

University of Plymouth

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business

School of Art, Design and Architecture

Programme Specification

MA Architectural Design / 6927

Date

Date of Approval: October 2011

Approved by Minor Change 12.11.14

Change of Award Title Approved: 12.12.19

Approved by Minor Change: May 2020 & April 2022

1. Final Award: MA Architectural Design

Level 7 Intermediate award title(s): PG Dip Architectural Design
[Upon successful achievement of 120 level 7 credits – all modules except ARCH776]

UCAS code: N/A

HECoS Code: 100122

2. Awarding Institution: University of Plymouth
Teaching institution: University of Plymouth

3. Accrediting body(ies)
Not applicable

4. Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience

Students entering the MA Architectural Design programme benefit from the following:

- Teaching on the Programme by nationally and internationally recognised academics and practitioners.
- Teaching on the Programme by full-time research-active staff with internationally recognised expertise in sustainability (Centre for Sustainable Futures – the UK government-designated Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in Sustainable Development) and urbanism (Culture – Theory – Space Research group)
- Research within the School which both informs and is informed by the content, nature of projects set for students and teaching methodologies inherent within the programme.
- Tradition of ‘live projects’ set in response to real contexts and briefs and ethical issues, typically in the context of community regeneration and

involving the participation of clients and users, as well as government bodies and professionals.

5. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)

The programme follows the QAA Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement (2020): [Subject Benchmark Statement: Architecture \(qaa.ac.uk\)](http://qaa.ac.uk) Embedded within this benchmark standard are the jointly held criteria used by the Architects' Registration Board (ARB) (Appendix 1) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) (Appendix 2) in qualification prescription and programme validation. While aligning with these, the programme does not meet all of these criteria as it does not hold ARB qualification prescription nor RIBA programme validation.

6. Programme Structure

FULL TIME

SEMESTER 1 (WEEKS 1-15)

SUMMER

SEMESTER 2 (WEEKS 16-30)

| | |
|--|---|
| ARCH 771A 30 credits URBAN DESIGN | ARCH 772 40 credits BUILDING DESIGN |
| ARCH 762 30 credits EMERGING RESEARCH | ARCH 773 20 credits INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY |
| ARCH 776 60 credits DISSERTATION BY DESIGN (Semester 3) | |

7. Programme Aims

The MA Architectural Design is a one-year full-time programme focused around architectural design. The programme aims to support students in developing proficiency in architectural design, in the process of developing both an urban design and a detailed building design. This study will be set in an exploration of new urban forms which are being generated in response to the changing nature of

cities, notably increasing regional/global connectivity, and shifting cultural, economic, ecological, political, social and physical conditions and demands. The MA Architectural Design builds on the strength of the successful ARB / RIBA-validated Part 2 programme. Students on the MA Architectural Design will work alongside students on the Part 2 programme through common coursework and projects, and sharing studio space with Part 2 students.

8. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

8.1. Knowledge and understanding

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1. Knowledge and understanding of the social, political, economic and professional context that guides building construction.
2. Knowledge and understanding briefs and how to critically appraise them to ensure that the design response is appropriate to site and context, and for reasons such as sustainability and budget.
3. Knowledge and understanding of an appropriate philosophical approach which reveals an understanding of theory in a cultural context.
4. Adequate knowledge of the histories and theories of architecture and the related arts, technologies and human sciences.
5. Knowledge of the fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural Design.
6. Adequate knowledge of urban design, planning and the skills involved in the planning process.
7. Adequate knowledge of physical problems and technologies and the function of buildings so as to provide them with internal conditions of comfort and protection against the climate.

8.2. Cognitive and intellectual skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1. Ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements.
2. Ability to prepare and present building design projects of diverse scale, complexity, and type in a variety of contexts, using a range of media, and in response to a brief.
3. Ability to understand the constructional and structural systems, the environmental strategies and the regulatory requirements that apply to the design and construction of a comprehensive design project.
4. Ability to develop a conceptual and critical approach to architectural design that integrates and satisfies the aesthetic aspects of a building and the technical requirements of its construction and the needs of the user.
5. Ability to critically implement history and theory on the spatial, social, and technological aspects of architecture.
6. Ability to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions within a structured discourse relating to architecture culture, theory and design.

8.3. Key and transferable skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed the ability to:

1. Identify individual learning needs and understand the personal responsibility required for further professional education.
2. Problem solving skills, professional judgement, and ability to take the initiative and make appropriate decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances.

8.4. Employment related skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1. Understanding of the profession of architecture and the role of the architect in society, in particular in preparing briefs that take account of social factors.
2. The potential impact of building projects on existing and proposed communities.
3. Understanding of the methods of investigation and preparation of the brief for a design project.
4. The need to critically review precedents relevant to the function, organisation and technological strategy of design proposals.

