THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

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



Please note that this 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 Research (MRes)
School	Research Department
Programme Leader	Professor Duncan MacLeod
Award to be Conferred	Master of Research (MRes)
Exit Awards	Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)
SCQF Level	11
Credits	180
Mode of Study	Full Time (FT) 12 months / Part Time (PT) 24 months. On-campus and distance learning, with hybrid delivery of shared teaching activities.
HECOS Code	

Academic Session	2027
Date of Approval	Programme Approval October 2026

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	Research Degrees Committee
Other Schools/Board of Studies	Mackintosh School of Architecture School of Design School of Fine Art School of Innovation and Technology
Programme Accredited By (PSRBs)	N/A

2. Entry Qualifications	
Highers	N/A
A Levels	N/A
Other	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). Applications are by Research Proposal in areas relevant to The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) and SIT based on research interests and supervisor expertise.
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:

	• IELTS for UKVI Academic with an overall score of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.5 in all components; • An alternative Accepted English Language Test which can be found on the Postgraduate 'How to Apply' page of the GSA website.

3. Programme Introduction

The Master of Research (MRes) is a postgraduate research degree incorporating taught elements. The programme supports students to undertake and communicate an independent research project, complemented by structured research training and researcher development activity. It develops advanced research capabilities relevant to doctoral study and to research-informed professional, creative, cultural and public contexts.

Research may 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, cultural organisations and third-sector bodies. Such engagement will be appropriate to the scope, discipline and methodology of the individual project.

Research outputs are expected to reflect creative research and engagement, recognising the importance of practice-based research, knowledge exchange and innovation as core research development activities. Outputs may take written, practice-based or hybrid forms, as appropriate to the project and discipline. Students will undertake independently developed or contextually located research projects, which may align with relevant research themes, priorities and external partnerships.

Students will be supported by a Primary Supervisor. Where appropriate, one or more Co-Supervisors may also be appointed to provide additional disciplinary, methodological or contextual expertise. Supervisors will normally be drawn from GSA, although a Co-Supervisor may be appointed from a partner institution. These arrangements will contribute to the development of an international postgraduate research culture as part of GSA's interdisciplinary community of research and practice. Supervisory arrangements will reflect the needs of the individual research project.

The principal component of the programme is the 120-credit Independent Research Project. This is supported by 60 credits of taught study comprising Independent Researcher, Applied Research Skills, and Research in Professional and Public Contexts. The taught elements are complemented by GSA researcher development training and disciplinary support provided through the student's School. The programme and all constituent courses are available through both on-campus and distance-learning modes. Teaching and cohort-based activities are supported by hybrid delivery, enabling on-campus and distance-learning students to participate in shared synchronous learning, complemented by asynchronous online activities and resources.

The programme accommodates a diverse profile of students through its on-campus and distance-learning modes, alongside full-time and part-time patterns of study. The MRes is a standalone research degree that prepares graduates for doctoral study and for research-led or research-informed roles across a range of professional contexts. The programme also offers eligible students the opportunity to apply to convert their registration to PhD study. Students can apply to convert their MRes 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 and students who convert their registration to doctoral study forfeit eligibility for the MRes award.

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 support students in developing 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 postgraduate research, including study at 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

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

- Design, manage and undertake a significant independent research project within an appropriate disciplinary, interdisciplinary, professional, public or community context;
- Select, justify and apply appropriate research methods and techniques through critical, original and creative approaches;
- Critically evaluate and make informed judgements on the ethical issues as they relate to the research questions, approaches and methods identified;
- Develop and critically contextualise appropriate research outputs in relation to relevant theories, practices and current developments in the field;
- Effectively communicate in-depth disciplinary research to diverse audiences in intellectual and creative ways;
- Identify research training and development needs and take appropriate steps to address them;
- Evaluate the research design, outputs and potential areas for further research.

6. Description of Learning and Teaching Approaches

The MRes aims to provide an authentic experience of undertaking an independent research project at Master's level. As a postgraduate research degree incorporating taught elements, the programme combines independent enquiry and supervision with structured research education and cohort-based learning. Students are supported to engage with GSA's wider research environment through disciplinary and interdisciplinary research communities, seminars, networks and access to appropriate research facilities and resources.

The MRes is available through both on-campus and distance-learning modes. Students undertaking either mode follow the same programme and courses, working towards the same Intended Learning Outcomes and assessment requirements. Learning and teaching are supported through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities, including hybrid delivery that enables on-campus and distance-learning students to participate together in scheduled teaching and cohort activities. Asynchronous online resources and activities complement these sessions, supporting

independent study, preparation and engagement between scheduled activities. Learning technologies also facilitate interaction between students, supervisors, course tutors and the MRes programme team, supporting a shared research community across both modes of study.

