Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Research in Professional and Public Contexts

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.

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
		2027-28

Course Title	Research in Professional and Public Contexts
Course Contact	Duncan MacLeod, Head of Postgraduate Research

Credits	20
SCQF Level	11
When Taught	Semester 2

Associated Programmes	Master of Research (MRes)
Lead School	Research
Other Schools	Mackintosh School of Architecture School of Design School of Fine Art School of Innovation and Technology
Date of Approval	Programme Approval October 2026

Course Introduction

Research in Professional and Public Contexts supports students in critically considering how research can be communicated, shared and used beyond its immediate academic or disciplinary setting. It supports students in developing and communicating the knowledge and skills needed to work as effective researchers across a range of wider contexts.

Students will consider how research may be adapted for different audiences, purposes and forms of communication. The course introduces broad principles relating to knowledge exchange and innovation, engagement, research communication, impact and wider research value, considering these in relation to relevant institutional, national and international research, innovation and policy contexts. Students will also consider responsible, ethical, inclusive and sustainable approaches to communicating, sharing and developing research within professional and public contexts.

The course draws directly on students' own research. It does not require students to develop a separate research project, undertake a placement or establish an external partnership. Students will develop a portfolio demonstrating how aspects of their research may be communicated or adapted for an appropriate wider context.

The course is designed to accommodate a range of disciplines, research approaches and modes of enquiry. It is available to students studying on campus and by distance learning, with shared teaching activities supported through hybrid delivery and complemented by asynchronous online resources.

Course Aims

1. Develop students' critical understanding of how research operates within professional, public and policy contexts.

2. Develop students' critical understanding of knowledge exchange and innovation, engagement, impact and wider research value within relevant institutional, national and international contexts.
3. Support students in identifying and critically evaluating audiences, purposes and contexts relevant to their own research.
4. Develop students' ability to critically communicate and adapt research for different contexts.
5. Enable students to recognise and articulate the wider relevance and transferability of the knowledge and skills developed through research across academic, professional and public contexts.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Critically examine how research may operate within professional, public or policy contexts, with reference to relevant institutional, national and international research and innovation environments.
- Critically select and justify an audience, purpose and form of communication relevant to their own research.
- Critically adapt research knowledge, methods, materials or findings for a defined audience or context, making informed decisions about purpose and form.
- Critically evaluate and apply relevant ethical, professional and practical considerations when communicating or developing research, exercising informed judgement.
- Critically reflect on the wider relevance of their research and the transferability of the knowledge and skills developed through it.

Indicative Content

The course will introduce students to ways in which research may be communicated, shared and adapted for wider contexts.

Indicative content may include:

- professional, public and policy contexts for research;
- knowledge exchange and innovation, engagement and research communication;
- research impact and wider societal, cultural and environmental value;
- institutional, national and international research and innovation contexts;
- responsible and ethical research practice;
- professional development and the transferability of research knowledge and skills.

Content and examples will be selected in response to the range of research represented within the student cohort.

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

This course supports an independent, tutor-supported approach to research communication, reflection and professional development.

Learning and teaching will use a combination of tutor-led sessions, workshops, peer learning, independent study and formative feedback. Scheduled teaching and peer-learning activities will be supported through hybrid synchronous delivery, enabling participation by both on-campus and distance-learning students. Activities will support students in critically applying course principles to their own research and in developing their portfolio.

Students will be encouraged to select approaches that are appropriate to the nature, stage and direction of their research.

Learning and teaching will be supported through hybrid synchronous activities, asynchronous online resources and independent study, enabling students studying on campus and by distance learning to engage with the same curriculum and achieve the same Intended Learning Outcomes.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
20	200

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods
At least one formative activity with feedback will take place during the course. This will support students in developing the focus, content and form of their portfolio. Formative feedback may be provided through discussion, peer review, tutorials, presentations or review of work in progress, as appropriate. These activities will accommodate both on-campus and distance-learning students through hybrid sessions and feedback delivered in person or online, as appropriate. Students will be encouraged to use feedback and feedforward to strengthen the relationship between their research, selected context and chosen approach and to critically evaluate the decisions informing their proposed submission.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements
The summative assessment comprises a portfolio demonstrating how aspects of the student's own research may be communicated, adapted or situated within an appropriate wider context, supported by critical analysis and justification of the selected audience, purpose and approach. The portfolio will draw on the student's existing or developing research and is not intended to form a separate research project. Its focus and format will reflect the nature of the research and the selected audience, purpose or context. The portfolio may take written, visual, audiovisual, digital, practice-based or other appropriate forms. Detailed requirements, formats and submission guidance will be provided in the assessment brief. The portfolio will be assessed against the course intended learning outcomes and the GSA Grading Scheme. Submissions will be assessed and moderated in line with the Code of Assessment. Written feedback will be provided. The same assessment requirements and academic standards apply to students undertaking the course through on-campus and distance-learning modes.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
A portfolio demonstrating how aspects of the student's own research may be communicated, adapted or situated within an appropriate wider context, and critically justifying the selected audience, purpose and approach. Students will select a focus and format appropriate to their research, in consultation with the course lead. Further	100%	Week 11 (Semester 2)

guidance on the content, format and submission of the portfolio will be provided in the assessment brief. Indicative word count: 2,000 words		

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	

Reading and On-line Resources
Students will be directed to relevant learning resources through Canvas and the library and will identify additional sources appropriate to their research, selected context and intended audience.