

Job Description

Teacher of Art and Design

(Maternity Cover)

George Watson's College wishes to appoint a full-time Teacher of Art & Design. The vacancy represents an opportunity for an outstanding practitioner to make a high-profile contribution to the success of one of Scotland's leading schools. The post is to cover maternity leave and is likely to start in April 2026.

The School

George Watson's College is one of the country's best co-educational independent day schools. Despite its size, everyone remarks that it has a small-school 'feel': the close-knit and friendly relationships amongst all its constituents are a hallmark of the School. Its motto – ex corde caritas (Love from the Heart) – is central to its values as it seeks to sustain a sense of belonging and community.

This tangible sense of togetherness is significantly enhanced by everyone being on one purpose-built site, which is located in the attractive residential district of Morningside, to the South West of the centre of Edinburgh. Edinburgh itself is the second strongest city economy in the UK, outside of London, with the highest percentage of graduates and professionally qualified adults in the UK and a comparatively high number of school age children attending fee-paying schools. Watson's is proud of its independent status and, whilst remaining true to its Scottish roots, seeks to sustain and develop an international perspective.

The School welcomes a wide range of academic ability, and has very high academic standards, with over 90% of pupils going on to Higher Education and a large proportion of pupils achieving outstanding success. Watson's also has excellent facilities, and offers a huge range of courses as well as extra-curricular activities. In addition, it has particular strengths in Sport, Music, Drama, Outdoor Education, Technology and in Support for Learning. The School is very well resourced with a campus-wide IT network.

The Principal, Lisa Kerr, took up her post in 2024. Leadership of the Senior School is delegated to Louise Clarke, Head of the Senior School, and the Senior School Leadership Team, three Deputy Head Teachers and three Assistant Head Teachers. A similar structure exists in the Junior School.

The Senior School

The leadership of the Senior School is delegated by the Principal to the Head of Senior School who works closely with a team of Deputy and Assistant Heads and Principal Teachers. The leadership model enables Principal Teachers to shape the character of their department within an overall ambition for the Senior School and George Watson's College as a whole. Principal Teachers are encouraged to play a role in the development and implementation of practice in all aspects of the Senior School, especially in improving curriculum design, pupil support and learning and teaching.

Our work with pupils and amongst ourselves is characterised by good relationships which, in turn, creates the context for better learning. We aim to be an inclusive school and to find ways to recognise and celebrate our diversity. We have achieved Gold Status as a Rights Respecting School and we have been awarded Gold Level by LGBT+ Youth Scotland.

Approximately three quarters of pupils in the Senior School have progressed there from the Junior School. On arrival, they have a carefully worked out induction programme which includes a residential experience together in the first term.

In First and Second Year, a diverse and stimulating timetable balances challenging academic progression with a variety of learning experiences, including in two foreign languages. Pupils study many of their subjects in their form classes but are set in English and Mathematics. This enables them to progress at a pace that provides the appropriate level of challenge and provides them with an opportunity to mix with the rest of their year group.

From Second Year, pupils discuss their personal targets and study options with teachers, through to their key certificate examinations, and we ensure that they choose subjects and levels that match their abilities and aspirations.

At Watson's we are proud of the exceptionally broad range of certificate courses we offer. Available at various levels of certification within the national qualifications framework, our extensive provision includes subjects across the spectrum of arts, sciences and social sciences, with a notably wide selection of languages, including Mandarin Chinese.

It is important that we prepare pupils for the increased independence they will require after school. A programme of study skills encourages independent thought and enquiry. Throughout their time at Watson's, pupils make confident use of our outstanding IT facilities and our Library.

Art & Design Department

The Art School is a well-established, highly resourced and collaborative department, offering a supportive environment for a teacher joining the team on a maternity cover basis. The department is a multidisciplinary teaching space with specialist facilities for printmaking, ceramics, photography and digital media, including an Apple Mac suite of 20 computers running Adobe Creative Suite. Additional facilities include a department library, a fully equipped photography studio and multiple printmaking studios with specialist presses.

The team comprises six full-time teachers and is supported by a full-time technician, ensuring strong practical and technical support across all courses. Each year, the department is further enriched by an artist-in-residence who contributes specialist skills and supports pupils' creative development, adding breadth and contemporary practice to the curriculum.

From Primary 4, when the Art School begins working with Junior School pupils, pupils develop skills and confidence through a strong emphasis on observational drawing. This provides a secure foundation for progression into a broad range of disciplines including drawing and painting, sculpture, printmaking, ceramics, photography, fashion and textiles. Schemes of work and resources are well established, allowing for consistency and continuity across stages.

