

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

for the award of

M.Arch (Master of Architecture)

Managed by the Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment

delivered by the School of Architecture

Date approved:	Date approval confirmed, on recommendation of University validation panel or other authorised body.
Applies to students commencing study in:	September 2018

RECORD OF UPDATES

Date amended*	Nature of amendment**	Reason for amendment**
July 2016	Transferred to new template, update graduate attribute from global to active citizenship	CMA Compliance, Update to graduate attribute
October 2016	Checked for errors and amended by Subject Coordinator and Programme Lead.	Subject specialist knowledge.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Awarding body:	Oxford Brookes University
Teaching institution and location:	Oxford Brookes University, Headington Campus
Language of study:	English
Final award:	Master of Architecture (MArch)
Programme title:	Master of Architecture
Interim exit awards and award titles available:	PG Diploma Advanced Architectural Design (exit award) Dip Arch (Diploma in Architecture)AR87
Brookes course code:	MARC-ARC/AR88 PGD-ARD/AR88
UCAS code:	P008078
JACS code:	K100
HECoS code:	100122
Mode of delivery:	Full-time (face to face/on-campus)
Mode/s and duration of study:	Full time one year, maximum five years
QAA subject benchmark statement/s which apply to the programme:	Art and Design (2008), Architecture (2010)
Professional accreditation attached to the programme:	N/A
University Regulations:	The programme conforms to the University Regulations for the year of entry as published/archived at: http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/

SECTION 2: WHY STUDY THIS PROGRAMME?

This course offers students a year in which to research architecture without the constraints of professional accreditation. The emphasis on freedom of thought and research enables students to combine their understanding of architectural practice with experimentation through new media and techniques under the guidance of world-renowned tutors. Design research is undertaken as part of the studio process, with no emphasis on a particular technique or agenda allowing students to develop new methodologies that evolve on a daily basis. Students are taught to be critical and reflective and to reference their work to existing contemporary design research, and a multi-disciplinary approach is taken to architecture. The course has an emphasis on future thinking, encouraging innovative design projects that contribute to the development of architecture and architectural practice.

Design through representation is a key agenda, with students asked to generate quality media to test their projects throughout the design process.

The separation from the professionally accredited course enables students to address problems in much greater detail and focus.

The Programme aims to produce forward thinking; creative architectural thinkers who are able to feed back into professional practice new design methodologies.

Our graduates develop an in depth and systematic understanding of design methodology and how these apply to architectural practice. Graduates develop a portfolio documenting all aspects of their research, including critical reflection on techniques and methodologies employed.

Graduates evolve a critical awareness of architecture and architectural research and will have shown they can undertake analysis of complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge, and will be able to communicate the outcome effectively through their portfolio. The programme aims to teach students the importance of critically evaluating architectural agendas and precedents to improve their conceptual knowledge and to enable synthesis of complex ideas and strategies.

Active citizens must look to future technologies and the programme aims to stimulate design research of new design technologies from inside and outside the field of architecture.

We aim to create students that are able to make decisions and can demonstrate originality in planning and problem solving. The programme uses a combination of individual and group working to ensure students can work effectively as group leader or group member as well as being independent and self-critical autonomous learners. The course encourages students to become evaluative of their own and each other's work methodologies and argue alternative approaches.

Please refer to the following link to view the staff profiles within the School of Architecture:

<http://architecture.brookes.ac.uk/staff/>

SECTION 3: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the programme, graduates will demonstrate the following Brookes Attributes:

3.1 ACADEMIC LITERACY

- .1 Formulate a portfolio, which communicates depth of design strategies to both the expert and non-expert audiences from architectural and design communities.
- .2 Create original designs and other outputs reflecting strategic responses to current critical debates of architecture.

- .3 Critique new ways of thinking to search for solutions to real-world problems, and to pursue their own lines of enquiry of cross-disciplinary design study.

3.2 RESEARCH LITERACY

- .1 Appraise principle research paradigms, methods and tools employed in design-based architectural research tasks.
- .2 Integrate knowledge to competently set up and undertake research tasks
- .3 Act autonomously in designing and implementing a substantial research project relevant both to society and to design-based architectural research.
- .4 Judge the appropriateness of design-based methodologies and mediums, developing critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses for use.

3.3 CRITICAL SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL LITERACY

- .1 Engage with various forms of art, architecture and in artistic processes. Take and defend positions regarding the meaning and value of aesthetic expressions in the contexts from which they emerge.

3.4 DIGITAL AND INFORMATION LITERACY

- .1 Communicate ideas and designs with a high degree of originality and skill using both digital and analogue techniques
- .2 Identify and define the information required on a given topic and use research skills to evaluate relevant information resources within the art and architecture subjects.

