

# Digital Portfolio

Postgraduate Taught Degrees  
School of Design

MDes Communication Design (2 years)  
MDes Graphic Design (1 year)  
MDes Illustration (1 year)  
MDes Photography (1 year)  
MDes Fashion and Textiles (1 year)  
MDes Interior Design (1 year)  
MSc Product Design Engineering (1 year)

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# What is a digital portfolio?



The digital portfolio is a very important part of your application to study at the Glasgow School of Art. It is a collection of images of your design work laid out clearly to demonstrate your ideas, skills, interests and suitability for the programme you are applying to.

Uploading a digital portfolio is mandatory for all postgraduate taught degrees in the School of Design *except MSc Product Design Engineering*. Applicants to this programme have the option to upload if you have relevant project work from previous experience.

Your digital portfolio should show recently completed and/or work-in-progress including research, development work, evidence of exploration, as well as resolved pieces.

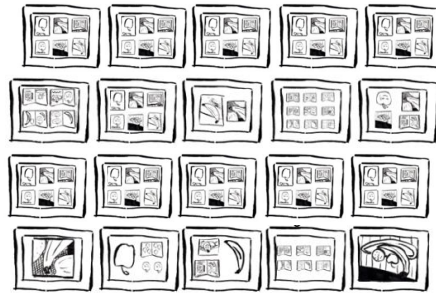
Admissions staff assess your application form, digital portfolio, personal statement and portfolio statement\* together. If successful at this initial assessment, you will be invited to attend an interview.

\*Portfolio statement is only required for Communication Design, Graphics, Illustration and Photography

# Initial assessment

- Initial assessment of complete application which includes; Application Form, Personal Statement,
1. Digital Portfolio and Portfolio Statement \*

*\* Communication Design, Graphics, Illustration and Photography only*



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.*

4.

Your score is totalled up and if it equals or exceeds the threshold you will be emailed an invitation to attend an interview.



2. Admissions staff review your application scoring it out of 7 for each assessment criteria.

## 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

3.

Each programme sets its own threshold, this is the score that your application needs to reach in order to be invited to interview.

# Interview assessment

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

## 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

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

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.*

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

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.



# Assessment criteria – Stage 1 (all programmes except MSc Product Design Engineering)\*

Your completed 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 creating your digital portfolio and writing your personal statement.

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

1. Evidence of ability to demonstrate practical skills
2. Evidence of relevant research, analysis and conceptual skills
3. Evidence of ability to position your work within the specialist field
4. Explain your motivation and rationale for applying to the specialist area at Glasgow School of Art

\* The criteria for MSc in Product Design Engineering programme is explained on [page 9](#).

## \* Criteria 1

### Evidence of 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 pdf.

These *may* include:

drawings, collage, physical work, 3D work, computer generated work, interactive works, photography, publications, prototyping, print making, typography, moving image, film 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.

## \* Criteria 2

### Evidence of relevant research, analysis and conceptual skills

We want to see evidence of your design thinking, process and critical choices to inform your final outcome/s.

A brief contextualising introduction (100 words maximum) for each project

Evidence of research informing project development?

How was this idea explored and experimented with?

How did you analyse the effectiveness of your design choices?

Evidence of design decisions that determined the final outcome/s?

Your digital portfolio process should be organised and presented with a clear iterative process and conclusion.

## \* Criteria 3

### Evidence of ability to position your work within the specialist field

Through your digital portfolio pdf and personal statement, you should demonstrate that you have researched your chosen programme and be able to position your practice within the specialist field.

## \* Criteria 4

### Explain your motivation and rationale for applying to the specialist area at Glasgow School of Art

Through your personal statement expand and contextualise on your motivation and rationale for applying to the specialist area at The Glasgow School of Art. Consider how you contribute to the studio culture at GSA.

# Assessment criteria – Stage 2 (all programmes except MSc Product Design Engineering)\*

Your interview 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 subsequent pages.

1. Ability to communicate your analytical and conceptual skills
2. Critically reflect on your research informing your project
3. Identify possible themes or areas of interest you would like to explore during your studies
4. Communicate your motivation and ambitions for the subject area applied for at The Glasgow School of Art

\* The criteria for MSc in Product Design Engineering programme is explained on [page 11](#).



