagement with stakeholders, communities and audiences, and in the production of artefacts, services, systems and experiences.

#### Course Aims

This course provides students with the opportunity to:

- Work autonomously through self-directed exploration and individual creative practice within an environment of peer, academic, and professional interactions.
- Deploy the design process as the synthesis of research, analysis, development, and critique within the context of contemporary design practice.
- Identify the impact of a design proposition in response to a self-defined opportunity, problem, or context.
- Produce tangible designed outcomes and communication material to a level where the value is explicit.

#### Course Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Apply appropriate research methods and analysis to inform the development of a (self-directed) design brief.
- Explore an individual design direction through an iterative, reflective practice

- Engage with project stakeholders and recipients to inform the evolution of a self-directed design proposal.
- Demonstrate conceptual and semantic refinement in the manifestation of a resolved design outcome.
- Communicate the value of a design proposition for the intended recipients and wider communities using a range of media.
- Manage a project from definition of brief to realisation of design intent through the delivery of a self-directed body of work

### Indicative Content

This course covers the following content:

- Brief writing
- Engagement with stakeholders and/or participants
- Project management
- Production of a personal portfolio of designed products, engagement artefacts, services and experiences
- Curatorial and exhibition skills

### Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

In this course, students will be expected to increasingly take significant responsibility for the management of their learning. Emphasis will be placed on the gradual encouraging of self-reliance and personal academic development.

This course is designed as a practice-based experience which supports students in their introduction to studio-based learning and practice. This is further supported by TSD (Technical Services Department), who provide workshop and material-based learning.

The principal teaching strategies employed on this course are:

**Tutorial** (group and individual) - designed to provide academic support through individual or group meetings with staff to discuss the different directions and aspects of projects or course-based activities as well as progress on the programme/course overall.

**Review** (group and individual) - enables the development of key presentation skills and encourages students to receive and give constructive feedback regarding each other's work, and an opportunity to debate project input. These may be tutor-led, tutor-facilitated, or peer-led allowing students to fully explore all aspects of practical submissions within a reflective discursive framework.

**Presentation** (visual and verbal) - an important learning device used to generate peer debate regarding the generation, development or overall success of concepts, and their practical realisation within the context of a project brief or proposal. Students present work to their peers, tutors and stakeholders when relevant through appropriate visual and verbal means (including: models or mock-ups, portfolios, videos, slideshows, etc.).

**Workshops** - are practice-based sessions aimed at supporting students to develop key skills to support project development.

**Self-Directed Learning** - self-directed study emphasises the importance of autonomy, reflection upon personal learning and project work within an individual and/or a collaborative environment.

**Guest Speaker sessions** (when relevant) – include input from visiting lecturers/guests from industry and academic staff enabling students access to, and understanding of, relevant contemporary practice, research and commercial context. Talks arranged at the School of Innovation and Technology are often open to all students regardless of year group or programme.

**Lectures** - often used to introduce key knowledge to support practical work project development, to disseminate theoretical, methodological, contextual and historical knowledge and address specific issues related to each course which can be used to underpin practical studio work. Lectures also have the broad aim of generating further debate in seminars, tutorials, studio sessions or further enquiry in self- directed learning or research.

This course is supported by a virtual learning environment tool (Canvas) for the dissemination, discussion and access to relevant course information, and signpost 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

Students are supported in their learning through a range of formative assessment activities that enable students to reflect on their learning as they progress through the course. This includes:

- Regular feedback from tutors through engagement in individual and group tutorials, reviews and presentations
- Class discussion and peer input

#### Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

Summative assessment is designed to support students to reflect upon their learning on completion of a course. It provides an evaluation of progress made and the level of achievement identifiable in the work submitted.

Following an assessment presentation, students will submit a body of work for assessment. Grades will be awarded using the GSA marking scheme following/adhering to the assessment regulations in the Code of Assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
<b>Annotated Portfolio</b> - Students are required to submit an annotated portfolio of work (2D & 3D) that responds to a given project and that includes the prescribed deliverables	100	Week 12

#### Exchange/Study Abroad

<b>Can this course be taken by Exchange/Study Abroad students?</b>	No
<b>Are all the students on the course taught wholly by distance learning?</b>	No
<b>Does this course represent a work placement or a year of study abroad?</b>	No
<b>Is this course collaborative with any other institutions?</b>	No

**If yes, then please provide the names of the other teaching institutions**

N/A

**Reading and On-line Resources**

An on-line resource list will be provided to students at the start of the course. This will be reviewed annually to remain relevant and current for the course and subject specialism. An indicative list of resources is accessible via [Resource Lists](#).