# UNIVERSITY OF FORWARD THINKING WESTMINSTER⌗

# Programme Specification

# Course record information

| | |
|---|---|
| Name and level of final award: | BA (Hons) Architecture |
| | The BA (Hons) Architecture is a BA Honours degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA first cycle degree or diploma compatible. |
| Name and level of intermediate awards: | Diploma of HE Architecture |
| | Certificate of HE Architecture |
| Awarding body/institution: | University of Westminster |
| Status of awarding body/institution: | Recognised Body |
| Location of delivery: | Marylebone Campus |
| Language of delivery and assessment: | English |
| Course/programme leader: | Julian Williams |
| Course URL: | http://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/architecture-and-interiors/undergraduate-courses/full-time/u09fuarc-ba-honours-architecture |
| Mode and length of study: | Full-time – 3 years |
| University of Westminster course code: | ACHSACH |
| JACS code: | K100 |
| UCAS code: | K100 |
| QAA subject benchmarking group: | Architecture, Art and Design (current) |
| Professional body accreditation: | Validated by RIBA and Prescribed by ARB on a five year cycle with Annual Monitoring. |
| Date of course validation/review: | 2000/2011 |
| Date of programme specification: | 2013/14 |

# Admissions requirements

The Programme seeks to introduce suitably-qualified entrants to the challenging, diverse and complex nature of architectural design, practice and procedures

Entry criteria:

- Age: 18 years or over.
- At least three GCSEs at grade C (including English and Mathematics).
- Three passes at A-Level with grades AAB (340 points), or better; a BTEC National Diploma with grades of DDD; or an International Baccalaureate with 35 or more.
- A strong personal statement demonstrating a commitment to studying architecture supplemented by a portfolio of your own work, or an accredited account of relevant experience acceptable to the Course Leader. The portfolio of work should illustrate your skills, talents and interests through a variety of media and forms; it may include sketches, drawings, collages, modelling, 3d work and painting. The portfolio should evidence your creative process as well as the final outcome, so please include developmental work as well as final pieces (CAD drawings or software photo manipulations need not be included). You may be asked to attend interview and present your portfolio or to submit work online with interview by Skype.
- A good standard of written and spoken English. New students, whose secondary education has been in a language other than English, should have attained the equivalent of IELTS 6.0, Cambridge Proficiency, or TOEFL 550.
- A good standard of numeracy.

The University offers supporting courses in English Language and Numeracy, if required. Opportunities for Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning may be considered subject to the University's standard requirements and procedures.

All applicants have the opportunity of viewing the work of the Department by visiting the Campus at an Open Day and/or at the time of interview. There is also an end of year exhibition of students' work and a series of smaller-scale events during the year which are open to all. Scrutiny of the Departmental website is also recommended.
Equal Opportunities:

The University is an equal opportunities institution. The Department is fully committed to providing wide access to the Programme and care and support for students is provided in line with University policies.

# Aims of the course

Architecture, with creativity at its core, is an interesting, challenging and rewarding subject choice at university involving study of the arts, history, culture and technology from both an academic and vocational perspective. It has wide-ranging appeal to those seeking theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills, possibly with a view to becoming a practising architect, establishing a career in a related discipline or pursuing further awards in tertiary education.

The Undergraduate Programme, therefore, has been specifically developed as an introduction to the richness, sophistication and diversity of architecture and its associated influences. The three-year, full-time Programme is modular in format and, upon completion, students with a classified degree are exempt from RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Part 1 examinations. This is the first of three stages in academic and professional development, usually followed by a year of practical training and two further years of full-time study at postgraduate level (Part 2). A further year of practical training and part-time study normally ensues culminating in the Part 3 examination, following which successful students may make an application to the professional register administered by the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and membership of the RIBA.

The Programme has been structured to reflect the varied backgrounds and interests of entrants and the pluralist nature of the subject. Innovation and experimentation are encouraged throughout the Programme that, additionally, provides a sound, pragmatic basis for subsequent academic and professional development.
The Department is located within the Faculty of Architecture and Built Environment on the Marylebone Campus, close to the RIBA and many other professional and cultural institutions.

# Employment and further study opportunities

London, in recent years, has provided a particularly robust marketplace for students seeking full and part-time employment, although the situation has changed recently. At the time of writing the economic outlook is still uncertain but students in the Department of Architecture at Westminster are well placed to take advantage of any forthcoming upsurge in employment in the profession and related disciplines.

As a precursor to the above, and as an intrinsic part of the Cultural Context 3B module (Preparing for Practice), Level 6 (Third Year) students undertake a week of arranged work experience in an architectural practice. This has proved to be an extremely valuable exercise, many students making useful professional contacts, some returning for the practical training year to the same practice.

On successful completion of the Undergraduate Programme, students gain an award that is an ARB-prescribed Part 1 qualification as well as exemption from Part 1 RIBA examinations. Following this, they may consider one of two options for academic and/or professional advancement:

- A minimum of one year's practical training before applying for postgraduate architectural studies at Diploma level (two years). During this time students must keep a Personal Experience Development Record (PEDR) and consider applying for relevant short courses.
- Progression to further academic studies at Master's level.

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, ie employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses
- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision
- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements which will inform the service delivered to students.

# Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These threshold statements of achievement and are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course. Specific Learning Outcomes, Assessment Methods and Assessment Criteria are identified in the module *proformas* in the Course Handbook and skills maps are provided for each Level of the Programme (sub-sets include Learning Resources, Information Management, Communication, Problem Solving, Group Working, Self–Evaluation, Autonomy and Career Management). Additional guidance is also provided with respect to the ways skills are taught, practised and assessed.

