

Glasgow School of Art Programme Specification

Programme Title: MASTER OF FINE ART (MFA)



Image courtesy of Yolanda Garcia Ceballos

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	Master of Fine Art
School	School of Fine Art
Programme Leader	TBC
Award to be Conferred	Master of Fine Art
Exit Awards	Stage 1: Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) Stage 2: Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Stage 3: Master of Fine Art (MFA)
SCQF Level	Level 11
Credits	240
Mode of Study	Full Time
HECOS Code	100059

Academic Session	2026-27
Date of Approval	PACAAG April 2026

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

2. Entry Qualifications	
Highers	N/A
A Levels	N/A
Other	<p>An undergraduate degree in Fine Art or a related subject area or equivalent professional practice.</p> <p>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>
English Language Requirements	<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 6.0 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

The Master of Fine Art (MFA) at The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) is recognised globally as a specialist practice-based postgraduate fine art programme at the forefront of contemporary artistic practice and education. The programme is designed to prepare and support artists for success in professional practice and advanced research.

Central to this success is a dynamic and vibrant studio-based learning environment fostered by a diverse and inclusive community of artists committed to critical thinking and multidisciplinary approaches. The MFA curriculum emphasises new and emerging methodologies in contemporary art practice, encouraging curiosity, experimentation, and speculation with an ever-broadening range of materials and media. Equally important is helping you explore how your artistic practice and research engage with different contexts, settings, and audiences to understand how your work can impact the art world and beyond. Embedded within Glasgow’s uniquely dynamic art scene, where artist-led collectives, public institutions and commercial galleries freely intermingle, the MFA welcomes students to benefit from and contribute to city’s artistic and cultural community.

A full-time programme of 60 weeks over two years with a summer break, leading to 240 credits at SCQF Level 11, the MFA provides an extended opportunity to reflect, develop and reposition your artistic practice and research. The curriculum nurtures individual and collective ambition, self-direction, and distinctiveness of practice within a mutually supportive, diverse, and thriving studio community. Driven by critical intelligence and artistic quality, the curriculum promotes openness to change through tutorials, group critiques, seminars, electives, and exhibition-making, strengthening your proficiency in artistic making and research methods. In addition to programme-specific studio-based courses, MFA students also study a course in research methods and methodologies for artistic practice alongside other postgraduate students in the School of Fine Art. You further extend your practice by participating in the GSA Postgraduate Taught Cross-School Electives programme.

The programme benefits artists from wide-ranging backgrounds and stages of career. It cultivates an international, cross-cultural community and network ensuring you benefit from multiple, diverse perspectives throughout your studies and beyond. Overall, the MFA provides diverse and dynamic learning opportunities for you to synthesise and integrate multiple skills, knowledge and abilities, allowing you to confidently and purposefully establish and extend your artistic practice professionally.

4. Programme Aims

The programme aims to:

- Enable the development of creative practice in relationship to an understanding of historical, theoretical and contemporary debates within fine art.
- Encourage a speculative and critically analytical approach to existing disciplinary norms and conventions in the context of fine art as an expanded field of practice.
- Broaden and deepen your knowledge to critically evaluate and develop practice.

- Facilitate enhancement and acquisition of practical skills whilst identifying and applying appropriate research methods and methodologies in creative practice.
- Support the acquisition of transferable communication, presentation and exhibition skills through a breadth of learning opportunities, including collaboration with peers in the public presentation of work.
- Cultivate knowledge and understanding of professional practice in fine art, including its broader socio-economic and environmental impact, promoting good practice applicable to a range of contexts.

5. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

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

- Critically re-appraise work demonstrating an intellectual and creative ability to identify, characterise and address problems related to historical, theoretical, and contextual aspects of practice within contemporary discourse.
- Establish an advanced understanding of the relations between studio practice, theory and context by speculatively and critically analysing disciplinary norms and conventions in Fine Art and its expanded field.
- Plan, execute and evaluate new work whilst establishing an 'independent voice' as an artist, applying a range of skills and techniques associated with current developments in fine art.
- Demonstrate originality and creativity in developing studio practice informed and enhanced by research methods and methodologies and skills acquisition in the synthesis and consolidation of artwork.
- Exercise autonomy, independence and initiative in the conception and production of practice and research,
- Apply good practice in a range of professional contexts, demonstrating an advanced understanding of existing and emerging opportunities within and beyond the arts and culture sector.

6. Description of Learning and Teaching Approaches

A dynamic range of teaching and learning approaches are employed to support you in engaging with the curriculum and achieving the intended learning outcomes. Our dialogic approach to learning and teaching is intended to help you develop your ability to direct your practice and research independently throughout the programme. Your learning objective is to become an expert in your practice, what it can become, and how to achieve that.