3.5 ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

- .1 Develop a global and multi-dimensional perspective to contemporary architectural practice through the experience of learning alongside others from a range of design backgrounds, countries and cultures.

SECTION 4: CURRICULUM CONTENT & STRUCTURE

4.1 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS:

Code	Module Title	Credits	Level	Status	Coursework: Exam ratio
ARCH701 4/P30051	Advanced Architectural Design Research	30	7	Compulsory	100%CW
ARCH701 5/P30052	Advanced Architectural Design Representation and Realisation	50	7	Compulsory	100%CW
ARCH701 8/P30101	Urban Cultures	20	7	Compulsory	100%CW
ARCH701 9/P30103	Architecture and the City	20	7	Compulsory	100%CW
ARCH702 7/P30409	Research methods and Design	10	7	Compulsory	100%CW
ARCH701 7/P30099	Dissertation	50	7	Compulsory	100%CW

4.2 PROGRESSION AND AWARD REQUIREMENTS

The programme is a full time mode of study and has a normal duration of one-year full-time study. To qualify for the award of a PG Diploma or a Master of Architecture degree a student shall have completed all the modules for the award within a maximum of five years of study after the initial registration date.

Students must pass all the Semester 1 and Semester 2 modules prior to proceeding to the programme's dissertation phase.

Updated May 2016

The following awards and Level 7 credit ratings shall apply to the programme:

- **Master of Architecture [MArch]**

To qualify for the Master of Architecture, a student must complete a minimum of 180 Level 7 credits and achieve a minimum of 50% for each element of assessment for the module. The student must pass all year compulsory modules.

- **Award of Postgraduate Diploma [PGDip]:**

To qualify for the award of Postgraduate Diploma Advanced Architectural Design, a student must complete a minimum of 120 Level 7 credits and achieve a minimum of 50% for each element of assessment for the module. The student must pass compulsory modules except for Research Methods and the Dissertation

4.3 PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

None.

SECTION 5: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Teaching and Learning

Student time is split between contact and independent study with students being expected to work in studio with their peers – two days of contact time per week should be complemented by three days of self-learning. Contact time involves teaching activities such as:

- Lectures and seminars, including student-led seminars
- Workshops
- Crits, Group and one-to-one tutorials

Modules range from 10 to 50 credits.

Each module will set out one or more assessment elements that enable students to structure their learning and demonstrate the learning outcomes. Assessment elements are designed to progress students through the five core graduate attributes supporting individual *abilities, personal qualities and transferable skills* include:

The programme includes one or more field trips, which provide students with the opportunity to directly experience the application of specialisation in the built environment.

Teaching and Learning

The **Advanced Architectural Design Modules** (ARCH7014/P30051 and ARCH7015/P30052, 30+50 credits run in parallel) represent the core of the learning experience. Project-based learning is used in a studio environment to individually and collectively explore architectural design problems. The specific design problem and methodology employed will be set by the design studio tutors. It is envisaged that several parallel studios may be established, numbers permitting, each led by separate studio tutors with different agendas, programmes and methodologies. However, the learning outcomes will be common. Initially, there will be only one studio, The David Greene Studio, which will be organised as follows:

The first semester is always a rigid organised fabric of reviews, seminars, tutorials and deadlines with students working both individually and in groups. Within this framework students engage in two strands of investigation: a) an in-depth research into the tectonic possibilities of a new material/s and b) the analysis of a real site with the aim of generating a series of questions that demand an architectural response. By the end of the semester each student is expected to present to a jury of invited critics a catalogue both conceptual and material, from which they will make a project, in a coherent manner using appropriate media. This jury provides formative feedback for students on their learning.

The first semester design studio is complimented by a series of challenging lectures on **Urban Cultures** by external academics and practitioners. Students are expected to engage in questioning and debate with the lecturers and are required to produce a seminar paper (50%) and an essay (50%) on a theme related to the lecture series.

The second semester design studio focuses on the architectural implications of bringing the two apparently dissimilar strands of the first semester's investigation, programmatic and tectonic together- *'the pursuit of the illogical with the utmost logicity'* (David Greene 2005). At this stage the studio places emphasis on the importance of developing students' ability to demonstrate conceptual clarity, to locate their ideas in the spectrum of current and past architecture and to maintain a strong link between concept and product.

Students are also encouraged to explore a wide range of media and technique and to develop a rationale for selecting appropriate techniques for the representation of particular kinds of architectural ideas. Students are required to present their design projects to an invited group of invited critics close to the end of the semester. This proves formative feedback for students. The final Module mark is generated from a portfolio-based assessment held at the end of the second semester involving a panel internal staff (this system will ensure a parity of marking when the module consists of multiple design studios).

As with the first semester the Design Studio project work is complemented by a series of challenging lectures on **Architecture and the City** by external academics and practitioners and students are expected to engage in questioning and debate with the lecturers and are required to produce a seminar paper (50%) and an essay (50%) on a theme related to the lecture series.

