Postgraduate Taught Study
School of Design

Guidelines for making an application to postgraduate programmes

Scope

This document includes guidelines for making an application to the postgraduate programmes listed below.

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

Where can I find out more about the programmes?

- You can meet GSA online for Advice & Introductions at Virtual Open Days and during more informal Meet your Department sessions taking place throughout the year. Find out about events taking place and register an interest.

- You can find useful information about each of the School of Design programmes via the weblinks 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 listings on GSA website

  Programme and course specifications

  MDes Interior Design

  MDes Communication Design, Graphics, Illustration, Photography

  MDes Fashion and Textiles

  MSc Product Design Engineering

Academic 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 these academic entry requirements, we may still consider your application on the basis of your portfolio and or relevant professional experience.

- We seek 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.
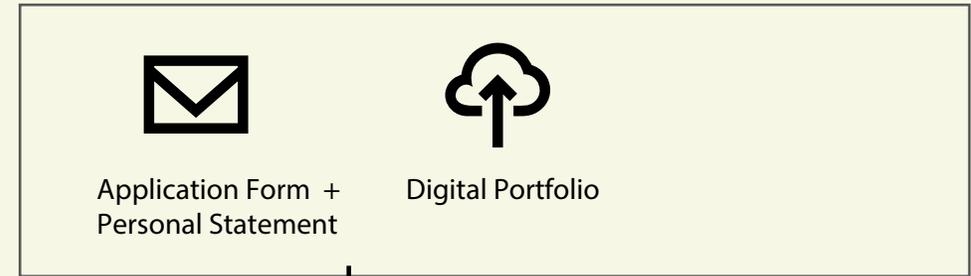
English Language Entry Requirements

- GSA expects applicants to demonstrate proficiency in the English language. International applicants will normally be expected to provide evidence of attainment equivalent to International English Language Test (IELT) for UKVI Academic from a UKVI approved test centre.

- All School of Design postgraduate programmes require a score of 6.5 overall, with a minimum of 6.0 in each component.

- GSA's preferred test is the IELTS for UKVI (Academic) test taken at a UKVI approved test centre. A full list of UKVI approved test centres and other tests that may be presented are available on the GSA website.

- GSA Pre-sessional English course called English for Creative Disciplines is recommended to PGT applicants applying to postgraduate programmes in the School of Design. Further information is also available in this Student Guide.
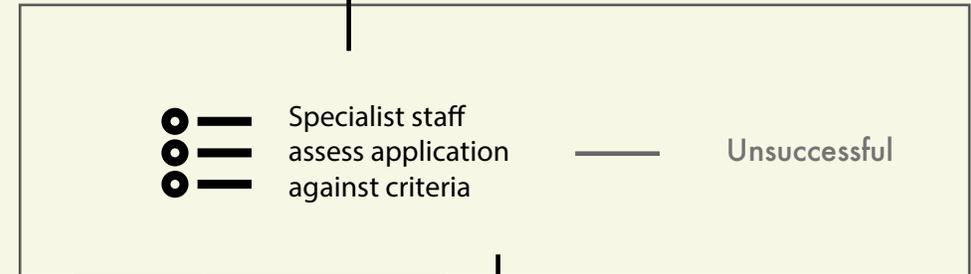
Timeline

There are 4 stages to your application.

1. Apply through GSA website with application form, statement, transcripts, references and digital portfolio.

2. GSA specialist 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.

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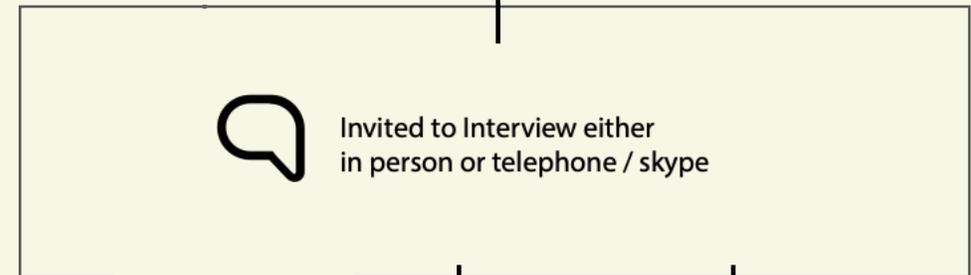Application Form +
Personal Statement

