

Masters in Architectural Studies Study Guide

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Masters in Architectural Studies 1 year (3 semester) programme combines individual specialist study, through a series of **pathways**, with the opportunity to share knowledge and experience with fellow students in a cross disciplinary context.

We are uniquely positioned within a wider community of artists and designers at the Glasgow School of Art and this allows our students the opportunity to make connections both academically and socially.

Our physical shared studio provides a permanent workplace for all students which provides peer support and learning throughout the duration of the programme.



Image credit: James Fauld and Tom Starke

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Pathways

The Masters in Architectural Studies Pathways are as follows:

- Urban Design
- Creative Urban Practices
- Urban Building
- Digital Creativity
- Energy and Environmental Studies
- History and Theory of the City
- Zero- Energy Mass Customised Housing

Our pathways relate closely to the research clusters within the Mackintosh School of Architecture.



Image: Jan Wright, Creative Urban Practices, 2020

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Cross Disciplinary Context

The programme begins with a series of core lectures and seminars, balanced by focused reading of key literature which give an overview of contemporary issues in and around architecture. This enables all of the Masters students on the programme to gain a multi-disciplinary perspective and provides the forum for shared discourse.

The lecture series consists of lectures in:

Architectural Research

Energy and the Environment

Contemporary Urban Practices

Urban Design and Urban Building

The Ideal and the City, looking at philosophy, literature, arts and science and their influence on architecture and urbanism.



Image: Refang Man

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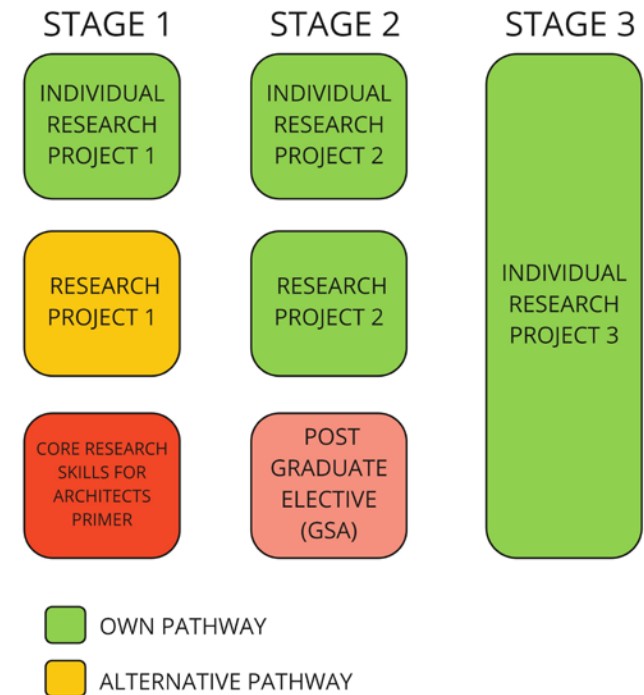
Course Structure

In **Stage 1** (semester 1) students undertake an Individual Research Project within their own pathway and a Research Project within an alternative pathway. This allows them to gain a multi disciplinary perspective and supports their development.

They also undertake a Core Research Skills course for architects.

In **Stage 2** (semester 2) students develop their Individual Research Project from stage 1 into a Feasibility Study whilst also undertaking a Research Project within their chosen Pathway. Students are enrolled on the Post Graduate Elective which allows them to undertake a course within the wider community of GSA.

In **Stage 3** (semester 3) students focus entirely on their Individual Research Project which builds on the work undertaken in the first 2 stages and brings their Individual Research Project to a conclusion.



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Urban Design Pathway

Our approach to the study of urban design views the urban plan as an artistic creation, with its more or less detailed design prescriptions or 'urban rules', as the setting for joyful urban life – with Glasgow as a rich location for individual investigations.

The pathway will look at the creative exploration of the complex interrelationships between urban form and the daily activities of citizens, under the theme of place-making.

A review of international and local case studies will take place within Stage 1 and 2.

Recommended readings will discuss normative city models, urban elements and urban texture.

