

School of Design

Postgraduate Taught Degrees

Applicant Guidelines for entry in September 2020

Programmes

This document includes guidelines for making an application to postgraduate taught programmes within the School of Design at the Glasgow School of Art (GSA).

One-year programmes

- MDes Fashion and Textiles
- MDes Graphics
- MDes Illustration
- MDes Photography
- MDes Interior Design
- MSc Product Design Engineering

Two-year programme

- MDes Communication Design

Entry Requirements

Normally a UK Bachelors honours degree, or its international equivalent, in the subject you are applying to, or a related subject that gives appropriate grounding for postgraduate study. You should demonstrate knowledge of the subject and its contemporary practice. If you do not meet the academic entry requirements, we may still consider your application on the basis of your portfolio and / or relevant professional experience.

GSA expects applicants to demonstrate proficiency in the English language. International applicants will normally be expected to provide evidence of attainment equivalent to IELTS for UKVI (Academic) from a UKVI approved test centre. School of Design programmes require a score of 6.5 overall, with a minimum of 6.0 in each component.

The School of Design seeks to enrol students who are self-motivated, determined critical thinkers, and are passionate about their subject, are technically curious, independent, professionally orientated, and understand that their commitment to the programme is a significant investment in their future.

Applications

Your application to study for a postgraduate taught degree at GSA is in two parts:

Part 1. Application form, [personal statement](#), references and transcripts

Part 2. [Digital portfolio of your work](#)

You can start an application through clicking this link: <http://www.gsa.ac.uk/study/graduate-degrees/how-to-apply/>

Once you have completed part 1 of the application process, GSA will acknowledge your application, and for those programmes requiring a digital portfolio you will be directed to complete part 2. You are advised to upload your portfolio prior to the next [deadline date](#) to ensure it is assessed as early as possible.

Deadline dates

Programmes begin in September. Although there are no application deadlines early application is encouraged in order to ensure a place on the programme. We guarantee to review all applications received before 14 February for 2020 entry. Early application is encouraged in order to avoid disappointment. Applications are reviewed on a cyclical basis from November – August as shown below. Your application will need to be complete (part 1 and 2) by the date shown to enter the next review round.

Review number	Complete application received by	Final decision communicated by
1.	3 January 2020	24 January 2020
2.	14 February 2020	20 March 2020
3.	3 April 2020	1 May 2020
4.	22 May 2020	19 June 2020
5.	7 August 2020	

Timeline

Your completed application will be assessed at the next review round. There are 4 stages to your application.

1. Apply through GSA website with application form, statement, transcripts, references and digital portfolio
2. GSA academic staff will assess your application
3. You may be invited to interview
4. The outcome of your interview will be communicated to you through GSA Registry

1



Application Form +
Personal Statement



Digital Portfolio

2



Specialist staff
assess application
against criteria

Unsuccessful

3

Unsuccessful



Invited to Interview either
in person or telephone / skype

4

Unsuccessful

Conditional
Offer

Unconditional
Offer

How is my application assessed?

Candidates for all programmes are assessed on their existing qualities as demonstrated in their:

- application form and personal statement
- references and transcripts
- digital portfolio
- interview
- as well as on their potential to benefit from the programme and to achieve master standards overall.

The assessment will consider: creativity, intellectual curiosity, ability to demonstrate an advanced understanding of the subject and sufficient technical skill to realise intentions, the ability to articulate the context for the work, evidence of commitment to the subject, the ability to engage in sustained and consistent study.

Where can I find out more about the programmes?

You can find useful information about each of the School of Design programmes through the links below. You should be aware of the focus of the programme you are applying to, its' structure and content, as well as the opportunities available to you during your studies. It is important to make sure that the programme you are applying to meets your expectations.

- Programme listing on [GSA website](#)
- Programme specifications on [GSA website](#)
- MDes Interior Design [website](#)
- MDes Communication Design, Graphics, Illustration, Photography [website](#)
- MDes Fashion and Textiles on [GSA website](#)
- MSc Product Design Engineering on [GSA website](#)

Digital Portfolio

All applicants are required to submit a digital portfolio, with exception of Product Design Engineering. Your portfolio will be assessed by academic staff and should contain examples of work that show an understanding and level of skill appropriate to the postgraduate programme you are applying to. It is also important for the portfolio to reflect your individual abilities, experiences and interests.

Academic staff will look at your portfolio for approximately 10 minutes. Make sure that you curate and pace the pages so they will be able to assess your portfolio in the way you wish to present yourself.

Guidelines for the [contents of your digital portfolio](#) and how to [upload using the GSA application website](#) are included on the following slides.

What to include in your digital portfolio

The digital portfolio should:

1. demonstrate your individual interests, approach and creativity
2. clearly present your research methods and routes
3. show the links between your research and development of ideas
4. include evidence of your working process, from project inception to resolution, demonstrating experiments and explorations
5. demonstrate technical knowledge and skills used to realise intentions
6. include professional, fully resolved work
7. show an awareness and understanding of the professional context for the work

How to demonstrate your individual interests, approach and creativity

We are very keen to learn about your interest in design; this includes historical or contemporary artists / designers that you are inspired by, exhibitions you have visited, and industrial / work experience you have undertaken. We want to know what or who has inspired you within your design specialism and motivated you to make an application to a specialist programme at GSA.

