

**Glasgow School of Art Programme Specification**  
**Programme Title: Master of Research**



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 2026-27 Academic Year.

1. Programme Details	
Programme Title	Master of Research (M.Res.)
School	The School of Innovation and Technology (SIT)
Programme Leader	Professor Lynn-Sayers McHattie
Award to be Conferred	Master of Research
Exit Awards	N/A
SCQF Level	11
Credits	180
Mode of Study	Low Residency (Blended): Online and On Campus with Full Time (FT) 12 months / Part Time (PT) 24 months.
HECOS Code	

Academic Session	2026-27
Date of Approval	Programme Approval July 2024

Awarding Institution	University of Glasgow
Teaching Institutions	The Glasgow School of Art.
Campus	Glasgow and the Highlands and Islands (Altyre) campuses
Lead School/Board of Studies	The School of Innovation and Technology (SIT)
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>2:1 degree – with a dissertation or equivalent component (within three years of graduation, thereafter an equivalent will be considered based on candidate’s experience).</p> <p>Applications are by Research Proposal in areas relevant to The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) and SIT based on research interests and supervisor expertise.</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 <a href="#">UKVI exemption list</a> 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"> <li>IELTS for UKVI Academic with an overall score of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.5 in all components;</li> </ul>

- 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 Research (M.Res.) is a Low Residency (Blended) research programme delivered online and on campus, supporting students to undertake and communicate a discrete research project.

Research will involve a variety of engagement activities at different levels with, for example, international partner Higher Education Institutions, local communities, businesses, the government, public sector organisations, etc.

Research outputs are expected to reflect creative research and engagement, which recognise the importance of practice-based research, knowledge exchange and design-led innovation as core research development activities. Students will undertake design-led research in contextually-located projects or aligned to thematics and priorities of SIT external partners including:

- The Digital Health & Care Innovation Centre ([DHI](#)) is part of the Scottish Funding Council’s Innovation Centre programme, which is designed to support transformational collaboration between universities and businesses. Through the DHI, SIT receives funded M.Res. Studentships (Fees FT/PT) annually;
- The Built Environment – Smarter Transformation ([BE-ST](#)) Innovation Centre also part of the Scottish Funding Council’s Innovation Centre programme provides the connections, infrastructure and culture needed to solve the sector’s most pressing challenges. BE-ST offer funded M.Res. (Fees FT/PT).

Students will be supported by a supervisory team comprising a Primary Supervisor and a Co-Supervisor. Supervisory teams may include two GSA/SIT Supervisor(s) or a GSA/SIT Primary Supervisor and a Co-Supervisor from a partner institution. This will actively contribute to the development of an international post graduate research culture as part of GSA’s high-profile community of practice and research.

Research training is delivered **synchronously** through a model of three Seasonal Schools (Winter, Spring and Autumn) with attendance either in person or online:

- Winter School includes an induction and introduction to the M.Res.;
- Spring School delivers rigorous research training with a focus on contextually-led design methods;
- Autumn School hosts Mock Vivas for students who are approaching completion in addition to supporting a student-led Symposium on public engagement with research, knowledge exchange, dissemination and contemporary impact agendas.

The programme accommodates a diverse profile of students due to its blended structure, part-time and full-time modes of study and through offering students the option to articulate their work developed in the M.Res. into PhD study. Students can apply to convert their M.Res. research to PhD at Year 2 full-time in what is termed a ‘1+2’ model Full Time Equivalent (FTE). Should the candidate wish to apply to convert to Year 2 of PhD study elements of formative outputs can also constitute evidence for candidates to progress within GSA’s existing PhD Annual Progress Review process

(Year 1 into Year 2 FTE). There is no double counting of research, i.e. students are awarded the M.Res. or forfeit the M.Res. to progress with doctoral study.

