

PRE-SESSIONAL ENGLISH FOR CREATIVE DISCIPLINES

Student Guide

What is the GSA Pre-Sessional Course in English for Creative Disciplines?

The GSA Pre-Sessional Course in English (PSE) for Creative Disciplines constitutes a flexible discipline-specific language and study skills programme tailored to the needs of international students who have been offered a place on an undergraduate or postgraduate course at GSA on the condition that they improve their English up to a level required by the given GSA programme. Achieving the required grades at the end of the PSE course allows the students to progress onto their GSA programme without having to retake the IELTS test.

The course is made up of three independent modules, each built around a particular theme:

- Module 1: Objects
- Module 2: Mapping the city
- Module 3: Critical art and design

The themes are sufficiently general to allow every student, regardless of their discipline, to engage with it and apply the learning later on their UG or PG course.

Each module lasts 4 weeks and is progressively more challenging than the previous one, both linguistically and conceptually.

Students can join the PSE course at any stage, as long as they meet the language requirements of the particular module and complete a preparatory online module (see section 'Practical information about the PSE course' below for details).

Why should I take the PSE course?

This intensive bridging programme offers a unique opportunity to study English and essential academic skills in the context of the creative disciplines (Art, Design and Architecture), their specialist learning methodologies, practices and processes, enriched by immersion in the British and Scottish culture.

Based on close entwining of language with subject content and studio practice, the PSE course can help the student to develop discipline-specific practices, which should make the transition to prospective programmes easier.

More specifically, the PSE course offers the following advantages:

- integrated individual and group projects combining language and studio practice to allow the development of relevant research skills, creative and critical thinking, content knowledge and professional attributes;
- interactive, inquiry-based and student-centred and -driven teaching methods which mimic those used in the discipline-specific contexts;
- integrated formative assessment to allow the monitoring of progress and establishing of personalised learning objectives through one-to-one and small group tutorials with language and studio tutors;
- a cultural immersion programme in form of gallery visits, field trips, film screenings, artist talks, lectures from subject specialists integrated into the course curriculum;
- learning in small groups with guidance from experienced and qualified language and art tutors;
- a virtual learning environment supporting the course and communications between students and staff.

What can I expect to gain from the course?

Overall, the student can expect to improve their performance across the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and subskills in the context of creative disciplines. It is intended that they make a progression within the 'Independent' category of the CEFR framework, from upper B1 to upper B2 (an equivalent of 5.5 – 6.5 range of IELTS), the main features of the transition being increased engagement with language at the level of detail, complexity, familiarity and abstraction of the topic.

More specifically, by completing the PSE course, the student can expect to:

- generally, communicate more effectively and confidently in English in the context of critical art and design education, both in writing and speaking;

- improve their listening comprehension when listening to lectures, talks and discussions in the context of the creative disciplines; develop relevant strategies to cope with increasingly more challenging and complex lectures and talks;
- improve their reading comprehension and develop relevant strategies to be better able to cope with a range of disciplinary texts of varying degrees of complexity and length in order to locate significant and relevant information, identify the author's stance and discern between facts and opinions;
- learn how to identify and evaluate pieces of information from a range of spoken and written sources in terms of their relevance to your own spoken and written work;
- develop the necessary note-taking skills while listening and reading in order to use the notes effectively during presentations, seminar discussions and conversations, and in writing;
- develop the necessary skills in relation to referencing and citing in order to appropriately integrate source material in your own work to develop a logical and coherent argument;
- demonstrate a better understanding of the written genres typical of the creative disciplines, such as an essay, exhibition review, reflective account, visual analysis, and an ability to produce them;
- develop greater autonomy and independence as a learner in a creative learning environment as well as a range of higher-order thinking skills (e.g. critical and analytical skills, reflection, evaluation) and personal attributes (e.g. cross-cultural communication, creative thinking, collaboration, ethical awareness, adaptability, resourcefulness) in order to succeed at the GSA.

On top of that, the student can expect to develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of the creative and cultural practices with a specific focus on the context of arts education within Scotland and the UK. This will be mainly achieved through the studio practice integrated into the PSE course syllabus.

It is also hoped that the course will help the learners to get familiar with the GSA campus and the city of Glasgow and their unique features so that the student is well settled when they start their GSA study programme in the academic year 2019/20.

How does the course work?

The PSE Course for Creative Disciplines is a full-time course with 25 hours of classroom contact every week and a daily minimum requirement of 2 hours of independent study.

The overall approach taken to the design of the course relies on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which is learning English by studying a content-based subject, in this case Art, Design and Architecture.

Because of that, the course design features three interconnected subject-specific strands:

1. art and design/culture studies concepts, e.g. speculative design;
2. art and design methodologies, e.g. visual analysis, reflective journal;
3. art and design projects, e.g. mapping project.

