

**Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: MLitt Contemporary Art Practice Studio Core
Two: Activation**



Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
	100059	2026-27

Course Title	Studio Core Two: Activation
Course Contact	Mick McGraw

Credits	40
SCQF Level	11
When Taught	Stage 2

Associated Programmes	Master of Letters (MLitt) in Contemporary Art Practice
Lead School	School of Fine Art
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	Programme Approval February 2025

Course Introduction

This course builds on Stage 1, which emphasised creating a critical and creative community through peer dialogue, establishing a studio practice, and orienting you to the programme, school, and city. Stage 2 shifts focus to activating your practice. You will continue to develop a body of work and begin to explore ways to make the work public, using modes that are appropriate to your practice. These may include exhibition, publication, presentation, or event.

This course challenges and supports you to consider how you will reach audiences through the work you create. Having established a critical dialogue with your peers, you will form collective groups based on shared interests. Together, you will initiate and realise a public-facing event, output, or publication during the semester. This could involve hosting an exhibition (in one of the GSA project spaces or externally), producing a collaborative publication, presenting a workshop, or organising a group performance (or another alternative event/output). Whatever you and your peers choose to do, your work should expand the possibilities for engaging with others and reaching an audience. The principle of learning through doing and taking an experimental approach – one that challenges you to expand the possibilities of your work and create new dialogues around your practice – is emphasised in this course. It is, therefore, important that your chosen event or output is realistic within the available time and resources. While you will continue to make your own work and expand your practical and conceptual investigations, this course focuses on how you can operate collectively, an essential skill for all artists.

In addition to making and sharing your work, you will continue to develop an active dialogue with your peers. The collective groups will be formed by identifying specific interests, concerns, and approaches that you share with other members of the CAP programme.

Course Aims

The course aims are:

- Support further development of the ability to critically evaluate studio practice in relation to critical and theoretical fields of enquiry.
- Support you to develop practice on the basis of critical reflection.
- To enable critical consideration in the role of research in your own contemporary art practice.
- To enable you to consider and deploy effective communication to articulate the intentions and ambitions of your art practice.
- To develop abilities to work as part of a collective group to propose, initiate and realise a public 'event'.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon full participation in and successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

- Create and evaluate a body of work that demonstrates a deepening awareness of contemporary conditions, exploring the potential to engage with societal challenges and speak to social contexts.
- Develop and synthesise ideas and techniques to produce a cohesive body of work that demonstrates advanced conceptual and technical integration.
- Advance and refine a research-led practice by critically reflecting on methodologies and aligning them with contemporary practices and contexts.
- Collaborate to propose, develop, and realise an event that demonstrates a nuanced understanding of professional contexts and addresses the needs of an identified audience.

Indicative Content

Regular Dialogue Sessions will continue, providing opportunities to share your work and explore ideas, both within and across the two pathways.

The Dialogue Sessions in the Activation course will start with focused workshops entitled 'Collectives and Collaboration'. These sessions will explore what it means to work collectively or collaboratively with others. And enable you to identify shared interests and common practices with peers. The sessions and will support you to form collective groups, with whom you may work alongside, or in collaboration with, throughout the course.

In addition, the Dialogue Sessions develop the foundations of research by continuing to introduce and explore a variety of research-led practices, modes and methods for engaging audiences. These will include traditional methods and experimental methods that may include:

- Artists' publications
- Performance
- What is a gallery?
- Relational practices
- Internet art
- Audiences and ethics

You will work in collective groups to propose, realise and reflect on a public-facing event/output or publication. The form of the 'event' is not prescribed but you are encouraged to explore low-cost, sustainable modes that nevertheless have impact – engaging audiences both within and beyond the GSA.

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

The learning and teaching methods in Stage 2 build on those in Stage 1, with a greater emphasis on developing elements of professional practice and expanding the range of possibilities associated with this. These methods include a mixture of in-person and online sessions delivered by a range of speakers, and are shared across all postgraduate programmes within the School of Fine Art.

In the Activation Course, programme staff continue working with their respective tutorial groups through:

- one-to-one and group tutorials,
- group critiques
- Dialogue Sessions

'Practical Consultancies', group sessions designed to explore the practical and technical requirements of your practice, will continue in this course. They will include workshops which will cover practical issues around:

- making publications
- creating websites
- Presentation skills
- installing work – including audio-visual and sound.

The timetable provides you with adequate time to work independently outside structured contact hours. This is intended to help you continue developing your studio practice and the professionalism required to sustain it. You are expected to take greater responsibility and initiative for independent enquiry, making use of the studios and workshops to make work and to engage in dialogue with your collective groups.

Friday Events:

The cross-school Friday events are a significant component of the curriculum for all School of Fine Art Students. Friday Events feature lectures and discussions from a range of high-profile visiting artists, writers and take place throughout semester one and two.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
40	400

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

Formative assessment takes place at the midway point of the course. It is an opportunity to assess your progress on the course, identifying areas that may require action or further development. You will present your work-in-progress to your peers and tutors and receive verbal feedback on your progress. You will also complete a formative assessment form, which will ask you to identify where, and how effectively your work is meeting the course learning outcomes. Based on this critical reflection, following discussion with your tutor, you will identify a set of actions that will help you develop your work so that you can more effectively provide evidence of having met the Intended Learning Outcomes. The Formative Assessment form will be signed off by your tutor, acknowledging the actions set for the remainder of the course.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

Summative assessment is an opportunity to provide evidence that you have met all the learning outcomes for the course through the submission of the following assessment methods:

- A PDF, which documents your work in the public event
- A verbal presentation, which critically reflects on your public event, and outlines how your research is informing your approach
- A body of work presented in the studio

The work you submit will be assessed holistically against the course Intended Learning Outcomes. As such, each assessment method should be seen as an opportunity to demonstrate how effectively you have met the course Intended Learning Outcomes. You will receive verbal and written feedback accompanied with a single overall grade for the course.

Reassessment opportunities, where a student has not passed the course, are outlined in the Code of Assessment.

~~Summative assessment is an opportunity to submit the work listed below to demonstrate that your work provides evidence that you have met all the learning outcomes for the course.~~

~~You will receive verbal and written feedback, along with a mark against each of the course Intended Learning Outcomes. Reassessment opportunities, where a student has not passed the course, are outlined in the Code of Assessment.~~

~~The weighting of assessment elements, listed below, is intended to give you an indication of the time and effort you should attribute to each of these components. However, as the course is assessed holistically, the elements do not contribute to a mathematical computation of your overall grade. Instead, each component of assessment evidence should be seen as an opportunity for you to demonstrate how effectively you have met the course Intended Learning Outcomes.~~

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
A PDF, which documents your work in the public event.	100% - The work you submit will be assessed holistically against the course Intended Learning Outcomes.	Week 12
A verbal presentation, which critically reflects on your public event, and outlines how your research is informing your approach.		Week 12
A body of work presented in the studio		Week 13

Exchange/Study Abroad	
Can this course be taken by Exchange/Study Abroad students?	No
Are all the students on the course taught wholly by distance learning?	No
Does this course represent a work placement or a year of study abroad?	No
Is this course collaborative with any other institutions?	No

If yes, then please provide the names of the other teaching institutions

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Reading and On-line Resources

The course indicative reading and online resource list is accessible via [Resource Lists](#). This list will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect course content and subject developments.