5. The need to appraise and prepare building briefs of diverse scales and types, to define client and user requirements and their appropriateness to site and context.
6. The contributions of architects and co-professionals to the formulation of the brief, and the methods of investigation used in its preparation.
7. Ability to generate design proposals using understanding of a body of knowledge, some of the current boundaries of professional practice and the academic discipline of architecture.
8. Ability to apply a range of communication methods to present design proposals clearly and effectively.
9. Understanding of the relationship between people and buildings, and between buildings and their environment, and the need to relate buildings and the spaces between them to human needs and scale.
10. Understanding of the alternative materials, processes and techniques that apply to architectural design and building construction.
11. Understanding of the structural design, constructional and engineering problems associated with building design.

8.5. Practical skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1. Ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements.
2. Prepare and present building design projects of diverse scale, complexity, and type in a variety of contexts, using a range of media, and in response to a brief.
3. Ability to apply a range of communication methods to present design proposals clearly and effectively.
4. The investigation, critical appraisal and selection of alternative structural, constructional and material systems relevant to architectural design.
5. Strategies for building construction, and ability to integrate knowledge of structural principles and construction techniques.
6. Adequate knowledge of physical problems and technologies and the function of buildings so as to provide them with internal conditions of comfort and protection against the climate.

7. Strategies for building services, and ability to integrate these in a design project.
8. The necessary design skills to meet building users' requirements within the constraints imposed by cost factors and building regulations.
9. Critically examine the financial factors implied in varying building types, constructional systems, and specification choices, and the impact of these on architectural design.

9. Admissions Criteria

The admissions policy and procedures are designed to ensure that applicants have the intellectual ability, motivation and, where appropriate, the professional experience to benefit from, and contribute to, the MA Architectural Design programme.

The normal minimum requirement for entry to the MA Architectural Design is:

- Essential: A lower second degree in architecture (or similar-design related discipline subject to APL) with a minimum of 55 in final year design module(s). (Note: Lower second degree equivalent to "C" / 50s marking band.)
- Essential: Suitable references from previous academic institution, employer and/or similar.
- Essential: Overseas or EU students must attain minimum test scores of 6.5 IELTS (International English Language Testing Scheme) or equivalent standard for TEFL. Overseas and EU students will be advised to contact the University English Language Support Unit for advice and individual support.

The following requirements for entry are recommended:

- Highly Desirable: An upper second degree with a minimum mark of 60% in final year design project work. (Note: Upper second degree equivalent to "B" 60s marking band.)
- Desirable: IELTS of 7.0 or equivalent.
- Desirable: 6 - 12 months minimum work experience in an architects' office or similar, including a range of experience including, for example, a participation in a range of projects including feasibility studies, small scale interventions or refurbishment work and larger scale new build/urban design projects.
- Desirable: Completion of self-generated long-term (1 month) or several

short-term (1 week) study tours, during which students will have visited and examined buildings and urban layouts. These examinations would include documentation (photographs, sketches, analytical and reflective observations in a journal and sketchbook) and be presented in a portfolio. It is desirable that some or all of the studies will have occurred outside the UK.

Applicants may only be admitted with the approval of the Programme Leader.

Selection Procedures

The selection procedures are intended to help ascertain that:

- The candidate is suitable for advanced study.
- The candidate has a realistic understanding of what the programme will entail and of the demands and pressure upon them during the period of study.

Applications will be made on the University postgraduate student application form.

10. Progression criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards

Students undertaking the MA Architectural Design must achieve a pass 50% to qualify for the award. There is no compensation for failed modules.

Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)

- A Postgraduate Diploma will be awarded to a student who has successfully completed the appropriate modules worth at least 120 credits, of which at least 100 credits must be at level 7.
- A student will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma with Merit provided that s/he has achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 60% or above across all the modules.
- A student will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction provided that s/he has achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 70% or above across all the modules.

Masters Degree

- A Masters degree will be awarded to a student who has successfully completed the appropriate modules worth a minimum of 180 credits, all of

which must be at Level 7, and must include the dissertation/major project module.

- A student will be awarded a Masters degree with Merit provided that s/he has achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 60% or above across all modules (including the dissertation/major project), and provided that the mark for the dissertation/major project is not less than 50%.
- A student will be awarded a Masters degree with Distinction provided that s/he has achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 70% or above across all modules (including the dissertation/major project), and provided that the mark for the dissertation/major project module is not less than 60%.

11. Exceptions to Regulations

N/A

12. Transitional Arrangements

N/A

13. Mapping and Appendices:

13.1. ILO's against Modules Mapping

The mapping of assessed learning outcomes sets out modules where assessed learning outcomes MAY be demonstrated within the student portfolio. These outcomes may equally not be addressed in the work generated within each of the modules. This recognises that the nature of the student portfolio of work within architecture allows for students to demonstrate learning outcomes within various project work, notably across both studio-based and non-studio-based projects. It is for this reason that the mapping of assessed learning outcomes set out a number of different possible modules within which the relevant criteria may be met; it is equally why the MR for each module list a number of assessed learning outcomes