You may include work generated from previous study and independently generated work either self-directed or produced within industry. If there is work included that you have professionally designed for clients or that was undertaken as part of a group project, please ensure your role within the design and implementation process is explicit.

How to show your research methods, and the links between your research and the development of ideas

We are interested in how and where you gather the research that informs your projects and how you analyse this information. We want to know about how this research informs the concepts and ideas behind your work and how they progress and develop; from the initial starting point/ source of inspiration through to a finished piece of work. This could be evidenced by uploading high quality scans of sketchbook pages/ notebooks/ work sheets/ development sheets. This should be mainly made up of your own work, we do not want to see lots of secondary source material (magazine cut outs, print outs from the internet, photocopies of books).

Where the portfolio requires it, you may include short text descriptions for the work you are presenting.

How to evidence your working process, and your technical knowledge and skills

In order to show your working process, from project inception to resolution, as well as technical abilities applied during the development of your projects, you may wish to show several pieces of work together within one image. You could do this by photographing or scanning sketch books/ working sheets/ technical log books/ prototypes/ experiments/ resolved 3d work individually and use photoshop (or a similar programme) to combine into one image.

When recording your work in this way make sure the imagery is of high quality and an appropriate size to ensure that the details that you wish to communicate can be read by the academic staff viewing it.

How to show fully resolved work and your understanding of it's professional context

We are interested in how you visually present and communicate about your work. It is important to show that you understand how and where to position your work within your design specialism. This could be evidenced by including high quality photographs of fully resolved outcomes indicating its context (position in market). Including relevant contemporary sources within the research would also demonstrate the setting for your resolved outcomes.

Approximately 20% of the imagery in your digital portfolio should include final outcomes. The remaining 80% should focus on your design process and the elements listed on the previous 4 slides.

Uploading your portfolio

School of Design programmes accept two formats for uploading a digital portfolio:

1. **a single PDF file**, consisting of approximately 20 pages (please note portfolios that are longer may not be fully read).
2. **or 20 individual images.**

Your digital portfolio should consist of a minimum of 3 projects.

If including **moving image or sound work**:

- these can be viewed via a hyperlink (included in your PDF document) to Vimeo or YouTube. Access to these websites should not be password protected.
- these can be viewed by inputting a URL link into the designated field.
- the clips must be limited to a maximum of five minutes.

If including a link to your **professional website** this can be inputted into the designated URL field. This should supplement the PDF file or 20 images but cannot replace the digital portfolio. * **Please note, URL link/s to Dropbox folders or other external cloud services will not be accepted.**

Personal Statement

Your statement should consist of no more than 500 words. Statements should be inputted into the designated field. Statements that are longer may not be fully read. It is important that your statement is individual; reflecting your interest and suitability for the design specialism being applied to.

When addressing the list below you should evidence that you have researched and understood the focus of the programme you are applying to, the opportunities available to you, and importantly how this programme meets your expectations and ambitions.

Within your statement you should write about:

- your reasons for committing to study at postgraduate level;
- your reasons for applying to the specialist programme you have chosen at GSA;
- your interests and experiences within your design specialism;
- what you hope to gain by studying the specialist programme;
- what you will contribute to the specialist programme;
- how undertaking the specialist programme corresponds with your future ambitions.

You may also use the statement to expand upon a particular project or piece of work included in the digital portfolio.

Interview

You will be contacted if you have been shortlisted and invite you to interview. You will likely be interviewed via telephone or Skype video call. If you are able to travel to Glasgow we will offer an interview in person. In both cases you may be asked to supply additional work for the interview.

The interview is a two-way process; for you to gain a better understanding of GSA and your chosen programme, and for GSA staff to ask you questions about your work and your interest in your chosen specialism. The interview will normally take approximately 20 minutes and will be conducted by academic staff from your chosen programme.

How to prepare:

- Know where everything is in your portfolio. You will be expected to talk confidently about your work.
- Have questions to ask the interviewer about the programme, GSA or life in Glasgow.
- Prepare to talk about your interests (e.g. artists/ designers who inspire you) and your experiences (e.g. projects/ exhibitions/ commissions/ work experience).
- Relax! Everyone wants you to do well.

Interview practicalities

In advance of a telephone or Skype video interview please ensure we can get in touch with you at the agreed day / time.

How to prepare:

- Ensure you have confirmed the interview and provided a telephone number and Skype name to be contacted with.
- If you have been provided with staff contact details for Skype, add these to your account in advance.
- If you are being contacted by telephone make sure your phone can receive calls from the U.K.
- Check that you have a strong internet connection.
- Make sure you are in a quiet space where you will not be disturbed.
- Ensure your digital portfolio is accessible so you are able to talk about it during your interview.

Further Information

[How to apply GSA webpage](#)

[List of Graduate degrees at GSA](#)

[List of GSA Open Events](#) (if you would like to find out more information in person)

[UKVI Requirements - Tier 4 Student Visa requirements](#)

[English for Creative Disciplines](#) (pre-sessional English)

[Individual country guides](#)

[Guides for parents of international students](#)

[GSA Scholarships and alternative sources of funding](#)

[GSA Accommodation and private rented accommodation](#)

If you need further information about applying to Graduate level study, email admissions@gsa.ac.uk

If you have a question about an existing application, email registry@gsa.ac.uk