Teaching and Learning – Dissertation Stage

Students also undertake a **Research Methods** Module in the second semester that prepares them for their dissertation project. A set of generic postgraduate school-wide lectures on research paradigms, methodology and research tools is followed by Masters specific seminars in which students develop a synopsis for their dissertation. The module is assessed by means of a review of a relevant past Masters dissertation and a synopsis proposal.

The programme concludes with the **Dissertation Project** in which individual students work with a supervisor on projects that have developed from the work of the design studio (or appropriate Special Route). Students are expected to produce original, relevant and valid projects. The dissertation can be either written or design-based. In the latter case a written commentary is expected as part of the dissertation submission. Students submit their dissertation projects at the end of the summer vacation and are expected to hold an exhibition of their work in the Department or elsewhere as agreed.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Postgraduate Attributes

The programme builds imagination, academic abilities, personal qualities and transferable skills of its graduates through teaching, learning and assessment practice around *Academic Literacy, Research Literacy, Critical Self-Awareness and Personal Literacy, Digital and Information Literacy and Active Citizenship. A snapshot of just what we mean...*

Academic Literacy

Through individual tutorials students develop a project whose relevance in the context of the theme is questioned and encouraged. The demonstration of this individual approach is tested and assessed in formal critical sessions, which all students attend.

“Underpinning each theme is a strong set of ideas. Students are asked to design an architectural object that responds to the ideas explicit in the theme. The theme revisits an established trope from the history of architecture, to re-examine it in a new light shone on it in the context of changes evident in society and technology. A number of talks are given at the start of the year to explain this context. This theme is then followed up by a series of talks by tutors that look at the theme from a variety of individual perspectives.”

Research Literacy

Before deciding on the specific nature of their dissertation and the form it will take, students review the possibilities in a series of talks and workshops as part of the Research Methods module.

“There are two written submissions, the first of which looks at the kinds of work and the medium employed in projects produced by artists in a number of relevant fields related to the year’s theme, for instance film making, and installations, as well as drawing and model making. The second looks at specific media and forms that the student might they employ in considering the development of their own project in the dissertation stage. The written element is supported by a series of workshops and presentations organized as part of the Architecture and the City module. This exploration of creative writing and expression is run by a novelist and aims to help not just with expressing thoughts and ideas in an imaginative way relevant to the individual.”

Critical Self-Awareness and Personal Literacy

A system of studio based critical presentations to assembled students, invited professionals and tutors are held once a semester. A tutor and a student take formal notes of the observations made. The resulting notes are copied for the student’s reflection and kept on file.

“In addition students presenting work to their peers, in groups of three, make a less formal presentation. One student acts as the architect presenting work to another student adopting the role of client with the third acting as an observer who runs the half hour session in a clear timed structured way. The observer and a tutor keep notes of the conversation, in particular the clarity of the presentation. The designer is asked to reflect on the comments at the meeting and to state what has been learned from the discussion and what work will be undertaken as a consequence.”

Digital and Information Literacy

A series of writing workshops with a novelist and critic in the second semester encourage students to express their thoughts in words. The purpose is to be able to describe aspects of their design work accurately and appropriately. The making of a short film that expresses these thoughts in kinetic form supports the work. The exercises form a bridge to the written aspect of the Research Methods module.

“Great emphasis is placed in the course on using different media and learning which medium is most appropriate to employ in a given situation. At the start there is a series of workshops that explore hand drawing, and 3D computer rendering as distinct entities. The drawings produced then are incorporated into a short project that involves a study of verbal and visual logic that results in the construction of an architectural object in the computer, that is both three dimensional and can be seen in the round. In the second semester other aspects of this object are developed using digital moving imagery to make a short film. The grammar and techniques of film are taught in an incremental way so that there is an easy familiarity with the camera, lighting, sound, and editing.”

Active Citizenship

The course agenda evolves a new theme each year which students are expected to address. The year’s theme develops through the design of the brief. The students are asked to bring to bear some aspect of their personal civilization to the design work to be undertaken.

As a group they are asked to consider their role not just in limited global terms, but also in terms of the universe, seeing the globe as the Pale Blue Spot....

“From this distant vantage point, the Earth might not seem of any particular interest. But for us, it’s different. Look again at that dot. That’s here, that’s home, that’s us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and

destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every “superstar,” every “supreme leader,” every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there – on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.

The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that, in glory and triumph, they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot. Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner, how frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds.

Our posturing, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves.

The Earth is the only world known so far to harbor life. There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate. Visit, yes. Settle, not yet. Like it or not, for the moment the Earth is where we make our stand.

It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we’ve ever known.....”