Digital Portfolio

2

Specialist staff
assess application
against criteria

Unsuccessful

3

Invited to Interview either
in person or telephone / skype

4

Unsuccessful

Conditional
Offer

Unconditional
Offer

Starting an Application

- Your application to study for a postgraduate programme at GSA is in two parts:

  Part 1.   Application form, personal statement, references and transcripts

  Part 2.   Digital portfolio of work

- You can start an application on the GSA website. Once you have completed part 1 of the application process, GSA will acknowledge your application, and for 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 **12 February for 2021 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.

	Final date for applicants to submit application	**Final date for decision to be with applicant**
Review 1	13 November 2020	11 December 2020
Review 2	8 January 2021	29 January 2021
Review 3	12 February 2021	19 March 2021
Review 4	2 April 2021	7 May 2021
Review 5	21 May 2021	18 June 2021
Review 6	Applications received after 22 May	Rolling basis after 18 June
	8 August 2021 for international applications	

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How is my application assessed?

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

  1. application form, references and transcripts,

  2. personal statement,

  3. digital portfolio,

  4. interview,

  5. 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.

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. The portfolio should also communicate your individual abilities, experiences and interests.

- We discourage the use of external companies to prepare portfolios as the outcome can often be generic.

- Specialist 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 are included on the following slides.

Uploading your digital portfolio

We 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 pages.

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

If including moving image or sound work:

- these can 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.

A link to your professional website can be included, however this should supplement the digital portfolio.

* Please note, URL links to Dropbox folders or other external cloud services will not be accepted.

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What should I include in my 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 fully resolved work,

7. show an awareness and understanding of the 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 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 project 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 through to a finished piece of work.

- This could be evidenced by uploading high quality scans of work in progress sketchbook pages, notebooks or loose 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 and technical abilities during the development of your projects, you may wish to combine several pieces of work together onto one page. 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 page.

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.

Personal Statement

- **Your statement should consist of no more than 500 words. Statements that are longer may not be fully read.**

- Your statement should be individual; reflecting your interest and suitability for the design specialism applied to. 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.

- You may write about:
  - 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

- If you have been shortlisted you will be invited to interview via Skype or Zoom video call.

- The interview is a two-way process; for you to gain a better understanding of GSA and your chosen programme, and for specialist staff to find out more about you and your work.

- The interview will normally take approximately 20 minutes and will be conducted by specialist 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.

- Read any guidance documents provided with your invite to interview.

- Prepare questions to ask the interviewer about the programme, GSA or life in Glasgow.

- Prepare to talk about your interests and your experiences to date.

- Relax! Everyone wants you to do well.

Interview practicalities

In advance of an interview please ensure we can contact you at the agreed day and time.

How to prepare:

- Confirm the interview with GSA and provide your contact details.

- Ensure you have an internet connection which will support video calling.

- If you are being contacted by telephone make sure your phone can receive calls from the U.K.

- Find a quiet space where you will not be disturbed.

- Your digital portfolio should be easily accessible as you will be asked to to talk about it.

- If you have been provided contact details for a GSA staff member, add these to your account in advance of the interview.

- Please note, that following the interview staff will not communicate with applicants through video calling software (e.g. Skype).

- Interviews will be conducted within the working hours of GSA, Monday-Friday 9am-5pm (GMT).

Further Information

How to apply GSA webpage

List of Postgraduate degrees at GSA

GSA Open Events

Fees, Funding and Finance

Accommodation

Individual country guides

Guides for parents of international students

UKVI Requirements - Tier 4 Student Visa requirements

English for Creative Disciplines

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

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