

Glasgow School of Art Programme Specification

Programme Title: Master of Design (MDes) Silversmithing & Jewellery Design



Image: Misha McLean

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 Design (MDes) Silversmithing and Jewellery Design
School	School of Design
Programme Leader	Anna Gordon
Award to be Conferred	Master of Design (MDes) in Silversmithing & Jewellery Design
Exit Awards	Stage 1: Postgraduate Certificate in Silversmithing & Jewellery Design Stage 2: Postgraduate Diploma in Silversmithing & Jewellery Design Stage 3: Master of Design (MDes) in Silversmithing & Jewellery Design
SCQF Level	11
Credits	180
Mode of Study	Full time
HECOS Code	100725

Academic Session	2026-27
Date of Approval	Programme Approval September 2025

Awarding Institution	University of Glasgow
Teaching Institutions	The 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. 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.
English Language Requirements	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. 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: <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.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 MDes in Silversmithing and Jewellery Design provides a distinctive postgraduate experience that enables students to build on their prior learning experiences through research-led practice, critical inquiry, and conceptual risk-taking. The programme prioritises advanced creative independence over technical skills development, encouraging students to examine their work’s cultural, ethical, and societal dimensions and push disciplinary boundaries through creative experimentation and critically reflective practice. The programme frames learning as a dynamic space where students deeply engage with evolving practices of contemporary jewellery and silversmithing and explore thinking and making as a form of inquiry where materials, processes, and concepts are in constant dialogue. Within a structured yet adaptive curriculum, students develop and consolidate a critically engaged, materially intelligent practice rooted in experimentation, reflection, and expanded understanding to create and resolve a space that pushes what jewellery, or objects that have a relationship to the body, can be.

The programme is aimed at those who already have a skillset in silversmithing and jewellery techniques or a related area of design creative practice, and a working knowledge, material awareness, and design sensibility that can be appropriately applied within the specialism. The programme affords students the opportunity to develop a deeper critical understanding of design thinking and independent contextual research. Its vibrant studio culture supports and facilitates critical reflection, exploration, and process. Students articulate their aims and objectives from the outset to experiment, develop and resolve project proposals, using and evolving pre-existing skill sets to focus and apply their knowledge into material form, whether analogue, digital, or a combination.

Throughout the programme, students have access to specialist workshops, expert guidance, and the wider creative community at GSA. The programme fosters opportunities to investigate the meaning and purpose of objects and consider their place in both personal and societal contexts to develop a personal practice rooted in curiosity, craftsmanship, and a strong sense of material awareness. The curriculum encourages an individual approach while fostering strong studio culture and peer learning, integrating theory and practice through writing, discussion, and making to support students in positioning their work within broader cultural, historical, and societal frameworks. Themes such as identity, memory, ritual, and storytelling often emerge as students explore the expressive and communicative potential of adornment and object-making and address social and ethical contexts, environmental impacts, conceptual mindsets, and diverse forms of expression within this dynamic creative field.

The programme fosters creative independence and critical thinking through a structured progression across three Stages, guiding students from exploratory practice to conceptual development towards realising a resolved, self-directed body of work.

Stage 1 focuses on material experimentation and contextual research. Students build on existing skills to test and evolve their practice through hands-on exploration and investigation via analogue, digital, or hybrid processes. They formulate individual project proposals that ground their making in a material understanding and theoretical or cultural contexts. Alongside Studio, the shared cross-

disciplinary course Design Research Methods broadens perspectives through collaborative dialogue and exposure to broader discourses.

Stage 2 prepares students for sustained independent work by aligning their practice with a purposeful narrative or research question, evolving a distinctive voice by positioning their creative directions within contemporary debates and professional contexts. Through critical engagement with themes, methods, and materials, students refine their proposals, deepen their creative inquiry, and develop a coherent methodology, incorporating critical feedback and reflective processes. Alongside Studio, PGT elective courses support students in contextualising their work within wider creative and academic domains, reinforcing interdisciplinary practice.

Stage 3 culminates in a self-directed graduation project integrating material research, contextual insight, and independent creative practice into a consolidated and critically reflective body of work. Students demonstrate a high level of autonomy, ethical awareness, and reflective practice, developing and resolving their ability to integrate material intelligence with critical thinking and personal vision. By graduation, students emerge with a defined creative identity and the confidence to pursue professional practice, independent projects, or PhD-level study.

4. Programme Aims

The programme aims to:

1. Empower students to take ownership of their learning and develop advanced, independent, and critically reflective practices in silversmithing and jewellery design.
2. Encourage critical exploration of materials, techniques, and ideas to support practice-led research, innovation, and original thinking in silversmithing and jewellery design.
3. Support students with advancing appropriate technical skills and deep material understanding needed to produce high-quality, complex design work.
4. Support engagement with cultural, social, and ethical issues relevant to contemporary design practice, encouraging a global outlook and responsible citizenship.
5. Develop students' communication and critical analysis skills across diverse contexts.
6. Prepare students for professional life by building the advanced knowledge, collaborative skills, and leadership attributes that support work within creative industries.

5. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:

1. Critically evaluate and reflect on their own learning, demonstrating autonomy and advanced independent practice in silversmithing and jewellery design.
2. Conduct in-depth research and experimentation with materials, techniques, and ideas to produce innovative and original work in silversmithing and jewellery design.
3. Apply and advance appropriate technical skills and comprehensive material knowledge to create resolved design projects.

4. Critically engage with and respond to cultural, social, and ethical issues in their practice, demonstrating a global perspective and responsible citizenship.
5. Integrate critical analysis and reflection to communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively across diverse contexts.
6. Apply advanced knowledge, collaborative skills, and professional aptitudes that support work within creative industries.

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
- studio-based practice and material experimentation
- individual and group tutorials
- peer critiques and collaborative evaluation
- self-directed learning and independent study
- lectures, seminars, presentations
- staff, student, and peer reviews of work
- critical reflective methods
- reflective self-evaluation of progress and learning

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

The programme is delivered over three stages:

Stage 1

Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio 1: Material and Contextual Exploration	40	11	1	
Design Research Methods	20	11	1	
	60			

Stage 2

Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Studio 2: Conceptual and Creative Development	40	11	2	
Postgraduate Elective	20	11	2	
Total Stage Credits	60			

Stage 3

Course	Credits	SCQF Level	Semester	Course Code
Stage 3: Graduation Project	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 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.