Important topics for the Urban Design Pathway include urban morphology, plot-based urbanism, housing typology, urban rules, neighbourhood design, density measurement, open space and street design.



Image: Jirapat Pharksirinan

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Digital Creativity Pathway

This pathway, inspired and stimulated by ideas from the Smart geometry (SG) group, explored the potential of scripting and algorithms to offer a new way of designing and thinking about the design process.

Computer algorithms and scripting provide architects with the opportunities to design in a nonlinear way. This is a notion of understanding nature's evolutionary and nonlinear process and learning from them rather than mimicking them.

The course also concerns areas of problem solving, mental structures, cognition, simulation and rule-based intelligence.

The course comprises a series of lectures which tackle the fundamental issues that underpin the theory behind algorithmic processes in design and design computation in general. These will be complemented by several algorithmic studios which aim to engage with the practice of writing algorithmic scripts for design problem solving.

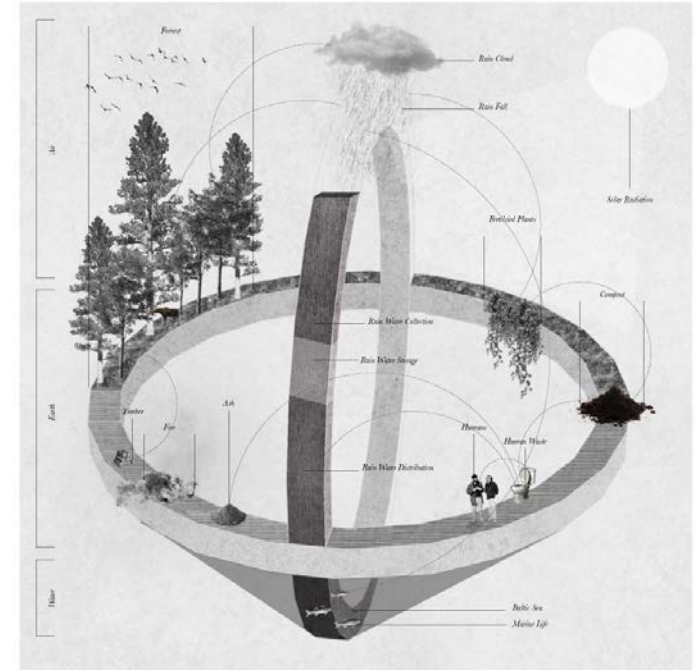


Image: Ella Walklate

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Energy and Environment + Zero Energy Mass Customised Housing Pathways

The context for the two pathways is the increasing requirements for low energy and sustainable buildings, and the rapid changes in legislation, technology and systems.

The Energy and Environment Pathway covers both domestic and non-domestic buildings and the wider built environment.

The Zero Energy Mass Customised Housing Pathway focuses on housing.

The programmes are predicated on the overlap between architecture, technology and users. The course content targets those who aspire to specialised practice as architects or researchers and those who wish to gain insight into the processes and knowledge that informs and shapes how buildings are designed to meet contemporary targets for energy, health and comfortable environments, and usability.

The pathways are closely linked to the specialist Mackintosh Environmental Architecture Research Unit (MEARU), and provide insights into the practice of sustainable 21st century architecture.

The programmes balance theory, design practice and innovation.

Content is closely linked with industry developments, but with a theoretical underpinning and willingness to experiment.



Image: Callum Sibbald

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Urban Building Pathway

The Urban Building Pathway is concerned with the study and exploration of architecture and the city through the design of a significant public building located within an established urban context.

This architectural project is conceived to encourage investigations and reveal insights into the reciprocal relationships which exist – as well as those which might yet be established – between the landscape, architecture and morphology of the city.

In this respect, Glasgow and its environs offer themselves as ideal models for study. Together they are a living resource as they bear the characteristic morphological imprints pertaining not only to their European counterparts, but also those ubiquitous gridiron planned cities of North and South America.

While the individual research focus is lead by each student a framework for the discussion will be the over-arching themes of *'type, technique and topography'* and initial Readings will be suggested.

