

Master of Fine Art (MFA)

Guidelines for Applicants



Courtesy of Monya Riachi



Courtesy of James Epps

Programme Overview

The MFA (two years Full Time and three years Part Time*) is a multidisciplinary programme of study that offers students an extraordinary opportunity to analyse their studio practice in depth, and to modify, develop and secure it accordingly. The multidisciplinary context also ensures that such developments are protected against narrowly defined ambitions.

MFA students learn from, and contribute to, the delivery of the programme curriculum, the experiences of their peers, and the wider art community based within the city of Glasgow. Within this situation a premium is placed upon independence, self-reliance, originality, initiative and enterprise.

Students develop their own working practices to explore and advance their own specific interests and academic agendas. Such interests usually take the form of a combination of formal, technical, thematic and theoretical concerns. Students are encouraged to explore their practices in relation to wider cultural, theoretical and historical contexts by means of individual research activity. Tutorial support from the MFA core teaching team and a wide range of visiting lecturers allows students the opportunity to discuss their work with experts, and peer-led critical feedback is also available by means of periodic group critiques.

*Please note the Part Time mode of study is subject to approval for 2024 entry.

Where can I find out more about the programme?

- 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.
- You can find useful information about the MFA programme 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 overview on GSA website](#)

[Programme and course specifications](#)

Academic Entry Requirements

- Normally a UK Bachelors honours degree (or its international equivalent) in Fine Art or a related subject that gives appropriate grounding for postgraduate study.
- If you do not meet these academic entry requirements, we may still consider your application on your portfolio and or relevant professional experience.
- We seek to enrol self-motivated students who are determined critical thinkers, 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.
- The MFA programme requires a score of 6.0 overall, with a minimum of 5.5 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 also offer Pre-sessional English course called '[English for Creative Disciplines](#)'. Entry requirements and course content can be found on our website.

Deadline dates

- The programme begins in September. Although there are no application deadlines early application is encouraged in order to ensure a place on the programme.
- **Guaranteed Review**
- All complete applications received by the Standard 1 deadline to apply of **26 January 2024** will be reviewed. Where programmes are over-subscribed, we cannot guarantee to review applications received after this date.
- Applications are reviewed on a cyclical basis from October – August as shown below. Your application will need to be complete (part 1 and 2) by the date shown to enter the next review.
- **GSA scholarships**

Students wishing to apply for a GSA scholarship should ensure their application is submitted by the Standard 2 deadline of **8 March 2024**. This ensures they have time to receive an offer of their place, this is required in advance of submitting scholarship application.

	Final date for applicants to submit application	Final date for decision to be with applicant
Early	10 th November 2023	8 December 2023
Standard 1	26 th January 2024	8 th March 2024
Standard 2	8 th March 2024	26 th April 2024
Late	7 th June 2024	19 st July 2024
	Applications received after 19 th July 2024	Rolling basis after 19 th July 2024
	Final date for applicants requiring a visa is 26th July 2024	

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.

Structure of Application Process

- Applicants submit application form and upload **Supporting Visual Material** (Portfolio) and 500 word statement to **GSA website**.

- Academic staff assess all applications against a set of criteria.

- Applicants are informed of one of two things:
 - i) They have been shortlisted and invited for an online interview OR
 - ii) The application has been unsuccessful.

- If offered an interview, candidates will be asked to have their portfolios open on their desktop and they will be asked several set questions applied to all candidates. Following the interview, they will be informed of one of these outcomes:
 - i) An **Unconditional Offer**. ii) A **Conditional Offer** ii) An **Unsuccessful** outcome.

How is my application assessed?

All applications are assessed by Academic staff against the same criteria. A points system is used which ranges from 1 – 7 and is applied to the criteria for both the E-portfolio and the interview

If you are unsuccessful, you can request feedback from Registry on how you scored in relation to the criteria of the portfolio and/or interview.

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

Assessment Criteria

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

1. Qualifications/Relevant Experience
2. Quality of personal statement
3. Quality of Portfolio, including range of work, skills and research interests
4. Potential for development within MFA Programme

Digital Portfolio

- All applicants are required to submit a digital portfolio. 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 level of study you are applying to. The portfolio should also communicate your individual abilities, experience and interests.
- You may include early work, but you are encouraged to focus on recent work made during the last 3 years. It is helpful to present your images in chronological order, beginning with the earliest.
- 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](#) 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 images.

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 three minutes.

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

Please note, you MUST upload your Digital Portfolio as outlined above. Submitting your portfolio via a URL link to Dropbox folders or other external cloud services will not be accepted.

What should I include in my digital portfolio?

1. Include fully resolved artwork with a focus on those pieces made in the past 3 years.
2. You can also include some work in progress to show recent experiments and explorations.
3. Do not try to fit too many images into the portfolio. Please keep it visually clear and simple.
4. Please include titles, the year the work was made and information about the materials, dimensions and duration of videos or performances.
5. If necessary, you can include very brief descriptions that help to explain aspects of the artwork.
6. The portfolio should demonstrate your individual interests, approach and creativity.

Personal Statement

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

It should be a concise, critical, self-evaluation of your artwork, giving a clear sense of the key areas that your work explores, how you see your work developing in the future and how that relates to your application to the MFA programme at GSA. The statement should demonstrate that you have researched the programme and indicate the reasons why you think it is best suited to the future development of your practice

- You may write about:
 - your reasons for applying to the MFA
 - your interests and experiences within your practice;
 - what you hope to gain by studying on the programme;
 - what you will contribute to the MFA;
 - how undertaking the programme corresponds with your future ambitions.

You may also use the portfolio 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 Zoom (or telephone if required).
- The interview is a two-way process; for you to gain a better understanding of GSA and your chosen programme, and for academic staff to find out more about you and your work.
- The interview will normally take approximately 20 minutes and will be conducted by academic staff from the MFA.

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.

Interview Assessment Criteria

Candidates for all pathways are assessed at interview on their existing qualities as demonstrated in their:

1. Ability to discuss work and research interests.
2. Awareness of the broader field of contemporary fine art
3. Critical awareness of potential for development

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.
- Find a quiet space where you will not be disturbed.
- Your digital portfolio should be easily accessible as you will be asked 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.
- 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](#)

[Individual country guides](#)

[UKVI 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