

Glasgow School of Art Programme Specification
Programme Title: Diploma in Architecture

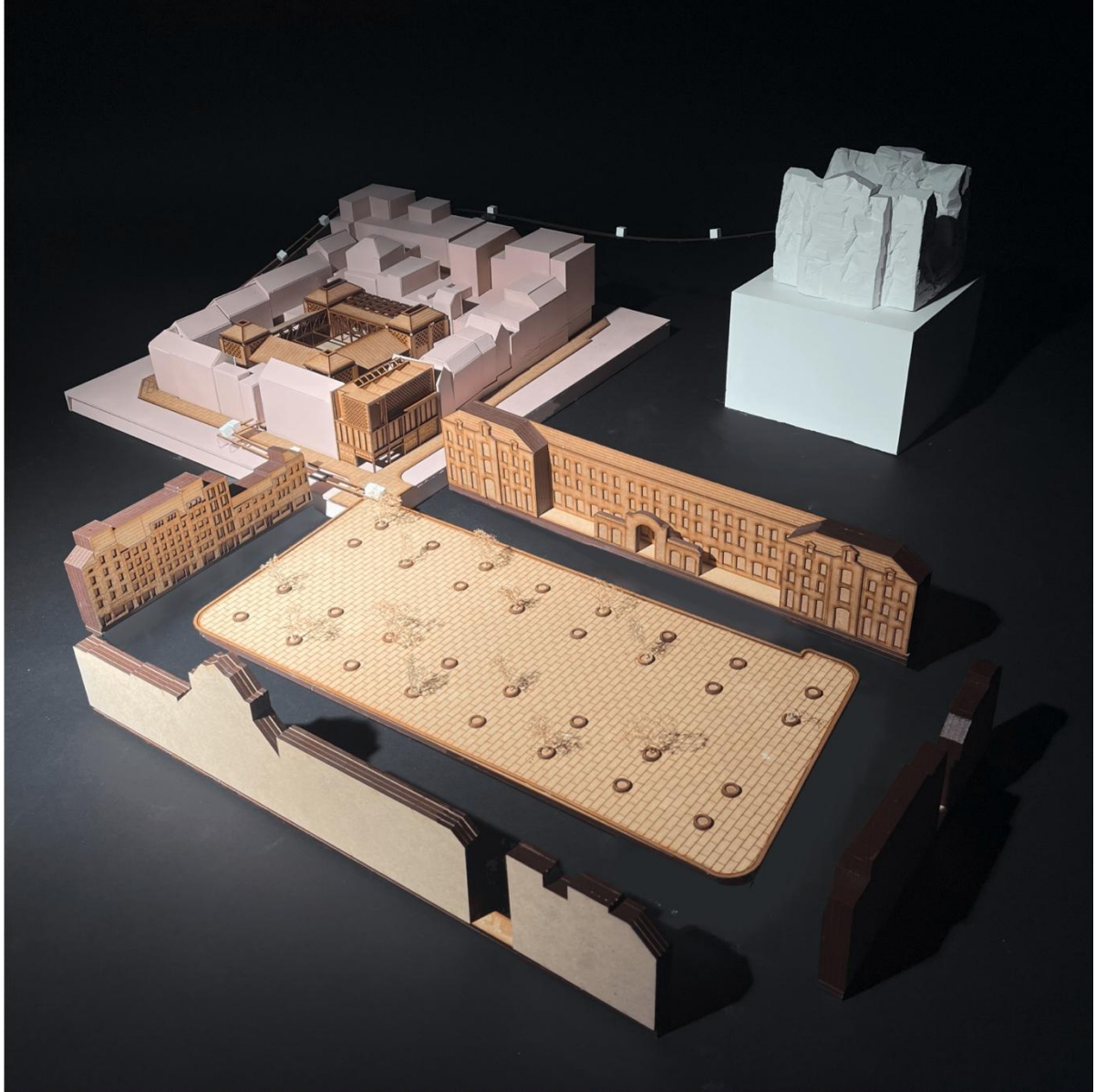


Image Credit: Rachel Crooks, Mackintosh School of Architecture, Year 5, 2023-24

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	Diploma in Architecture
School	Mackintosh School of Architecture
Programme Leader	Isabel Deakin
Award to be Conferred	Diploma in Architecture
Exit Awards	
SCQF Level	Level 10 & Level 11
Credits	240
Mode of Study	Full-time and Part-time
HECOS Code	100122/100197/100584

Academic Session	2026-27
Date of Approval	PACAAG April 2025

Awarding Institution	University of Glasgow
Teaching Institutions	The Glasgow School of Art
Campus	Glasgow
Lead School/Board of Studies	Mackintosh School of Architecture
Other Schools/Board of Studies	N/A
Programme Accredited By (PSRBs)	Programme validated by Royal Institute of British Architects Programme prescribed by Architects Registration Board

