

Glasgow School of Art Programme Specification

**Programme Title: Master of Design in Graphic Design, Illustration,
Photography (Individual Pathways)**



Image: Dominyka Sekonaite

| 1. Programme Details | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Programme Title | Master of Design in Graphic Design, Illustration, Photography (Individual Pathways) |
| School | School of Design |
| Programme Leader | Brian Cairns |
| Award to be Conferred | Master of Design in Graphic Design Master of Design in Illustration Master of Design in Photography (Individual Pathways) |
| Exit Awards | <p>Stage 1: Postgraduate Certificate in: Postgraduate Certificate in Graphic Design Postgraduate Certificate in Illustration Postgraduate Certificate in Photography (Individual Pathways)</p> <p>Stage 2: Postgraduate Diploma in: Postgraduate Diploma in Graphic Design Postgraduate Diploma in Illustration Postgraduate Diploma in Photography (Individual Pathways)</p> <p>Stage 3: Master of Design in: Master of Design in Graphic Design Master of Design in Illustration Master of Design in Photography (Individual Pathways)</p> |
| SCQF Level | 11 |
| Credits | 180 |
| Mode of Study | Full-time (12 months) |
| HECOS Code | 100061 / 1000062 / 100063 |

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|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Academic Session | 2026-27 |
| Date of Approval | Programme Approval February 2025 |

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| Awarding Institution | University of Glasgow |
| Teaching Institutions | Glasgow School of Art |
| Campus | Glasgow |
| 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 | N/A |
| A Levels | N/A |
| Other | An undergraduate Degree with minimum 2.2 or equivalent in a relevant subject area or equivalent professional practice. |

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| | <p>Additional entry requirements: Applicants are normally required to submit a portfolio of work, along with satisfactory academic references and a personal statement as parts of their applications. Applicants may also 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 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 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 Master of Design in Graphic Design, Illustration, Photography focuses on practice-led research and experimentation informing learning through three individual pathways within a one-year intensive master's programme. The programme prepares creative thinkers and makers to challenge their existing practices in an interdisciplinary studio-based learning environment that fosters a diverse postgraduate community. The programme equips students to critically reflect on their practice and learning through structured workshops, projects and to develop as self-directed practitioners.

The programme is delivered via a series of taught workshops, tutorials, set and elective projects, lectures, seminars, study trips and self-directed learning that engage with contemporary and historical practice underpinned by theory and research. Students engage in self-directed learning, peer learning, research, and critical reflection to inform and develop their discipline-specific practice. Informed by social, historical, technological, and economic contexts, the focus of study is specific to the discipline applied for (graphic design, illustration or photography), while benefitting from the interdisciplinary dialogue of other pathways in a shared studio environment.

In Stage 1, students are introduced to the principles and methods of practice-led research through scaffolded set projects in a studio-based learning environment. In Stage 2, students progress to develop self-directed projects. In Stage 3 students consolidate self-directed projects in a final portfolio of work contextualised through a critically reflective document. Moreover, the programme emphasises formal and informal cross-disciplinary discourse within the Stage 1 core

course on design research methods and Stage 2 PGT elective courses and reflects a sharing and collaborative ethos.

4. Programme Aims

The aims of the programme are to:

1. equip students with the critical reflective skills to construct new knowledge and meaning through specialist creative practice.
2. develop students' critical understanding of a range of specialist theories, methods and processes applied to practice-led research.
3. develop technical skills and critical approaches to challenge assumptions, provoke new insights and expand existing practices.
4. equip students with the personal and professional skills to enable self-directed and collaborative learning.
5. equip students with the appropriate professional skills to communicate complex ideas to a range of audiences, demonstrating an awareness of diverse perspectives.
6. equip our students with the skills to identify and respond to complex ethical, societal, political and environmental contexts.

5. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

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

1. evidence critical analysis, evaluation and reflection in the planning, development and execution of a self-directed project or projects.
2. evidence an extensive range of theory, methods and practice-led research processes to a specialist creative practice.
3. demonstrate informed judgement in creative responses to complex issues employing an appropriate range of specialist research methods
4. plan and execute a significant self-directed project or projects demonstrating originality, autonomy and informed judgement applied to specialist practice.
5. communicate complex ideas to diverse audiences regarding their specialist practice.
6. situate their specialist practice in response to complex ethical, societal, political and environmental contexts.

6. Description of Learning and Teaching Approaches

A range of teaching and learning approaches are employed to direct student learning with the curriculum to achieve the intended learning outcomes. These include:

- Briefings
- Introductions, Inductions and demonstrations
- Technical and process workshops
- Studio activities
- Peer-led activities
- Lectures, seminars, presentations and study visits
- Individual and group tutorials
- Staff/Student/Peer reviews of student work
- Critical reflective methods, textual, dialogic and visual.
- Journal and documentation of learning activities
- Continual reflective self-evaluation of progress and learning

Students are introduced to skills, including analogue, digital, software, material and technical knowledge through a series of introductions, 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 through 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 to review, collate and communicate work produced in response to project briefs and learning and teaching activities associated with the programme and its courses. Submissions will be assessed and moderated in line with the Code of Assessment.

8. Programme Structure

| Stage 1 | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|------------|----------|-------------|
| Course | Credits | SCQF Level | Semester | Course Code |
| Studio 1: Introducing Practice | 40 | 11 | 1 | |
| Design Research Methods | 20 | 11 | 1 | |

| Stage 1 | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|----------|-------------|
| Course | Credits | SCQF Level | Semester | Course Code |
| Total Stage Credits | 60 | | | |

| Stage 2 | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|----------|-------------|
| Course | Credits | SCQF Level | Semester | Course Code |
| Studio 2: Developing Practice | 40 | 11 | 2 | |
| Postgraduate Elective | 20 | 11 | 2 | |
| Total Stage Credits | 60 | | | |

| Stage 2 | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------------|----------|-------------|
| Course | Credits | SCQF Level | Semester | Course Code |
| Studio 3: Consolidating Practice | 60 | 11 | 3 | |
| Total Stage Credits | 60 | | | |

9. Outgoing Exchange and Visiting Student Arrangements

Not applicable.

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 (2026) Subject Benchmark Statement: Art and Design. Gloucester: QAA. Available from: [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.