SECTION 6: ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME

6.1 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The programme is intended for students who have completed their professional, role orientated, education and wish undertake speculative design-based research. Thus is expected that applicants from the field of architecture will already possess an accredited Graduate Diploma or Postgraduate Degree in Architecture (UK), a Professional Masters in Architecture (US), or the international equivalent. The programme also welcomes applicants from other design fields such as product design, graphic design and interior design, and would expect such applicants to possess an excellent first degree (equivalent to classification of First or 2.1).

Students are offered places on the programme after a successful interview with the programme staff and/or the submission of a satisfactory design portfolio.

All candidates for admission to a postgraduate programme in the School of Architecture must meet the two core requirements below in terms of previous education and ability to work at postgraduate level in the English language.

6.1.1.1 Core Requirements: Previous Education

Admission to the programme will normally be open to applicants who fulfil one of the following requirements:

- .1 Hold a good honours degree (2.1 or above), or equivalent qualification in architecture or a discipline related to architecture
- .2 Have an appropriate professional background and experience of designing architecture or designing in a discipline that has a strong relationship or similarities to architecture
- .3 are students in their final year of the MArchD in Architecture at Oxford Brookes University, who have demonstrated their proficiency in written and design work

Please also see the university’s general entry requirements: <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying-at-brookes/how-to-apply/entry-requirements/postgraduate-courses/>

Applications will also be considered from potential candidates who wish to seek accreditation for their prior experiential learning or earlier qualifications.

6.1.1.2 Core Requirements: English Language

Applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate that their level of English is appropriate for study at postgraduate level. In addition to the academic entry qualifications for their chosen programme, applicants must have one of the following or an equivalent qualification acceptable to the University:

- British Council IELTS: level 6.5 on the 'Academic' test, with a minimum score of 6 in reading and writing;

Please also see the university's English language requirements:

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/international/applying-to-arriving/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>

6.1.2 Dispensation

In exceptional circumstance, where applicants can show that they have qualifications or experience or both that demonstrate that they have knowledge and capabilities equivalent to those possessed by holders of the qualifications listed in 6.1.1.1 or 6.1.1.2 above, may be admitted with dispensation from the requirement to possess those qualifications.

6.1.3 Admission with credit [APL/APEL]

The assessment of prior learning (APL) shall be conducted in accordance with the principles, procedures and guidance in the University's Credit Accumulation and Transfer Guidelines, which can be found at:

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying-at-brookes/how-to-apply/credit-transfer/>

Entry with APL (max 120 credits) to the programme dissertation stage (60 credits incl. Research Methods Module) of the programme will **normally only** be granted to students who have successfully completed the Diploma in Architecture at Oxford Brookes University. Students are required to formally apply to transfer to the programme dissertation stage. The Programme Examination Committee must ratify any credit granted through the accreditation process, and the decision of the committee is final. A student admitted with credit will, on admission, receive a written statement of the module that they are required to take.

SECTION 7: PREPARATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Whilst the course is not professionally accredited with the RIBA/ARB it provides an additional insight into the subject of architecture and fosters thinking outside of the traditional architectural envelope – this has proved extremely useful to international students whose domestic architectural courses are often pragmatic and didactic.

The emphasis of the programme is on developing one's critical and reflective abilities, with a view to empower and enhance graduate employability. This focus better prepares graduates for employability in architectural and design based practices or advanced research degrees, with advanced subject knowledge and skills, to better adapt one's practice in an ever increasing complex world.

Oxford Brookes is one of the top UK universities for graduate employability and the school of Architecture has been listed in the Times Higher top 10 for a number of years.

The Head of School, Programme Directors and Staff regularly seeks advice from a broad range of groups to inform the curriculum including the School of Architecture Professional Liaison Group, the Standing Conference of Heads of Schools of Architecture (SCHOSA), local and international employers, research councils and alumni. Our aim is to enhance graduate employability through greater understand of diverse perspectives concerning relevance and 'real world' topics facing society and the architectural discipline, to shape the detailed curriculum and to enhance improvements to employment skill gaps.

The programme embeds research and practice directly into the curriculum to strengthen links with graduate employers. Programme staff includes both award winning academics and experienced practitioners. Our practitioners, with their diverse range of project scale and expertise, strengthen the direct link of up-to-date industry knowledge. Enhancing opportunities for cross-discipline studies through collaborations with interdisciplinary design practices are part of many detailed modules framing learning across-discipline critical dialogues.

The programme offers additional non-curricula activities throughout academic year and during the summer, aimed at enriching students' portfolios and increasing their employability with work-based learning experience. The OxArch Student Society organises regular monthly talks and live-build workshops with industry leaders.

The [OxArch Student Society](#) website and [@OUBArchitecture](#) provides regular updates to lectures, workshops, competitions, scholarships, volunteering, and job opportunities to the School and alumni community.