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 to support structured interaction between the cohort of MRes students and supervisors. Together, taught study, researcher development activity and online resources support the development of the MRes cohort through facilitating engagement and feedback, building community and providing responsive support.

The MRes 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 approaches are independent research, supervision, taught study and researcher development activity. These are supported by online and in-person peer learning, critical discussion, feedback and participation in relevant research communities and networks. Supervision provides disciplinary and methodological guidance appropriate to the individual student's project, while taught courses bring together students from across GSA's disciplines to support shared learning and cohort development.

The taught elements of the programme introduce and develop a range of research methods, approaches and professional practices relevant to research across art, design, architecture and related disciplines. Teaching may include seminars, workshops, tutorials, presentations, independent study and collaborative learning, delivered through online, hybrid and on-campus activities, ensuring opportunities for engagement across both modes of study.

7. Description of Assessment Methods

Assessment is designed to accommodate the different forms of research undertaken across GSA's disciplines. Assessment may involve written, visual, material, performative, spatial, sonic, digital or other appropriate forms of submission. Digital and physical formats will be used as appropriate to the learning outcomes, subject matter and methods of each course or research project. Feedback may be provided through supervision, seminars, tutorials, reviews, peer learning and written or oral commentary. Assessment arrangements will accommodate both on-campus and distance-learning students, ensuring consistency in academic standards, Intended Learning Outcomes and assessment requirements, while recognising the disciplinary and methodological needs of individual research projects.

The programme is comprised of a series of three taught courses, totalling 60 credits, and a 120-credit Independent Research Project. Each course is summatively assessed against its specified Intended Learning Outcomes. Assessment across the programme supports the progressive development of students' research knowledge, skills, methods and professional practice. Formative activity is embedded within the taught courses and the Independent Research Project.

The Independent Research Project constitutes a substantive research project at Master's level and may be submitted 'by Thesis' or 'by Practice'. Detailed requirements for submission and assessment are set out in the Independent Research Project Course Specification, while examination arrangements, including any viva voce examination, are governed by the applicable Programme Regulations.

8.Programme Structure

The MRes is a postgraduate research degree incorporating taught elements, leading to the accumulation of 180 credits at SCQF Level 11. The programme is normally undertaken over 12 months full-time or 24 months part-time and is available through both on-campus and distance-learning modes. Full-time study normally runs from September to September.

The programme comprises three taught courses totalling 60 credits and a 120-credit Independent Research Project. The Independent Research Project is undertaken across the full period of registration, with the taught courses, supervision and researcher development activity supporting the progressive development, conduct, contextualisation and communication of the research.

Students undertake the compulsory taught courses The Independent Researcher, Applied Research Skills, and Research in Professional and Public Contexts.

It is possible for students to exit the programme with an award where they have successfully gained the necessary credit points as follows:

- Postgraduate Certificate: 60 credits
- Master of Research: 180 credits

The Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) may be awarded as an exit award to students who have successfully completed the 60 credits of taught study at SCQF Level 11 but who do not complete the requirements for the Master of Research. Eligibility for the exit award is subject to the requirements set out in the Programme Regulations.

Transition to PhD Study

The programme includes an optional route through which eligible students may apply to articulate to Year 2 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) of PhD study under the '1+2' model. Articulation takes place during Semester 3 and must be completed before the MRes award is conferred. Applications must be supported by the student's Primary Supervisor, any appointed Co-Supervisor and the Programme Lead. Applications will be considered by an Articulation Panel comprising a Convener and an Independent Assessor, against GSA's criteria for progression from Year 1 to Year 2 FTE of PhD study. Articulation is subject to academic approval and is not automatic. Students who articulate to PhD study forfeit eligibility for the MRes award, and research may not be counted towards both awards.

Full Time				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
The Independent Researcher	20	11	1	
Applied Research Skills	20	11	1	
Research in Professional and Public Contexts	20	11	2	
Independent Research Project	120	11	1-3	
Total Credits	**180**			

Part time Year 1				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
The Independent Researcher	20	11	1	
Applied Research Skills	20	11	1	
Independent Research Project	-	11	1-3	
Total Stage Credits	**40**			

Part time Year 2				
Course	**Credits**	**SCQF Level**	**Semester**	**Course Code**
Research in Professional and Public Contexts	20	11	2	
Independent Research Project (cont'd)	120	11	1-3	
Total Stage Credits	**140**			

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

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.