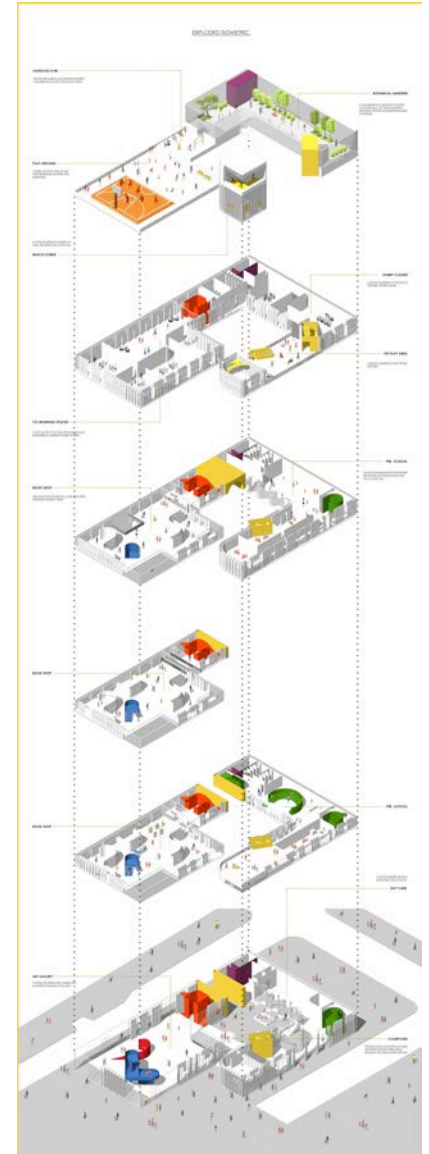


Image: Priyanka Parekh

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Creative Urban Practices Pathway

The Creative Urban Practices pathway provides an environment where students from diverse backgrounds – e.g. fine art, design, human geography, urban studies, and architecture – can collaborate in an environment, where experimentation and testing into **place, space and the city** are supported through a multi-disciplinary studio and discourse.

The course accepts that the conditions for today's cities and towns are different from the past and that these differences can be understood by knowledge of urban history and theory as well as art practice. The underlying premise is that past generations constructed towns and cities, or added to an inherited situation, to produce, over time, a communal work or art – a great city or town.

The aims of the Creative Urban Practices pathway are:

To develop a critical understanding of the key theories and practices of space and place, in the context of historical and contemporary urbanism.

To analyse the nature of a particular place in order to devise creative propositions that address issues of space and place in that location.

To reflect upon the links between theories and practices of space and place and the realities of contemporary urban design practice.



Image: Dustin Yee

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History and Theory Pathway

The Master's pathway in "History and Theory of the City" is designed to provide an understanding of the reasons for the forms of our cities, and of the theories that have been developed to explain them. Drawing from architectural history and theory as well as sociology, cultural studies, and urban planning, the course takes a broad range of approaches to the historical and theoretical study of the urban built environment.

Through case studies and first-hand experiences, it will give students the skills to devise and carry out research on the history and theory of the urban form.

The course is in two parts. Part one is the core component shared with students from other pathways. This part centres on past and present conceptions of space and how they influenced the formation of cities in their architectural, political and social contexts. The focus is on the development of Western urban space, looking at key periods and cities in history.

Part two is specific to the pathway. Lectures and seminars enable the students to explore various research methods for developing new knowledge about city form, including visual analysis, bibliographic and archive research, and working with maps. The course covers major themes in the history and theory of urban architecture, which may include power and its architectural representation in urban institutions, the roles of religious and memorial architecture in forming social identities, and environmental history of the city.



Image: Ariane Porter

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Post Graduate Elective

The Post Graduate Elective offers students the possibility of studying within another part of Glasgow School of Art, with electives offered from the School of Fine Art, Design, Innovation and Simulation and Visualisation.



Image: Mate Gehberger

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Examples of work undertaken by students on the Masters in Architectural Studies course can be found on our 2021 Graduate Showcase.



Image: Charles Dunn