## \* Criteria 1

### Ability to communicate your analytical and conceptual skills

We want to understand your design thinking, process and critical choices to inform your final outcome/s.

Evidence of research informing project development  
 How was this idea explored and experimented with?  
 How did you analyse the effectiveness of your design choices?  
 Evidence of the design decisions that determined the final outcome/s

At interview you will have the opportunity to articulate your research process and design decisions.

## \* Criteria 2

### Critically reflect on your research informing your project

We are keen to understand your research and how it informed the critical development of your projects and learning. The creative process is a journey, what did you learn and what areas did you find to be the most successful or challenging and how did you address them.

Show that you understand where to position your work within your design specialism by explaining this 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.

## \* Criteria 3

### Identify possible themes or areas of interest you would like to explore during your studies

Prepare to discuss the identified themes and areas of interest informing your study.

## \* Criteria 4

### Communicate your motivation and ambitions for the subject area applied for at The Glasgow School of Art

At interview you will have the opportunity to communicate your enthusiasm and ambition for the specialist subject area that you have applied for and why you chose The Glasgow School of Art.



# Assessment criteria – Stage 1

## MSc Product Design Engineering

Your completed application will be 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 creating your digital portfolio and writing your personal statement.

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

1. Is the applicant academically qualified?
2. Demonstrate evidence of conceptual, engineering/technical awareness and evaluation skills through your projects
3. Clearly communicate the relevance and appropriateness of project/folio work to Product Design Engineering
4. Clearly communicate through your personal statement your interest in Design and the relevance to Product Design Engineering

## \* Criteria 1

### Is the applicant academically qualified?

We want 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 subjects are required:

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

## \* Criteria 2

### Demonstrate evidence of conceptual, engineering/technical awareness and evaluation skills through your projects

We want to know about your creative process, from project inception to resolution. We are interested in the ideas behind your work and their development. We will look to see how present research methods, showing how these translate into developed ideas. What was the initial starting point, how were concepts explored and experimented with, and what decisions and evaluation determined the finished work? We are also looking to see how you have demonstrated your application of technical awareness. For example, engineering considerations that have been applied in the development of a product/concept. It is also important to show any practical and prototyping skills.

Within the digital portfolio this process should be organised and presented in a chronological order.

## \* Criteria 3

### Clearly communicate the relevance and appropriateness of project/folio work to Product Design Engineering

The creative process is a journey, what did you learn and what areas did you find to be most successful or challenging. We want to see the sources and what inspired the theme of your projects.

Demonstrate the relevance of your work to your chosen design specialism by presenting this visually in the digital portfolio and/or by explaining this in the personal statement. For work-in-progress you could describe what you hope to achieve, what sources you will be looking at, and how you plan to explore these.

## \* Criteria 4

### Clearly communicate through your personal statement your interest in Design and the relevance to Product Design Engineering

We want to know about your interest in your chosen design specialism; who or what inspires and motivates you. This might include artists, designers, engineers, architects, mentors, exhibitions or online events attended, documentaries, books, journals, archives, podcasts, etc. You can discuss this in your personal statement. You should demonstrate that you have researched the programme and be able to discuss why you have chosen to apply to the programme. You can do this within the personal statement.

# Assessment criteria – Stage 2

## MSc Product Design Engineering

Your interview 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 subsequent pages.

1. Demonstrate evidence of conceptual, engineering/technical awareness and evaluation skills through your projects
2. Critically reflect on your project development and learning
3. Identify an individual area of interest for exploration during your studies
4. Your enthusiasm, motivation and potential for being involved in Design Engineering and the subject area applied for at The Glasgow School of Art and the University of Glasgow

## \* Criteria 1

Demonstrate evidence of conceptual, engineering/technical awareness and evaluation skills through your projects

We want to understand your design thinking, process and critical choices to inform your final outcome/s

- What was the initial starting point?
- How were the concepts explored and experimented with?
- What decisions and evaluation determined the final outcome/s?

At interview you will have the opportunity to communicate confidently about your working process.

## \* Criteria 2

Critically reflect on your project development and learning

The creative process is a journey, what did you learn and what areas did you find to be most successful or challenging. We want to see the sources and what inspired the theme of your projects.