2. Entry Qualifications	
Highers	
A Levels	
Other	<p>An undergraduate Degree with a minimum second-class Bachelor's Degree in Architecture.</p> <p>Additional entry requirements: Applicants are normally required to submit a portfolio of architectural design project work of a standard approved by the Head of the Mackintosh School of Architecture, along with satisfactory academic references and a personal statement as part of their applications. Applicants may also be required to attend an interview as part of their admissions assessment.</p> <p>Candidates with the degree of Bachelor of Architecture (Honours) of Glasgow University may be exempted from stage 4 of the Diploma 2 Programme.</p> <p>A candidate with an equivalent degree of another University may be admitted on this basis on the approval of the Head of the School of Architecture.</p>
English Language Requirements	Applicants who are not a national of, nor have obtained a degree in one of the countries on the approved UKVI

	<p>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 6.5 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.
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3. Programme Introduction	
<p>Successful completion of the Diploma of Architecture programme provides Exemption from the ARB and RIBA Part 2 Examination in Architecture.</p> <p>Uniquely positioned within a wider community of artists and designers at the Glasgow School of Art the programme offers students the opportunity to develop their creative practice in architecture while building their academic and social networks. The Programme ethos is founded on a commitment to create positive change for people, places and the planet with a focus on the relationships between architecture and the 21st Century City.</p> <p>Our curriculum is centred on contemporary issues of architecture, building and the City. This is pursued through critical engagement with students examining environmental, social, cultural, political, economic and ethical issues shaping the built environment both presently and in the future. Students use Glasgow and then a European City as the model for study.</p> <p>The Programme is studio based and design-project focussed, supported with taught courses in Studio, Architectural Technology, Professional Studio and Research, delivered holistically through a framework of six learning domains: Professionalism, Design/Create, Research, Communication, Skills, and Knowledge.</p> <p>The curriculum is delivered through teaching methodologies enabling students to extend their core skills of architectural production, founded on regenerative design principles, research and investigation, an iterative design process, and deploying the associated visual and verbal skills, to propose architectural responses to societal, spatial, ethical and environmental challenges facing the contemporary world. Graduates will be both climate literate and numerate, able to make informed design decisions which address both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of climate change and be ethically aware.</p> <p>The programme provides an intensive theoretical background in the forces shaping contemporary architecture and supports individuals to develop creative design skills with intellectual and aesthetic rigour. The studio environment provides a forum for critical discussion, peer learning and support, where inclusivity is fostered through a mutually respectful, supportive and collaborative studio culture. Diverse teaching and learning methods encourage students to be curious and confident and above all independent in developing their own personal responses to architecture and the environment.</p> <p>Through their design and written work, graduating students are able to demonstrate the ability to</p>	

generate design proposals which integrate an understanding of environmental physics and comply with the relevant statutory standards, while synthesising complex environmental, social and spatial issues.

On completion of the programme, the primary aim is that graduates, as emerging professionals, are highly competent and creative practitioners, and as graduates of the Glasgow School of Art, are engaged citizens, critical thinkers, skilled communicators, inclusive and creative collaborators and life-long learners.

4. Programme Aims

The aims of the Programme are to enable students to:

- Undertake study which satisfies the requirements for the exemption from the ARB and RIBA Part 2 examination, whilst questioning and enhancing the creative role of the architect to respond to the ethical and environmental challenges of the 21st Century.
- Become creative self-reflective thinkers whose architectural practice is centred on inclusive, ethical and collaborative processes that are evident and explicit in their self-directed decision making and outputs.
- Develop research methodologies, research processes and systematic investigations to support complex architectural outputs and the associated architectural technology challenges.
- Communicate complex architectural ideas through different media to a range of audiences in a variety of different settings.
- Develop advanced architectural thinking, communication and design skills using iterative processes as evidenced through self-directed creative proposals.
- Develop a comprehensive knowledge of the discipline of architectural design, technology and professional practice in relation to the people, places and the planet.

5. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

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

Professionalism: knowledge of professional ethics in terms of collaborative, inclusive, sustainable and safe design principles in their professional/academic practice

Design/Create: a creative design process in the production of self-directed design proposals in relation to the discipline of architecture

Research: research skills in the production of a range of self-directed outputs including design projects

Communication: use and integration of analogue and digital media to visually and verbally communicate structured thinking and design proposals to a range of audiences

Skills: critical reflection, communication and a structured methodology, with digital and analogue tools, in the production of architectural design proposals

Knowledge: the creative use of advanced architectural theories, concepts, and techniques to address social, ethical and environmental challenges in a range of outputs including design proposals.

6. Description of Learning and Teaching Approaches

MSA offers a comprehensive and innovative learning experience that combines the richness of traditional studio-based architectural education supported by digital software developments and online delivery methods. The programme content and delivery provide students with a solid foundation in architectural principles, design theories, and practical skills founded on hands-on learning and immersive studio experiences, where students use hand-drawing, physical and digital modelling, discourse and discussion to explore design projects, supported by lectures in architectural technology, history and theory, and professional studio.