The first two strands focus on the presentation and exploration of the topics and relevant illustrative examples of artworks by means of lectures, talks, film screenings, text readings, as well as student-led discussions and presentations. The third 'Project' strand is a more practice-oriented component which will ask the students to work individually and/or in groups to produce a textual/visual/material artefact or a series thereof. This will be subject to formative feedback, including group critiques and critical response process (an artist-driven feedback process during which the author presents their piece together with probing questions for the audience in order to self-evaluate their work). The 'Project' strand will also allow the students to research what an artist's/designer's practice entails, interrogate their own practice, beliefs and values, experiment with research/creation processes as well as collaborate in groups. Last but not least, the projects within this strand feed directly into language outputs – see the section below for details.

All the three strands will strongly rely on inquiry-based learning, which emphasises the need for consistent questioning, problem posing and solving, divergent and convergent thinking, multi-perspective evaluation and group knowledge construction. This particular approach is typical of critical art and design education that the GSA prides itself on.

All the three strands will also integrate an appropriate and relevant language and study skills focus to help the students process the input adequately, develop relevant study and language skills and relevant coping strategies, and produce output demonstrating their ability to use those in context. For example, a lecture may be accompanied by a terminology task and a follow-up discussion.

On top of that, regular language and study skills workshops will be timetabled weekly to analyse the features of the written and spoken texts in more detail and in order to practise a range of language skills and subskills in more controlled activities to help the students make progress in order to achieve the required exit grades.

Throughout the course, regular one-to-one consultations will be offered during which the students will be able to keep track of their development in terms of short- and longer-term goals related to language study and study skills.

A staggered approach to timetabling the language workshops will be taken, with the proportion of the language input being front-loaded and gradually decreasing to make more space for the content input and practice through the project component (with language still being part thereof, in line with CLIL principles). The Project component itself will become progressively more challenging in terms of the complexity of the input and output. In other words, proportionately Module 1 will include more language input than Module 2 or Module 3. For that reason, the language expectations during subsequent modules will be higher. For example, during Module 1, the students will focus on developing writing at the paragraph level while during Module 2 they will be asked to write longer pieces with references to source material. This means a student joining the PSE course for Module 2 needs to be able to write well-structured, coherent and developed paragraphs in English.

What could a sample week of study on the PSE course look like?

Classes start at 9:30 am and finish around 4 pm. There is a 75-minute lunch break at around midday and two smaller comfort breaks, one in the morning and another one in the afternoon. Lesson units last between 60 and 90 minutes, depending on the topic and types of learning activities.

However, each week there are:

- study skills workshops in order to develop and practise the academic language skills;
- language workshops in order to help to improve accuracy and a range of grammar and vocabulary;
- content input, mostly in form of interactive lectures provided by guest speakers. Last year, for example, there were lectures on soundscapes and the history of fashion. There will also be film screenings and trips to galleries or other cultural institutions;
- studio input and practice led by experienced art tutors.

What happens outside the class times?

Outside the PSE class, the students are expected to do homework and independent study. This will be supported through the course Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas) and Blogs in form of structured activities, links to useful resources, and reflection tasks. The flipped classroom approach

will also be used which requires the students to complete activities online prior to class so that they have the background knowledge and skills necessary to engage in practical applications and language production.

How do I get assessed?

The students will only be assessed on the development of their language and study skills. While the studio component is not assessed, it gives the basis for the linguistic/academic assessment and indirectly feeds into it. In other words, all the assessed written and spoken language outputs rely on the studio projects.

The table below demonstrates how the studio and language components are linked in terms of assessment:

	STUDIO PROJECT	ASSESSED LANGUAGE COMPONENT	
		Written output	Spoken output
Module 1 - Objects	A material response to an object from GSA archives – students work in pairs All the objects are then curated as a group exhibition attended by external guests.	Exhibition materials in form of labels and description for each object (pair-work), group exhibition catalogue for the guests to take away (groupwork). An individual compare- and-contrast analysis of two objects.	Individual presentations of the exhibition objects ('artist talk') plus a group critique.
Module 2 – Mapping the city	Designing a sensory map and a related psychogeographic experience – students work in small groups. Each 'experience' is tested by another group. There is a possibility of external guests trying out the 'experiences' too.	A supporting statement for the experience design explaining the rationale and the design process – written in groups. A reflective account – written individually.	Group presentations discussing the design process, including the peer feedback from the 'experience' testers plus a group critique.
Module 3 – Critical art and design	Designing a product or service following the principles of	An essay providing a theoretical discussion and analysis of the	Individual presentations of the Projects plus a group

	speculative design – students work individually.	themes resulting from the Project.	critique. A seminar discussion on the value of speculative design principles for different creative disciplines.
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The first two modules will rely on formative/continuous assessment ('coursework' and 'class engagement') with two 'summative' tasks for each skill throughout each module. The tasks will be a combination of discrete and integrated assessment tasks in the four language skills, for instance:

- Listening – a listening comprehension task and a 'listen to speak/write' task;
- Reading – a reading comprehension task and a 'read to speak/write' task;
- Speaking – two interconnected speaking tasks, e.g. presentation/seminar discussion, to demonstrate the student's ability to respond to feedback);
- Writing – two interconnected writing tasks, e.g. single artwork visual analysis and a compare-and-contrast analysis of two artworks, to demonstrate the student's ability to respond to feedback.