Demonstrate the relevance of your work to your chosen design specialism by discussing this at interview. For work-in-progress you could describe what you plan to achieve, what sources you will be looking at, and how you will explore these.

## \* Criteria 3

Identify an individual area of interest for exploration during your studies

At interview, you should identify a possible area of individual design engineering interest.

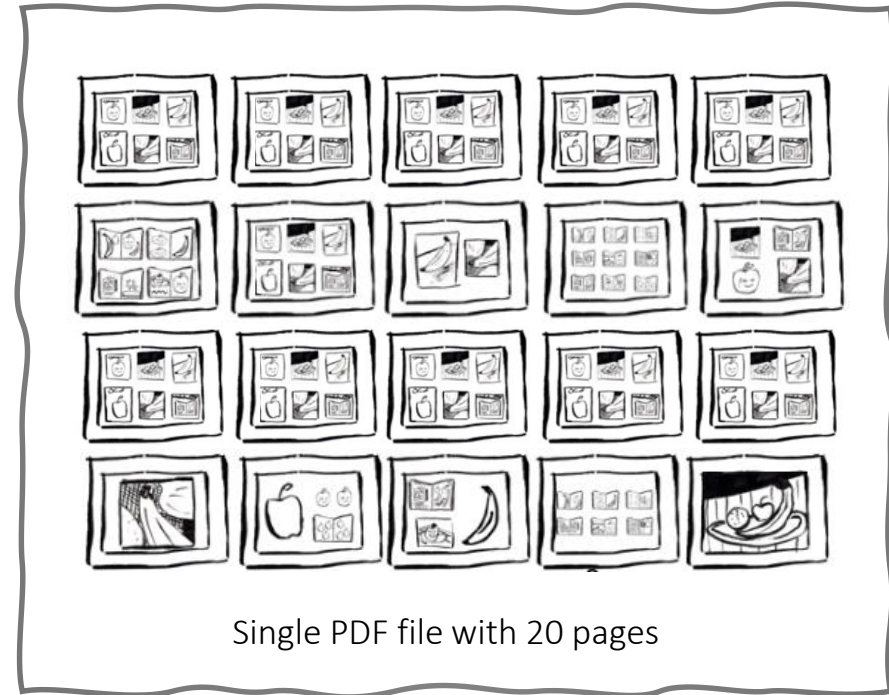
## \* Criteria 4

Your enthusiasm, motivation and potential for being involved in Design Engineering and the subject area applied for at The Glasgow School of Art and the University of Glasgow

At interview you will have the opportunity to communicate your enthusiasm and passion for design engineering and specifically the subject area that you have applied for. Who or what has motivated or inspired you to apply for the programme and why The Glasgow School of Art and the University of Glasgow?

# Files and images

- Digital Portfolio should be uploaded as a **single PDF file** to the GSA Digital Portfolio portal.\*
  - PDF file should contain a **maximum of 20 pages**. Digital portfolios that are longer may not be viewed fully. We are looking indicatively for 3-5 differing projects.
  - Each page of your digital portfolio can contain multiple images and explanatory text. Please carefully edit your portfolio to give admissions staff a clear indication of your current skills, knowledge, interests, and readiness for postgraduate degree level study.
  - Avoid cramming too many, small images onto one page as staff may not be able to read the imagery properly.
  - Do not include a page solely for your name or for a Curriculum Vitae (CV), as this unnecessarily uses the 20-page limit. Focus on showing project work instead.
- \* Digital portfolios submitted via URL weblinks to online cloud services will not be accepted.



Single PDF file with 20 pages

# Moving image, sound and professional websites



Moving image, sound clips or a professional website can be included in your application, however they must supplement a digital portfolio.

The media should be no more than five minutes long, otherwise they may not be fully viewed.

You can include moving image, sound clips, or professional websites by inputting a URL link into the designated field on the GSA Digital Portfolio portal. Access to websites should not be password protected or have an expiration date.