While curriculum delivery is predominantly in-person, online delivery methods supplement in-person delivery to offer students flexibility and accessibility. Online lectures, virtual workshops, and interactive design sessions allow students to participate in learning activities, providing them with the opportunity to manage their studies effectively while meeting their personal commitments. Students have access to digital software and tools commonly used in contemporary architecture, including 3D modelling, Building Information Modelling (BIM), visualization software, and other digital platforms that facilitate innovative design processes and foster creativity.

Design tutorials are offered in a range of groups sizes down to one-to-one tutorials between students and studio tutor. Group tutorials encourage peer-to-peer learning through the exchange of ideas and critical engagement with the work of others. Design Forums are generally arranged at the mid and endpoint of studio projects to encourage discussions around the design issues raised by the studio project.

Lectures and seminars are delivered through the Specialist subject courses in architectural technology, history and theory, and professional studio, offering students the opportunity to broaden their architectural knowledge and understanding coupled with analytical and critical thinking skills.

Project field trips are an essential aspect of the learning experience connecting student projects with real world situations, grounding students design propositions in places and communities with specific environmental issues.

7. Description of Assessment Methods

Assessment is undertaken through both formative and summative tasks. Formative assessment offers students the opportunity to obtain ongoing staff and peer feedback through discussion and review throughout the course. As such the Formative assessment process provided during the course supports the Summative assessment process which is generally undertaken at the end of the course.

Summative assessment is designed to support student learning through evaluation of the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for each course which are aligned with the required professional competencies. Summative assessment is undertaken through coursework assignments and/or formal written examinations. Coursework involves visual and text-based submissions in both digital and physical formats including design portfolios, technical studies and written essays. All summative assessments are marked in line with GSA's Code of Assessment.

During the academic session staff deliver assessment workshops with students clarifying the assessment processes applied within the Programme.

8. Programme Structure

Stage 4				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio Work 4	60	10	1 and 2	
Architectural Technology 4	30	10	1 and 2	
Research Project 4	20	10	1 and 2	
Professional Studio 4	10	10	1	
Total Stage Credits	120			

Stage 5				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Final Design Thesis	60	11	1 and 2	
Architectural Technology 5	30	11	1 and 2	
Post Graduate Elective	20	11	2	
Professional Studio 5	10	11	1	
Total Stage Credits	120			

In the Part-time Mode the courses are taken as follows:

DP1				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio Work 4	60	10	1 and 2	
Architectural Technology 4	30	10	1 and 2	
PT Mode – Year 1 Total Credits	90			

DP2				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Research Project 4	20	10	1 and 2	
Professional Studio 4	10	10	1	
Professional Studio 5	10	11	1	
Post Graduate Elective	20	11	2	
PT Mode - Year 2 Total Credits	60			

DP3				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Final Design Thesis	60	11	1 and 2	
Architectural Technology 5	30	11	1 and 2	
PT Mode – Year 3 TotalCredits	90			

9. Outgoing Exchange and Visiting Student Arrangements

Outgoing Exchange students undertake the first Semester of Stage 5 with one of our host partners with the requirements to undertake 60 SCQF/ 30 ECTS academic credits. Stage 5 students on Exchange Out will return to GSA for semester 2 and thereafter present work for summative assessment at the June Examination board.

Exchange-In and Visiting Students who undertake the first Semester of Stage 4 will have the opportunity to undertake up to 60 SCQF/ 30 ECTS academic credits, including Studio Work 4 Exchange In, Architectural Technology 4 Exchange In, and the Professional Studio 4 course which takes place in Semester 1.

Exchange-In and Visiting Students who undertake the two semesters of Stage 4 will have the opportunity to undertake up to 120 SCQF/ 60 ECTS academic credits.

Stage 4 Exchange-In and Visiting Student Courses – Semester 1 Only

Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio Work 4 Exchange In	30	10	1	
Architectural Technology 4 Exchange In	20	10	1	
Professional Studio 4	10	10	1	

Stage 4 Exchange-In and Visiting Student Courses – Semester 1 & 2

Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio Work 4	60	10	1 and 2	
Architectural Technology 4	30	10	1 and 2	
Research Project 4	20	10	1 and 2	
Professional Studio 4	10	10	1	

Stage 5 Partial Exchange Out Courses – Semester 2

Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Final Design Thesis- Partial Year Exchange Out	30	11	2	
Architectural Technology 5- Exchange Out	20	11	2	
Professional Studies 5 – Exchange Out	10	11	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: Academic:

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement--architecture>

Professional:

<http://www.arb.org.uk/information-for-schools-of-architecture/arb-criteria/>

<https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/how-to-become-an-architect>

<https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/resources-landing-page/validationprocedures-and-criteria>
<https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/resources-landing-page/the-way-ahead>

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 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.