#### **4. Programme Aims**

The aims of the programme are:

- To provide researcher development through the experience of a substantial research project at Masters level;
- To acclimatise students to a process of self-managed, professional researcher development;
- To extend knowledge of a particular subject, research methodologies and design methods to a depth or breadth (through interdisciplinarity) greater than that achieved in undergraduate study;
- To encourage the independent and original analysis of a complex range of appropriate source materials, knowledge domains and professional practices;
- To prepare students for further graduate study of an advanced kind e.g. to PhD level;
- To support students to develop the practical, organisational and presentation skills necessary for the successful reporting of research to relevant external audiences and stakeholders

#### **5. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes**

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

- Design and undertake a discrete research project within an academic, industrial or community context;
- Apply critical, original and creative approaches to research-based projects in situated contexts through conceiving and employing a range of research methods and techniques;
- Critically reflect on the ethical issues as they relate to research questions, approaches and methods identified;
- Outline potential research outputs from a given area of research activity;
- Effectively communicate in-depth disciplinary research for diverse audiences in intellectual and creative ways;
- Identify research training needs and locate opportunities to respond to these;
- Evaluate the research design, outputs and potential areas for further research.

#### **6. Description of Learning and Teaching Approaches**

The M.Res. aims to provide an authentic experience of undertaking a research project. As a Low Residency (Blended) programme the M.Res. is designed to be taught online and on campus, with access to campus spaces and facilities, as required, and subject to opening times.

M.Res. students are supported through synchronous modes of delivery simultaneously online and on campus and asynchronous delivery supported by CANVAS and pre-recorded video resources allowing students to engage and access research training in their own time. Seasonal Schools (see below) delivered on campus prioritise the interactions between the students, supervisors and the M.Res. programme team. A range of learning technologies and tools will also be used to enhance and extend learning between physical and synchronous online interactions.

CANVAS is used to support learning and access to resources such as research training, reading lists and other relevant material (e.g. podcasts, videos, journal articles, books and websites) and in addition to supporting structured interaction between the cohort of M.Res. students and supervisory teams. The Seasonal Schools are supported by PADLET (also embedded into CANVAS) as complementary digital repositories, which incorporate relevant research resources and training

materials. Together, the Seasonal Schools and online resources support the socialising of the M.Res. cohort through facilitating engagement and feedback, building community and providing responsive support.

The M.Res. places significant emphasis on the value of peer learning and the sharing of knowledge and professional experience that students bring to the programme. The key learning and teaching method is supervision, however, equally central to the development of the student's research skills is engagement in cohort development through online and in-person peer-to-peer learning and participation in associated research networks.

Established design-led innovation research methods, approaches and techniques underpin the tailored postgraduate research training, which is delivered online and on campus through a model of Seasonal Schools:

- **Winter School** is hosted over five days (1 week) in January and includes an induction and introduction to the M.Res. research training programme. This extends to contextually-located research and its relations to design/practice, crafting an abstract and research questions and developing a contextual/literature review. ***It is mandatory for students to attend Winter School either online and/or on campus.***
- **Spring School** is hosted over five days (1 week) usually in March/April and delivers rigorous research training focussing on students' positionality, theoretical underpinning, research design and methodological orientation aligned to contextually-led design/research methods and research ethics practices and processes. ***It is mandatory for students to attend Spring School in-person and on campus.***
- **Autumn School** is hosted over 5 days (1 week) normally in September and includes the diet of Mock Vivas for M.Res. students who are approaching completion. In addition, during Autumn School, a student-led Symposium focuses on developing confidence and skills in public engagement with research, knowledge exchange, evaluation, dissemination and impact agendas. ***It is mandatory for students to undertake Mock Vivas either online or on campus during Autumn School in the year prior to completion of the M.Res. Part-time students are invited to join and contribute to Autumn School although it is not compulsory.***

## 7. Description of Assessment Methods

Assessment is designed as primarily a digital submission with feedback provided through online reviews and supervision, as well as digital approaches to support research skills and development. Physical submissions are supported during on campus activities with feedback provided through a range of on campus interactions including reviews and supervision.

The programme is comprised of a series of research-related Formative Outputs supported by a programme of research training (Seasonal Schools), which collectively contribute towards a **Summative Submission**.

Formative outputs include both visual (design practice and process) and textual elements, which are reviewed with oral and written feedback provided by the Supervisory team. Whilst there is no formal formative assessment during the M.Res. programme, Supervisors closely monitor students' progress through a formative phased approach as follows:

- Phase 1 (formative): Abstract, Research Question(s), Literature Review;
- Phase 2 (formative): Research Design, Fieldwork Plan, Ethics;

- Phase 3 (formative): Fieldwork, Synthesis and Analysis;
- Phase 4 (formative): Write Up, Thesis Design and Mock Viva;
- Phase 5 (summative): Submission 'by Thesis' or 'by Practice'.

