Preparing for Interview

Postgraduate Taught Degrees
School of Design

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

Image: Nadja Andersson

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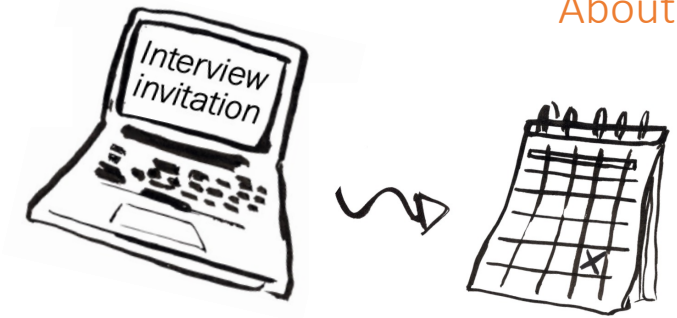# Why does GSA interview?

The interview is a two-way process.

For you

It's an opportunity for you to gain a better understanding of what it is like to be a student at the Glasgow School of Art. Studying a postgraduate degree is a big commitment, so it is important to make sure we meet your expectations.

For us

We want to discuss the work in the digital portfolio as well as your passion for the subject. The interview is an important opportunity for us to confirm you know what studying the programme entails and that you are ready to study at postgraduate level at GSA.

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Shortlisting

If you have been shortlisted, you will receive an e-mail from GSA inviting you to an interview. Check the email address listed on your application regularly.

Open the weblink provided to access the interview booking website. We conduct interviews during specific dates, these are marked by the ✳ in the table below.

Shortly before your appointment, you will receive an email with details of a Zoom meeting to access the interview online.

Round	Deadline to apply	Interviews taking place	Decision on application by
Early	11 November 2022	✳ 28 November – 2 December 2022	20 January 2023
Standard 1	27 January 2023	✳ 20 February – 3 March 2023	10 March 2023
Standard 2	10 March 2023	✳ 3 April – 21 April 2023	28 April 2023
Late	9 June 2023	✳ 3 July – 14 July 2023	21 July 2023

Interview Process

Scoring System

1 – Unsatisfactory evidence of required ability
2 – Very limited evidence of required ability
3 – Limited evidence of required ability
4 – Satisfactory evidence of required ability
5 – Good evidence of required ability
6 – Very good evidence of required ability
7 – Excellent evidence of required ability

1. An interview takes place online with a staff member from your chosen programme. You will be asked set questions and your digital portfolio will be discussed.

2. The staff member reviews your performance scoring it out of 7 for each assessment criteria.

3. Each programme sets its own threshold, this is the score that your application needs to reach in order to be offered a place on the programme.

5. If your total score is below the threshold, GSA Registry will let you know your application has been unsuccessful.

Upon request, your assessment criteria scores can be provided as feedback.

Congratulations!

4. Your score is totalled up and if it equals or exceeds the threshold GSA Registry will issue either an unconditional or conditional offer.

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Interview format

All interviews will take place online via Zoom within the working hours of GSA. It will be conducted by a tutor from your chosen programme and will usually take about 20 minutes.

The interviewer will have your digital portfolio available. They will have set questions prepared to ask you and they might take notes.

You will also have time to ask questions. If you would like to know more about anything now is a really good time to ask. It also shows you're interested.

Following the interview, your interview performance will be numerically scored against the assessment criteria.

✳ Answering Questions ✳

Listen carefully to the questions you are asked.

Try to answer them directly and as fully as possible.

If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification.

If you don't hear the question, ask for it to be repeated.

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Assessment criteria

Your complete application will be numerically scored against specific assessment criteria. It is important to know what this assessment criteria is, and you should try to respond to this criteria when preparing for interview.

The assessment criteria is listed to the righthand side and explained in more detail on the next page.

1. Applicants' ability to demonstrate practical skills. *Except MSc Product Design Engineering

2. Applicants' ability to apply analytical and conceptual skills.

3. Applicants' ability to communicate about work and put it in context.

4. Applicants' ability to demonstrate an interest in design and specialist area applied for.

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* Criteria 1

Applicants' ability to demonstrate practical skills

We would like to see your practical skills. You can demonstrate these in a variety of ways in your digital portfolio, including hand drawing, collage, 3D work, computer work, photography, prototyping, print making etc. Practical skills can be shown through finished pieces and development work. It's important to show all the practical skills that are relevant and transferable to your chosen programme. You can also talk about these at interview and write about the most relevant skills in your personal statement.