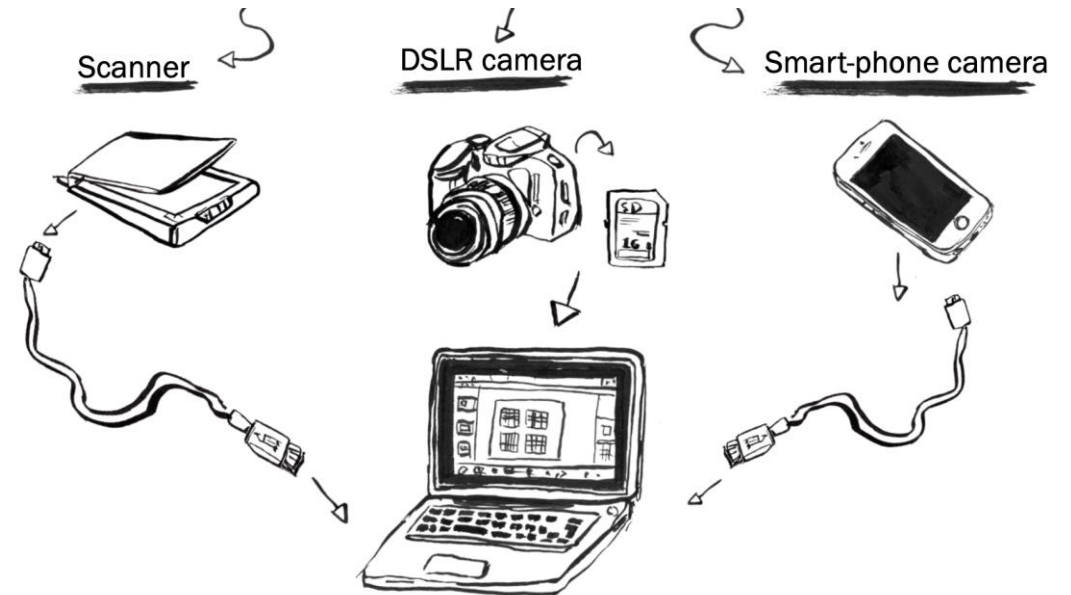
# Documenting your work

Documenting your work is one of the most important parts of creating a digital portfolio. You have invested time and effort in making your work and it deserves to be shown properly.

Make sure to photograph or scan work that you have made. This might include projects you've done at university, during work experience or employment, as well as any self initiated work.

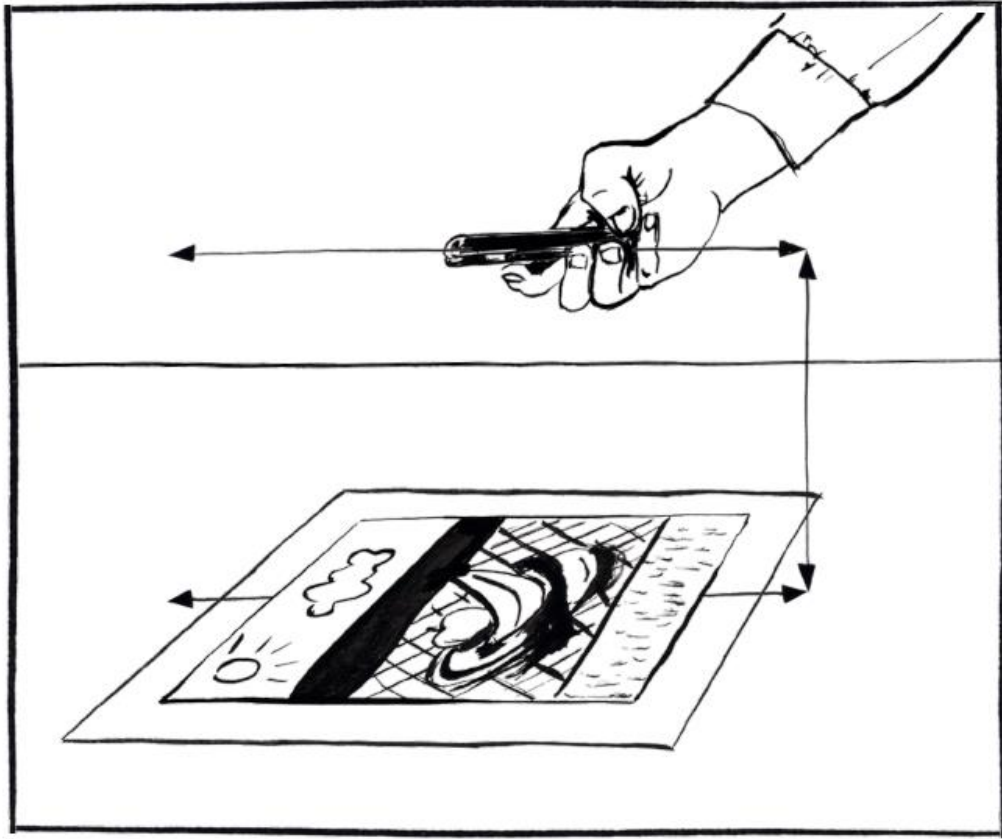
Your digital portfolio isn't just for finished work. Include all work that shows your creative process. It is good practice to photograph work throughout the process of making and at the end when you feel it is finished. It can be helpful for admissions staff to see how you made a particular piece of work, especially if you were exploring iterations of an idea or a way of making work that is relevant to the programme.

