Plymouth University

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

School of Architecture, Design and Environment

Programme Specification

MA Architecture

Date

Date of Approval: October 2011

Approved by Minor Change 12 11 14
1. **Final Award: MA Architecture**  
   **Intermediate award title:** Postgraduate Certificate in Architecture  
   **UCAS code/JACS code:** n/a

1. **Awarding Institution:** University of Plymouth  
   
   **Teaching institution:** University of Plymouth

2. **Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience**

   Students entering the Master of Architecture 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.
   - Core modules enable students to explore, absorb, analyse and reflect upon key knowledge, skills and understanding in issues central to the School’s ethos, notably Sustainability and Urbanism.
   - 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.
   - A new, purpose-built Faculty of Arts Building, offering opportunities for collaborative work and projects with the students and staff in Fine Art, Art and Performance, Graphics and Photography, 3D Design and Humanities.
3. **Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)**

Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment the curriculum and outcome standards for the programme include the following:

- Module Feedback Questionnaire
- Staff Module Review.
- Student Perception Questionnaire
- Annual Faculty Programme Review
- Internal Scrutiny of Programmes
- Programme Committees
- Staff Student Liaison Group Meetings
- External Examiner Reports
- PostGrad Programme in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education for new members of staff
- Teaching observation

4. **Programme Structure**

**FULL TIME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER 1 (WEEKS 1-15)</th>
<th>SEMESTER 2 (WEEKS 16-30)</th>
<th>SUMMER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ARCH 771</strong> URBAN DESIGN</td>
<td><strong>ARCH 772</strong> BUILDING DESIGN</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 credits</td>
<td>40 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ARCH 775</strong> ADVANCED CONNECTING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES</td>
<td><strong>ARCH 773</strong> INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 credits</td>
<td>20 credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ARCH 774</strong> ADVANCED URBAN METHODOLOGIES</td>
<td><strong>ARCH 776</strong> DISSERTATION BY DESIGN</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20 credits</td>
<td>60 credits</td>
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</table>
5. **Programme Aims**

The MA Architecture is a one-year full-time programme focused around design and design technology. 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 Architecture builds on the strength of the successful RIBA-validated M Arch programme. Students on the MA Architecture will work alongside students on the M Arch programme through common coursework and projects, and sharing studio space with M Arch students.

6. **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.

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.

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.

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 Architecture programme.

The normal minimum requirement for entry to the MA Architecture 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: 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 and the Head of the School of Architecture.

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 Architecture must achieve a pass 50% to qualify for the award. There is no compensation for failed modules.
Where a student has achieved an aggregate of 70%, they will be awarded the MA Architecture with Distinction.
Where a student has achieved an aggregate of 60% they will be awarded the Master of Architecture with Merit

Where a student has passed 60 credits) of the programme they will be awarded Postgraduate Certificate in Architecture (non professional award)

11. Exceptions to Regulations

n/a

12. Mapping and Appendices:

12.1. ILO’s against Modules Mapping

12.2. Assessment against Modules Mapping

12.3. Skills against Modules Mapping

12.4. Appendices

Master of Architecture
Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

That 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 does not contravene professional validation body requirements, as long as all criteria are satisfied across the whole of the portfolio. 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 DMR for each module list a number of assessed learning outcomes.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Intended Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Module in which LO is assessed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1.1 1. Knowledge and understanding of the social, political, economic and professional context that guides building construction.</td>
<td>ARCH771, ARCH772, ARCH775, ARCH776</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<td>8.1.3 Knowledge and understanding of an appropriate philosophical approach which reveals an understanding of theory in a cultural context.</td>
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<td>8.2.1 Ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements.</td>
<td>ARCH772, ARCH773, ARCH776</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<td>8.2.5 Ability to critically implement history and theory on the spatial, social, and technological aspects of architecture.</td>
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<td>ARCH772</td>
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<td>Section</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>8.4.6</td>
<td>The contributions of architects and co-professionals to the formulation of the brief, and the methods of investigation used in its preparation.</td>
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