Methods range from task-based structured learning through lectures and seminars to diagnostic approaches to studio practice through tutorials and group critiques, from technical inductions and workshops to project briefings and exhibition-making. Most learning happens in the studio and focuses on the material, formal and conceptual dimensions of your practice in relation to relevant critical, cultural or theoretical contexts. Thinking through making is central to developing the quality of your work, so technician-led demonstrations, inductions, and consultations in workshops are essential features of how you will learn digital and physical skills, materials, and techniques.

You have regular opportunities to present and discuss your work at different stages of development with tutors and peers, supporting your ability to identify and reflect upon the key concerns,

obstacles and opportunities in your practice. Seminars and reading groups provide opportunities to contextualise approaches to practice and broaden knowledge of your field of contemporary art practice. Critically reflective writing and self evaluation is embedded into all stages of the programme and, at stage 3, you will complete a thesis or equivalent negotiated research project, supported through individual and group tutorials. Independent learning skills will be developed through guided activities and digital online learning resources available on Canvas.

Student-led peer learning is essential to the programme's culture. Well-established initiatives have included a regular informal 'crit club' and collaborative approaches to independently organised group exhibitions in venues across the city. Stage 2 and stage 3 of the programme focus on producing work for public exhibitions supported by professional practice workshops relevant to a range of skills, such as writing exhibition copy to installing and documenting work professionally. Where appropriate and beneficial, online learning and delivery augment and enhance the curriculum.

7. Description of Assessment Methods

Various assessment methods are used across the programme-specific and shared courses that make up the MFA. These include self-evaluative writing, studio presentations, research proposals, essays, digital portfolios and exhibitions.

Formative assessment, a key part of your learning process, enables you to gain tutor feedback while developing your work for the summative submission over the length of each course. This continuous feedback loop is designed to support and encourage you in your learning journey. In each of the 3 stages of your studio course you will actively participate in formative assessment through writing a critical self evaluation for your Progress Review, encouraging increasing self-direction. Formative assessment then takes the form of a tutorial with a course tutor, reflecting upon your progress through each course within the programme.

Summative Assessment is designed to support you in reviewing, documenting, collating and presenting work produced throughout the programme in response to various learning opportunities. The primary method of summative assessment for programme-specific studio courses in the MFA is a body of work presented in a studio display and/or public exhibition and documented in a digital portfolio. Although comprising different elements, this work is assessed holistically as a single component and awarded a single grade. Doing so supports the equitable assessment of a wide range of contemporary art practices, especially process-driven work incorporating site-specific and event-based working methods whose default exhibition mode is not the white cube gallery. It also recognises the integrity of a body of work and your ability to account for the relationship between process and outcome, theory and practice reflection and outcome in ways that reflect the distinctiveness of your practice.

Details of the assessment methods relevant to each Stage of the programme are provided in the relevant course specifications and are accompanied by briefings and guidance on presenting work for assessment.

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
Critical Review of Studio Practice	40	11	1	PMFA101
Practice as Research	20	11	1	PCXS101
Total Stage Credits	60			

Stage 2				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Exploring Studio Practice	40	11	2	PMFA203
GSA PGT Cross-School Elective	20	11	2	
Total Stage Credits	60			

Stage 3				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Theorising Studio Practice	40	11	1 and 2	PMFA304
Consolidating Studio Practice	80	11	1 and 2	PMFA301
Total Stage Credits	120			

9. Outgoing Exchange and Visiting Student Arrangements
<p>Outgoing and Incoming Exchange opportunities for this programme are available in Stage 3, Semester 1.</p> <p>Students may apply to undertake Stage 3, Semester 1 at one of our partner institutions, subject to satisfactory academic progress and approval from the MFA Programme Leader, with the requirement to achieve a minimum 60 SCQF/30 ECTS academic credits.</p> <p>Students returning to complete Stage 3, Semester 2, undertake <i>Consolidating Studio Practice (Exchange)</i>, which offers 60 SCQF/30 ECTS academic credits.</p> <p>We also welcome applications from Incoming Exchange students for Stage 3, Semester 1. All incoming exchange students undertake <i>Consolidating Studio Practice (Exchange)</i>, which offers 60 SCQF/30 ECTS academic credits.</p> <p>Incoming Exchange places are limited and depend on available capacity and the alignment of the applicant's interests and proposal with the ethos of the MFA programme.</p>

Stage 3 Incoming and Outgoing Exchange and Visiting Student Course				
Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Consolidating Studio Practice (Exchange)	60	11	1 or 2	PMFA305

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:

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

QAA Subject Benchmark Statements on Art and Design (2016), History of Art, Architecture and Design. See also QAA Characteristics Statement for Master's Degrees (2020)

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, you should consult the university regulations applicable to the academic session in which you first registered for the degree programme in question.