Regardless of the method(s) you choose to use, make sure the images are clear, in focus and do the work justice.





# Photography



Documentation photographs tend to fall into two major categories; work-in-progress documentation to show processes and development of ideas and techniques. Second is the presentation of finished works.

These two types require different approaches and thought: showing work as you're making it on a well used desk or in a workshop isn't unreasonable; but displaying finished pieces in a similar context might suggest a lack of regard for your own work.

Good documentation photographs are typically:

- Contextually appropriate
- Softly, and evenly lit
- Free from background distractions
- Correctly focused, exposed and colour balanced

For a detailed guide on photographing your work, including how to document using a Smartphone, visit:

<http://www.gsa.ac.uk/portfoliophoto>

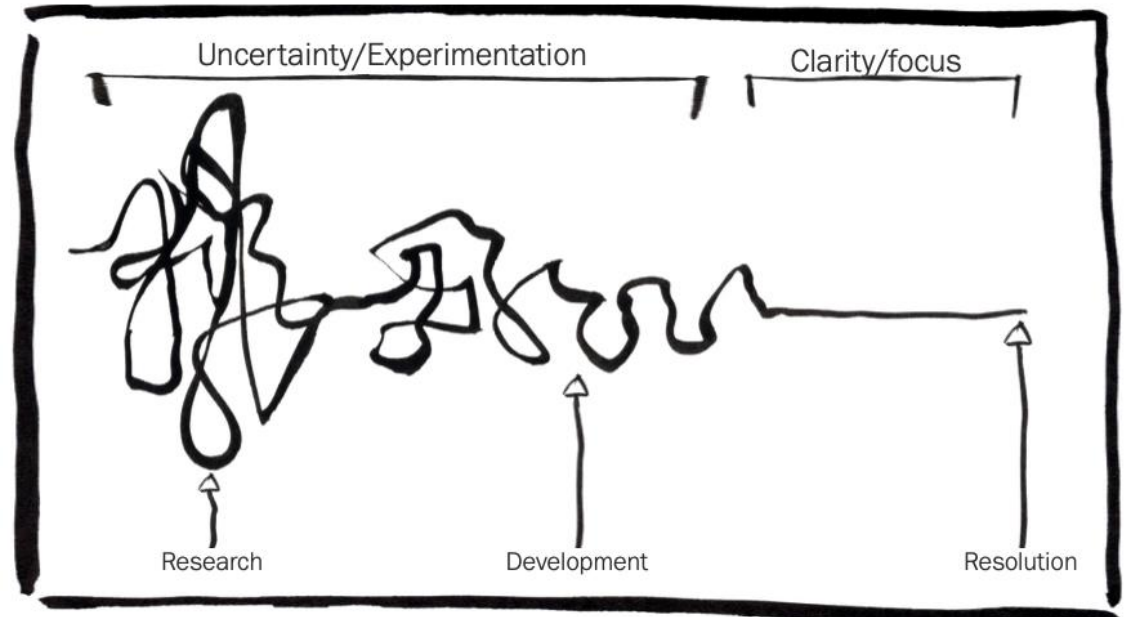
# Select and curate

Admissions staff will look at your 20-page digital portfolio for a maximum of 10 minutes. It is important to curate and pace the pages in a way you wish to present your work and you as a designer.