In the Senior School, the department teaches a wide range of abilities and consistently achieves excellent outcomes. In 2025, pupils attained the highest mark nationally for Higher and Advanced Higher Art and Design. National 5 is delivered over two years in S3 and S4, with many pupils progressing to Higher Art and Design in S5. Courses are well resourced and supported by shared planning, assessment materials and moderation within the department. Senior School portfolios are diverse and ambitious, beginning with research drawings using a wide range of media and sources, which are developed towards resolved final pieces. Alongside practical work, pupils research relevant artists and art movements and regularly visit galleries and exhibitions. Advanced Higher pupils benefit from dedicated studio spaces, encouraging increasing personal autonomy and creative decision-making within a structured and well-supported framework.

Pupils' experience at Advanced Higher is further enhanced through an additional Portfolio course, which supports confidence in experimentation, collaboration and the creation of ambitious, large-scale three-dimensional work. In S6, pupils may also study Higher Photography, developing both technical and creative skills using our suite of DSLR cameras, lenses and studio equipment.

Extracurricular opportunities are an important and well-supported aspect of the department. These include Art Camps during school holidays, Sketchbook Club, Printmaking Club, Junk Kouture and an annual 2-day Artist-led portrait workshop. The department also offers an annual Art & Design trip to London for S5 and S6 pupils, and this year we are running a collaborative trip to Rome alongside Higher Italian pupils. Staff involvement is shared across the team, ensuring sustainability and balance.

Pupils' achievements are celebrated annually through exhibitions and a fashion show, developed in collaboration with the Junk Kouture competition and partner schools. In addition, we award a range of Art and Design prizes and regularly enter national Art & Design competitions.

Person Specification

The person appointed will:

- be a trained and qualified graduate Teacher of Art and Design, eligible for registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland
- have experience teaching Primary, S1-S3, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Art & Design
- have some experience in Photography

- have a good command of relevant IT skills using the Adobe Suite, in particular, Photoshop, Illustrator, and Lightroom.
- have excellent interpersonal and communication skills and be able to work with colleagues from different disciplines and across both Junior and Senior Schools;
- be flexible and imaginative in developing new ideas and resources, as well as adapting to curriculum changes
- be prepared to contribute to the extracurricular programme of the department and/or to the wider school
- have significant personal commitment to the making of Art and Design as demonstrated in a personal portfolio.

Job Specification

Line Management

The Teacher of Art and Design will be accountable to the Head of Art.

General Responsibilities

The Teacher of Art and Design will be expected to teach 45 out of 56 periods of teaching, over a 10 day timetable cycle.

The person appointed will be responsible for teaching classes in the School using their skill, experience and best endeavors. They will abide by the Code of Conduct for Staff at George Watson's College. A contribution to the wider life of the School is an expectation of all staff.

Specific Responsibilities

The person appointed will:

- maintain the Standard for Full GTCS registration. They will be required to undertake relevant CPD, be observed and write up all activities in the GTCS Profile
- work effectively as a member of the department to facilitate outstanding teaching and learning and ensure pupils are properly prepared for examinations
- set high expectations for all pupils, to deepen their knowledge and understanding to maximise achievement
- prepare and provide activities that are appropriate to each year group and suitable for learners' needs
- be confident of their ability to work and respond to the needs of pupils and inspire the next generation of adults
- develop new resources and course materials, as directed by and/or in collaboration with the other staff in the department
- assess, record and report on the work of pupils as required by the School, ensuring that assessments are punctual, meaningful and informative
- contribute to the extra-curricular life of the School

- attend parent evenings and communicate with parents whenever necessary and contribute effectively and positively to the corporate life and welfare of the School
- act as a Form Tutor and/or S6 Tutor as required, carrying out the administrative, pastoral and advisory responsibilities of these roles.
- contribute to enrichment provision of the Senior School by developing and implementing opportunities for pupils both in lesson time and at other times.

Additional Responsibilities:

The Teacher should also be willing to undertake such other responsibilities as the Head of Department may from time to time reasonably require.

Renumeration

Teaching staff at George Watson's College are paid a competitive salary. The salary is pensionable under the Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme.

DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND - PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS SCHEME

All staff must be prepared to undergo screening to confirm their suitability to work with children and young people.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / PROFESSIONAL REVIEW

All staff are required to participate in appropriate programmes of continuing professional development and undergo professional review as set out in the School's policy.

APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply, please include a letter of application of not more than 800 words giving us more information about you, which role you are applying for and why you would like that role, addressed to Louise Clarke, Head of Senior School.

Any specific questions relating to the advertised post can be put directly to the Head of Department, Sara Conlan by email (s.conlan@gwc.org.uk).

Candidates called for an interview will be asked to teach a lesson as part of the selection process.

If you require more information about the School, please visit our school website.

Closing date: 11:59pm on Monday 16 February 2026

Interviews are scheduled to take place in the week beginning Monday 23 February 2026.