*This criteria applies to all programmes except the MSc in Product Design Engineering programme. This is explained further on *

* Criteria 2

Applicants' ability to apply analytical and conceptual skills

We want to know about your working process, from project inception to resolution. We are interested in the ideas behind your work and your thought process. Clearly present your research methods and routes, showing how these translate into developed ideas. What was the initial starting point, how was this idea explored and experimented with, and what decisions determined the finished work?

Within the digital portfolio this process should be organised and presented with a clear succession and conclusion. You should be able to speak confidently about your working process during the interview.

* Criteria 3

Applicants' ability to demonstrate an interest in design and specialist area applied for

We want to know about your interest in your chosen design specialism; who or what inspires and motivates you. This might include artists, designers, architects, mentors, exhibitions or online events attended, documentaries, books, journals, archives, podcasts etc. You can discuss this in your personal statement and during the interview. Including reference imagery in the digital portfolio can also show this but don't include too much, the portfolio imagery should focus on your response to the references.

You should demonstrate that you have researched your chosen programme and be able to discuss why you have chosen to apply to this programme. You can do this within the personal statement and during discussion at interview.

* Criteria 4

Applicants' ability to communicate about work and put it in context

We are keen not only to understand your sources of inspiration but also what determined the direction and focus of your projects. The creative process is a journey, what did you learn and what areas did you find to be the most successful or challenging.

Show that you understand where to position your work within your design specialism by showing this visually in the digital portfolio or by explaining this in the personal statement or at interview. For work-in-progress you could describe what you hope to achieve, what sources you will be looking at, and how you hope to explore these.

Product Design Engineering

The first criteria for Product Design Engineering is;

1. Applicants' ability to demonstrate engineering and technical awareness.

* Criteria 1

Applicants' ability to demonstrate engineering and technical awareness

We look to see your knowledge of a range of Mathematics, Physics and Engineering subjects within your application. Due to the Engineering and Technical nature of the programme, knowledge of the following subject areas will be of great value to you:

Engineering Maths
Statics
Dynamics
Power Electronics
Thermodynamics
Mechanics of Solids/Structures

If you have any examples of work and or a portfolio, we are interested in seeing how you have demonstrated your application of these subject areas. For example, technical analysis and engineering considerations that have been applied in the development of a product/concept. It's important to show the practical and prototyping skills that are relevant and transferable to your chosen programme. You can also talk about these at interview.

City of Glasgow

Think about what makes Glasgow a great place to study **for you**. There is no right answer, but it should be personal. Some broad ideas, that could be expanded upon include:

- Architecture
- Diversity of people
- History and culture
- Access to green spaces and proximity to nature
- Lots of students, good for socials
- Art and music scene
- Exhibition spaces, studios, galleries, museums

Click here to view a Google Map-based guide to GSA's global creative networks, connections, and the city at our heart, Glasgow.

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Glasgow School of Art

Think about what makes GSA the right place **for you**. There is no right answer, but it should be personal. Some broad ideas, that could be expanded upon include:

- Only independent art school in Scotland
- Studio based teaching
- Self-directed learning
- Workshop facilities
- Practical work underpinned by history and theory
- Studying interdisciplinary courses

You can meet GSA online for advice and introductions at Open Days and during more informal events taking place throughout the year. Find out more about events taking place and register an interest.

Choosing GSA because it is prestigious, top rated, or due to the Mackintosh building doesn't tell the interviewer about **your** motivation. Avoid using generic statements.

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Programmes

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.

Think about what makes this the right programme **for you**.
- Read everything you can about the programme.
- Note down specific aspects that appeal to you.
- Look at student projects available through our digital Degree Show. Note work you are interested in and why. You could mention it during your interview.

Programme information is available via the weblinks below.