The running order of the imagery 'tells the story' of how a project develops. This helps the admissions staff to see the way that you work and understand your creative process.

Each page of your digital portfolio can contain multiple images. You should carefully edit your work in order to provide a good indication of your current skills, knowledge, and readiness for postgraduate study.

We would expect to see approximately 3-5 projects.



The Creative Process

# Positioning imagery



In most cases you want to keep the layout of your work simple, with white space around the images, so that they are not overlapping. You want your work to be visible and clear to see.

Having a lot of images together on a page can show multiple ideas being explored at once, but make sure they are included at an appropriate scale so that the image contents can be read.

# Including text

Text should be concise to support your visuals. Ensure a title and a brief summary for each completed piece of work. Larger sections of text will not be read.

When including images which are not your own (for example, research sources) a text reference should be positioned alongside the image stating who it belongs to.

If collaborative work is included in the digital portfolio (for example, an industry project for clients or a university group project) ensure your role within the project work is made explicit.

Remember that we are most interested in *you*; your individual knowledge, skills, experiences and interests. As a result, we discourage the use of external companies to prepare portfolios as the outcome can often be generic.



Remember the Digital Portfolio should:

- be a single PDF file with a maximum of 20 pages.
- be a collection of images of your design work laid out clearly to demonstrate your ideas, skills, interests and suitability for the programme you are applying to.
- show recently completed and/or work-in-progress including research, development work, evidence of exploration, as well as more resolved pieces.
- tell the story of how a project develops.
- respond to the assessment criteria.



# Portfolio Guidance for Communication Design, Graphics, Illustration and Photography

- A portfolio statement must be submitted (300 words maximum). This should provide context to your portfolio and/or list of contents. You will be asked to submit this when you upload your digital portfolio.
- The portfolio statement needs be different from your personal statement which is completed as part of your online application.
- There is a limit of 2 images or 2 spreads per page. No other text should be on the page except for a project title (if relevant). If there is a moving image, include a still image and URL hyperlink to view the video (youtube or vimeo only). Access to links should not be password protected or have an expiration date.
- Images should be at a reasonable resolution to be able to view as a pdf. More guidance on preparing images for your portfolio can be found [here](#).

# Deadline dates

Complete applications will be processed in four rounds: *Early\**; *Standard 1*; *Standard 2* and *Late*. Key dates for each round are included below.

We guarantee to review all complete applications received by the Standard 1 deadline date of **26 January 2024**. After this date, programmes can become full and close to applications in advance of the Standard 2 and Late rounds. Early application is therefore encouraged to avoid disappointment.

Round	Deadline to apply	Interviews taking place	Decision on application by
Early *	10 November 2023	27 November – 8 December 2023	19 January 2024
Standard 1	26 January 2024	19 February – 1 March 2024	8 March 2024
Standard 2	8 March 2024	1 April – 19 April 2024	26 April 2024
Late	7 June 2024	1 July – 12 July 2024	19 July 2024

\* Communication Design, Graphics, Illustration and Photography do not hold an early round.

# Uploading your digital portfolio

We would encourage you to upload your completed application form, personal statement and digital portfolio as soon as you have it available rather than waiting until the deadline. This will give you time to receive assistance if you need it and reduce any frustration over internet upload speeds during particularly busy times.



## Important times

Applicants must submit a completed application form and personal statement by **12:00 noon (GMT)** on the deadline to apply date.

You will then be emailed log-in details and instructions on how to submit your digital portfolio to the GSA Digital Portfolio portal.

Applicants should then submit their digital portfolio by **4:00pm (GMT)** on the deadline to apply date.

Submissions made after these times will automatically move to the next round, unless the programme has been closed to applications.



# Further information

## 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](#)

## 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](mailto:admissions@gsa.ac.uk) If you have a question about an existing application, email [registry@gsa.ac.uk](mailto: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](#)

[Individual country guides](#)

[Guides for parents of international students](#)

[English for Creative Disciplines](#)

[Glasgow and Scotland](#)