The M.Res. Summative Submission is designed to constitute a standalone body of work fulfilling the academic requirements of a substantive research project at Masters level. Summative assessment is by Viva Voce for the award of M.Res. 'by Thesis' or 'by Practice'.

The Summative Submission will be agreed with the Supervisory team and tailored to best reflect the nature and design of the research project. The submission may include a wide range of visual, artefactual and textual elements (in physical and/or digital formats) and a written element comprising of at least 50% of the submission. Students can submit 'by Thesis' (20,000 words), or 'by Practice' which combines a written submission (8-10,000 words) and accompanying artefacts that are proportionally equivalent and closely aligned.

Summative Assessment (defined as the final examination) of the respective submission 'by Thesis' or 'by Practice' is **by Viva Voce** usually held in January and comprising two appropriately qualified Examiners, one internal and one external to GSA and a Convener.

#### Transition to PhD Study

Should a candidate wish to apply to convert their M.Res. research to directly articulate into the PhD programme (1 + 2 Model), entering PhD study at Year 2 (FTE) articulation must be supported by their Supervisory Team and the Programme Leader and be subject to evaluation and approval from an Articulation Panel. The Programme Leader will arrange the Articulation Panel comprising a Convener and an Independent Assessor, in line with GSA's PhD Annual Progress Review Criteria (Year 1 into Year 2 FTE).

*Please see Section 8 Programme Structure*

### 8. Programme Structure

The M.Res. **Programme Structure** is presented in the following table illustrating full-time study and part-time study options.

Phase 1 (Formative Review)	12 Months / Full time (FT)	24 Months / Part time (PT)
Abstract / Research Question(s) / Literature Review <b>Winter School: January (1 week) Synchronous</b> - Delivered online and on campus (in person) - Mandatory attendance	January – March (Months 1-3)	January – June (Months 1-6)
<b>Phase 2 (Formative Review)</b>		
Research Design / Fieldwork Plan / Ethics <b>Spring School: usually March/April (1 week) Synchronous</b> - Delivered in person and on campus - Mandatory attendance for FT students- (Note: PT students can opt to attend in their second year of study)	April – May (Months 4-5)	July – October (Months 7-10)
<b>Phase 3 (Formative Review)</b>		
Fieldwork / Synthesis / Analysis	June – July (Months 6-7)	November – July Months 11-19)
<b>Phase 4 (Formative Review)</b>		
Write Up / Thesis Design / Mock Viva <b>Autumn School: September (1 week) Synchronous</b> - Delivered either online or on campus	August – September (Months 8-9)	August – September

- Mandatory for students to undertake Mock Vivas prior to completion. (Note: PT students are invited although it is not compulsory)		(Months 20-21)
<b>Phase 5 (Summative assessment by Viva Voce)</b>		
Phase 5 Submission 'by Thesis' (20,000 words) or 'by Practice' (8-10,000 words)	<b>October – December</b> (Months 10-12)	<b>October – December</b> (Months 22-24)
<b>Viva Voce</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>January</b>
The Articulation Process M.Res. to PhD study is summarised in the following table illustrating full-time study and part time study options. <u>This table illustrates the transition into a 1+2 model of study, which is detailed in section 7.</u>		
<b>Phase 1 (Formative Review)</b>	<b>12 Months / Full time (FT)</b>	<b>24 Months / Part time (PT)</b>
Abstract / Research Question(s) /Literature Review	<b>January – March</b> (Months 1-3)	<b>January – June</b> (Months 1-6)
<b>Phase 2 (Formative Review)</b>		
Research Design /Fieldwork Plan /Ethics	<b>April – May</b> (Months 4-5)	<b>July – October</b> (Months 7-10)
<b>Phase 3 (Formative Review)</b>		
Fieldwork / Synthesis / Analysis	<b>June – July</b> (Months 6-7)	<b>November – July</b> Months 11-19)
<b>Articulation Panel</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>September</b>

## 9. Outgoing Exchange and Visiting Student Arrangements

N/A

## 10. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and Other External Reference Points

The programme accords with the QAA statement regarding Research degrees (including Masters level education): [https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance-research-degrees.pdf?sfvrsn=b424c181\\_2](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance-research-degrees.pdf?sfvrsn=b424c181_2)

The programme is aligned with the Level 11 Descriptors provided by the SCQF available here: <https://scqf.org.uk/level-11/>

## 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.