| MA Architecture Prog speci learn. out no. | Programme Intended Learning Outcomes | Module in which LO is assessed |
|---|---|--|
| 8.1.1 | Knowledge and understanding of the social, political, economic and professional context that guides building construction. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH776 |
| 8.1.2 | Knowledge and understanding briefs and how to critically appraise them to ensure that the design response is appropriate to site and context, and for reasons such as sustainability and budget. | ARCH771A ARCH772 |
| 8.1.3 | Knowledge and understanding of an appropriate philosophical approach which reveals an understanding of theory in a cultural context. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH762 ARCH776 |
| 8.1.4 | Adequate knowledge of the histories and theories of architecture and the related arts, technologies and human sciences. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH773 ARCH762 ARCH776 |
| 8.1.5 | Knowledge of the fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural Design. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH776 |
| 8.1.6 | Adequate knowledge of urban design, planning and the skills involved in the planning process. | ARCH771A |
| 8.1.7 | Adequate knowledge of physical problems and technologies and the function of buildings so as to provide them with internal conditions of comfort and protection against the climate. | ARCH773 |
| 8.2.1 | Ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH773 ARCH776 |
| 8.2.2 | Ability to prepare and present building design projects of diverse scale, complexity, and type in a variety of contexts, using a range of media, and in response to a brief. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH776 |
| 8.2.3 | Ability to understand the constructional and structural systems, the environmental strategies and the regulatory requirements that apply to the design and construction of a comprehensive design project | ARCH772 ARCH773 ARCH776 |
| 8.2.4 | Ability to develop a conceptual and critical approach to architectural design that integrates and satisfies the aesthetic aspects of a building and the technical requirements of its construction and the needs of the user. | ARCH772 ARCH773 ARCH776 |
| 8.2.5 | Ability to critically implement history and theory on the spatial, social, and technological aspects of architecture. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH776 |
| 8.2.6 | Ability to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions within a structured discourse relating to architecture culture, theory and design. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH762 ARCH776 |
| 8.3.1 | Identify individual learning needs and understand the personal responsibility required for further professional education. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH773 ARCH762 ARCH776 |

| | | |
|--------|---|--|
| 8.3.2 | Problem solving skills, professional judgement, and ability to take the initiative and make appropriate decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH773 ARCH762 ARCH776 |
| 8.4.1 | Understanding of the profession of architecture and the role of the architect in society, in particular in preparing briefs that take account of social factors. | ARCH771A ARCH772 |
| 8.4.2 | The potential impact of building projects on existing and proposed communities. | ARCH771A ARCH772 |
| 8.4.3 | Understanding of the methods of investigation and preparation of the brief for a design project. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH773 |
| 8.4.4 | The need to critically review precedents relevant to the function, organisation and technological strategy of design proposals. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH773 ARCH776 |
| 8.4.5 | The need to appraise and prepare building briefs of diverse scales and types, to define client and user requirements and their appropriateness to site and context. | ARCH771A ARCH772 |
| 8.4.6 | The contributions of architects and co-professionals to the formulation of the brief, and the methods of investigation used in its preparation. | ARCH771A ARCH772 |
| 8.4.7 | Ability to generate design proposals using understanding of a body of knowledge, some of the current boundaries of professional practice and the academic discipline of architecture. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH773 ARCH776 |
| 8.4.8 | Ability to apply a range of communication methods to present design proposals clearly and effectively. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH776 |
| 8.4.9 | Understanding of the relationship between people and buildings, and between buildings and their environment, and the need to relate buildings and the spaces between them to human needs and scale. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH773 ARCH762 ARCH776 |
| 8.4.10 | Understanding of the alternative materials, processes and techniques that apply to architectural design and building construction. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH773 |
| 8.4.11 | Understanding of the structural design, constructional and engineering problems associated with building design. | ARCH773 |
| 8.5.1 | Ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH776 |
| 8.5.2 | Prepare and present building design projects of diverse scale, complexity, and type in a variety of contexts, using a range of media, and in response to a brief. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH776 |
| 8.5.3 | Ability to apply a range of communication methods to present design proposals clearly and effectively. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH776 |
| 8.5.4 | The investigation, critical appraisal and selection of alternative structural, constructional and material systems relevant to architectural design. | ARCH773 ARCH776 |
| 8.5.5 | Strategies for building construction, and ability to integrate knowledge of structural principles and | ARCH773 ARCH776 |

| | | |
|-------|--|---|
| | construction techniques. | |
| 8.5.6 | Adequate knowledge of physical problems and technologies and the function of buildings so as to provide them with internal conditions of comfort and protection against the climate. | ARCH773 ARCH776 |
| 8.5.7 | Strategies for building services, and ability to integrate these in a design project. | ARCH773 ARCH776 |
| 8.5.8 | The necessary design skills to meet building users' requirements within the constraints imposed by cost factors and building regulations. | ARCH771A ARCH772 ARCH773 ARCH776 |
| 8.5.9 | Critically examine the financial factors implied in varying building types, constructional systems, and specification choices, and the impact of these on architectural design. | ARCH772 |