The tasks are referred to as 'summative' because even though there will be an expectation of progress over the duration of the block, not reaching the expected module exit grades will not prevent the student from progressing to the next stage of the course. For this reason, at the end of the first and second module, the student will receive a progress report stating what stage they are at in a descriptive way: 'well on track', 'making progress', 'needs to work'.

The last third module will follow a similar arrangement, i.e. there will be formative tasks as above; however, at the same time it will feature traditional summative (graded) assessments in the four skills which together with the continuous assessment over the whole course (all the blocks the student has attended) will provide the exit grades (equivalents of the IELTS scores). The summative assessment will look as follows:

- For receptive skills, there will be a final exam in listening and reading.
- For productive skills, there will be a summatively assessed task in speaking and writing.

In terms of the final course grading, each of the language skills will be given equal weighting of 25%, 15% coming from the summatively assessed task and 10% coming from continuous assessment, class participation, coursework submission.

- Listening 25% - Final exam (15%) and classwork (10%);

- Reading 25% - Final exam (15%) and classwork (10%);
- Writing 25% - A sourced essay on a topic related to the module themes, submitted toward the end of the block (15%) plus written coursework (10%);
- Speaking 25% - A presentation on a topic related to the course themes (15%) delivered toward the end of the module plus class discussion participation (10%).

To help the students develop their portfolio of coursework, formative feedback events will be held regularly throughout the course, including group critiques and self-evaluations structured around the idea of the critical response process, as well as individual consultations with the tutor.

Practical information about the PSE course

In order to apply for the PSE for Creative Disciplines, the students have to have a conditional offer for any GSA course which requires them to improve their language skills up to a level required by the prospective course. These requirements will be different for undergraduate and postgraduate courses and so they affect the entry requirements for the PSE Course. The entry requirements for different GSA study programmes can be found in section 8.4 of the following website: <http://www.gsa.ac.uk/about-gsa/key-information/our-structure/academic-services/programme-course-specifications/programme-specifications-2018-19/>

Depending on their current IELTS results, the students can join the PSE course at three intake points to undertake all three modules (12 weeks), Modules 2 and 3 (8 weeks), or only the last third Module (4 weeks).

The table below outlines the entry requirements for the GSA Programmes and the PSE course modules, as well as the module start dates and associated fees.

Main degree language requirement	Current IELTS scores*	PSE course we recommend**	Start Date	Fees****
IELTS 6.5 overall with no individual skill lower than 6.0	6.0 overall with no skill lower than 5.5	12-week course (Module 1, 2, 3)	17/06/19	£3,950
	6.0 overall with no more than one skill at 5.5	8-week course (Module 2, 3)***	15/07/19	£2,850
	6.5 overall with no more than one skill at 5.5	4-week course (Module 3) ***	12/08/19	£1,450

IELTS 6.0 overall with no individual skill lower than 5.5	5.5 overall with no skill lower than 5.0	12-week course (Module 1, 2, 3)	17/06/19	£3,950
	5.5 overall with no more than one skill at 5.0	8-week course (Module 2, 3)***	15/07/19	£2,850
	6.0 overall with no more than one skill at 5.0	4-week course (Module 3)***	12/08/19	£1,450

* Current IELTSs must have been taken at an approved test centre within 2 years of the proposed course start date.

** Please note the PSE course requirements indicate the minimum entry levels. If the student's level is higher, they can still join the PSE course at an earlier stage if you feel it can benefit them.

*** Students joining the course after Module 1 or 2 will be required to undertake an online preparatory module prior to starting study on the PSE course. It is also recommended that they arrive a day or two earlier in order to get familiar with the campus and city.

**** The cost of the programme includes tuition, materials and course related field trips (but not accommodation). It is payable in full, prior to students being issued with their CAS.

Accommodation is available at Blythswood House, situated in the centre of Glasgow.

Further information can be found at <http://www.gsa.ac.uk/visit-gsa/summer-accommodation/>

Please state that you are attending the pre-sessional English course here at GSA when making enquiries.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

Any enquiries can be made to pre-sessional@gsa.ac.uk