Programme Websites

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

GSA website
Programme listings
Programme specifications
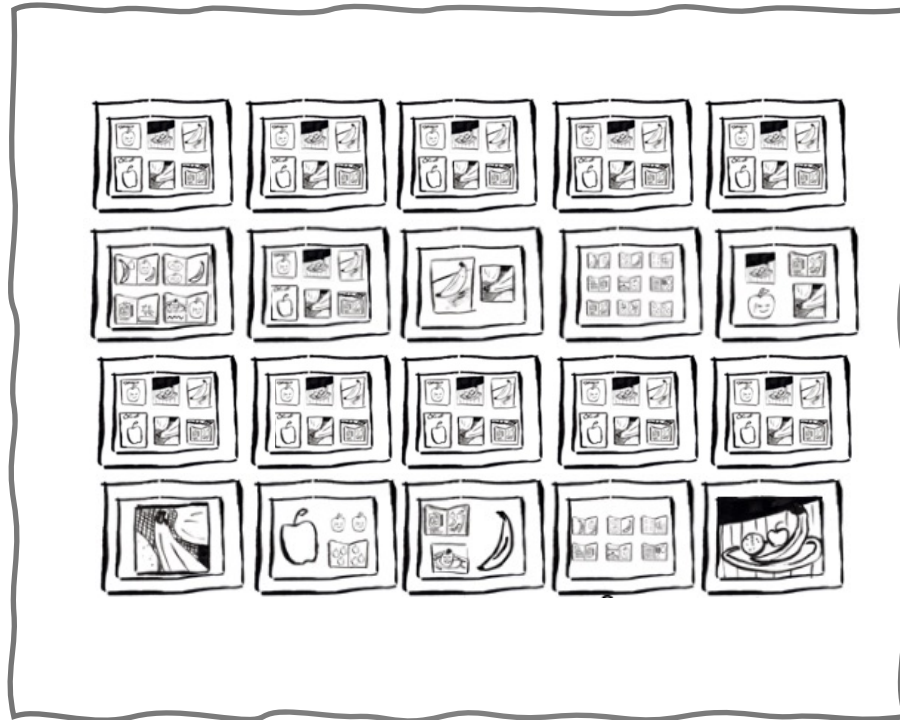
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Application

In advance of the interview review your application form and personal statement.

- Be prepared to talk about your interests and your experiences to date.

- Highlight any sections you think the interviewer could ask you to explain further.

- Is there anything missing you'd like to say at interview?

You can have notes beside you to refer to during the interview.

Digital Portfolio

In advance of the interview review your digital portfolio.

- The interviewer will ask about the work within it. Be ready to talk confidently about your work and interests.

- Know where everything is in your portfolio. You may need to direct the interviewer to look at a particular page.

- Be ready to discuss artists/ designers/ makers included.
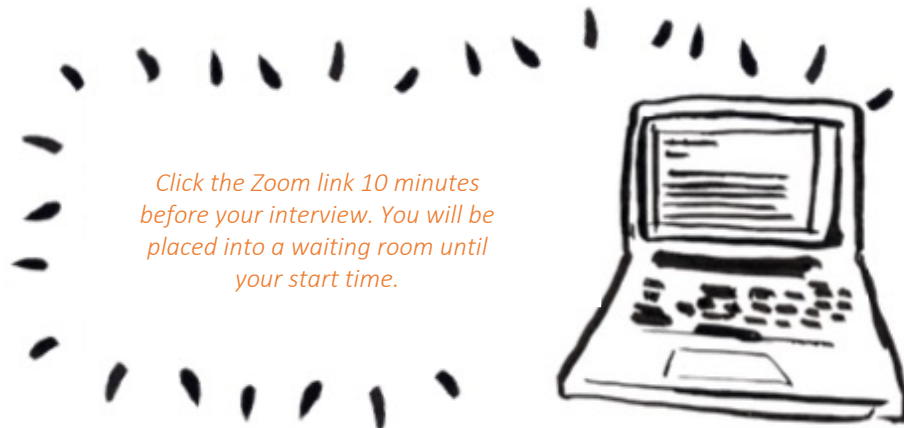
Minimise distractions

- Find a quiet, well lit, private space for your interview.

- Let others around you know when your interview is and ask not to be interrupted.

- Consider using the blur feature or use a background image to ensure privacy .

- Try using earphones to minimise noise from your home.

- Use the mute button when you are not speaking.

- If you are distracted during the interview:
    - apologise and ask for a moment,
    - turn off your camera and mute your microphone,
    - resolve the issue,
    - take a few deep breaths,
    - return to the interview.

Getting connected & Good impressions

Some simple steps taken beforehand will help to minimise any issues that could occur during the interview.

- Test using Zoom with a friend or family in advance.

- Update your device beforehand if required.

- Make sure your device is fully charged or plugged in.

- Ensure your Wi-Fi signal is strong.

Click the Zoom link 10 minutes before your interview. You will be placed into a waiting room until your start time.
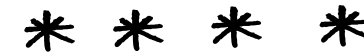
Good impressions

Dress as if you were attending in person.

Try to smile, keep an open posture, and positive tone.

Make use of non-verbal communication (for example head nodding).

Express your enthusiasm, no need to 'play it cool'.

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Further Information

Programme websites

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GSA website

Programme listings

Programme specifications

Open Day

You can meet GSA online and on campus for advice and introductions at Open Days and during more informal events taking place throughout the year. Find out more and register an interest.

Need help or have a question?

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

Useful weblinks

How to apply to Postgraduate programmes at GSA

GSA Degree Show to view work of our graduates

Fees, Funding and Finance information

Accommodation information

Country guides

Guides for parents of international students

English for Creative Disciplines

Glasgow and Scotland

Covid-19 information

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