**Knowledge and understanding**
Students are introduced to a number of given reference frameworks at the commencement of the Programme and develop greater awareness of architectural design, technical, cultural and ethical influences and professional responsibilities as they progress. Knowledge, awareness and abilities are normally developed through lectures, seminars and similar activities, supported by reading lists and references to articles in architectural journals and other publications. Continuous assessment is carried out by the submission of academic portfolios including essays, reports and diaries. In a design context, students respond to given project Briefs and site determinants, sometimes on an iterative basis, schemes being submitted in a design portfolio at the end of each project period.

**Specific and Cognitive/Intellectual Skills**
These include analysis, synthesis and evaluation with increasing autonomy and reduced guidance being given as a student progresses. Similarly, the selection and application of learning and presentation techniques ranges from known, standardised methods in First Year to innovative, experimental and more abstract vehicles towards the culmination of the Programme. The resonance of such techniques is reviewed on a regular basis during crits, seminars and tutorials, students being invited to critically evaluate their own work, as well as that of their peers. Interaction and flexibility are encouraged throughout the Programme, appropriate skills being acquired and developed in response to the Learning Outcomes defined in each constituent module.

The Department has developed its Skills Policy in accordance with the University's requirements. In determining appropriate skill sets and attendant policies, the Department recognises the following categories which are relevant to the Programme:

- Group working
- Learning Resources
- Self-evaluation
- Information management
- Autonomy
- Communication
- Problem solving

The Programme also engenders a broad range of transferable skills including:

- Core skills
- Project-based skills
- Research skills
- Analytical skills
- Transferable skills
- Life-long learning skills
- Employability skills

**Personal Development Plans (PDPs)**
Students will be required to complete a number of proformas (mainly self-reflective) in order to map their progress through each year of the Programme, and beyond. A dedicated introductory session is held shortly after registration in which PDP procedures are carefully explained. Personal Tutoring arrangements are also discussed at this session.

**Career Management Skills**

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace. At the University of Westminster students will be given the opportunity to develop and record their employability skills alongside their academic studies.

The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students through an on-line vacancy service
- Strategies are in place to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers and other professional organisations/bodies
- Employers are encouraged to become involved in curriculum design and other aspects of the University's careers education, information and guidance provision
- Employers, other agencies and training providers are encouraged to work in partnership with the University
- Job opportunities are posted on the University's Career Development Centre webpages Career Management Skills are embedded in all courses.

**Key transferable skills**

As well as assuming individual responsibility, students frequently work in groups of varying size throughout the Programme. At such times they are expected to meet respective obligations, interact effectively and be pro-active in the preparation and presentation of material in a variety of formats. They are also required to access, use and manage resources, communicate coherently, both visually and orally, and be increasingly self-critical as they progress through the course. In addition, students are required to define, identify and address problems of increasing complexity. Clearly, such skills are invaluable and easily transferable to career management, employment and other similar situations.

# Learning, teaching and assessment methods

**Teaching**

A set of standardised *proformas* in the Handbook clearly describes attendant aims, learning outcomes, content, teaching and learning methods, assessment rationale and criteria, assessment methods and weightings and reading lists for each module. The Programme is divided into the following elements:

- Studio-based design (50% of the module weighting)
- Cultural Context, including history, theory contemporary issues and professional practice (25% of the module weighting)
- Technical studies (25% of the module weighting)

The pattern of teaching and learning in the Programme may be generically classified as follows:

- Lectures, demonstrations and other forms of visual and verbal presentation. A typical lecture course consists of twelve sessions of three hours contact teaching (also involving seminars, presentation sessions, visits etc).
- Studio-based design work under the guidance of Studio Supervisors.
- Studio discussions, seminars, workshops and other events.
- Tutorials, either individually or in small groups.
- Specialised instruction in the use of computers, drafting and representational techniques, workshop equipment etc.
- Critical discourse ('crits') with feedback being recorded by academic staff and peers at an interim stage and towards the conclusion of a project.
- Field Trips to a city of international significance at Level 5.

- Visits to sites, exhibitions, galleries and projects.
- Portfolio Review at the end of each design module.

Creative thinking is always encouraged, supported by the exploration of appropriate architectural, cultural and technological typologies and precedents. In doing so, students develop a passion for, and curiosity about, the subject as well as honing attendant research skills and knowledge. Iteration is sometimes necessary, however, students learning to do the basics well and, thereby, gaining valuable experience within, and without, the complex and challenging realm of architecture.

**Learning**
Students learn and progress by:

- undertaking self-directed research under tutor support and guidance
- attending lectures, seminars and tutorials in Cultural Context and Technical Studies modules, and progressing coursework set by tutors.
- developing designs through creative endeavours and extensive iterative design processes using a wide range of media. The direction of these will be negotiated and agreed with tutors during tutorials and presentations.
- resourcing and integrating ideas and knowledge gained through co-requisite modules and through peer and tutor led studio investigations and discussions.
- presenting and communicating coursework (design/project work and research proposals) to peers and tutors, and in critically appraising the work of peers.
- responding to critical appraisal of coursework, formative and summative assessment.
- reflecting constructively on PDP submissions and Personal Tutorial discussions.

In design projects, students learn to conceptualise, make proposals and to evaluate them in the context of module assessment criteria.

Students are expected to plan their time and study with increasing independence as the Programme unfolds.

**Assessment**

Assessment is undertaken using a wide range of established methods including crits (formative assessment) and Portfolio Reviews (summative assessment). There is additional coursework in the form of written and/or illustrated texts such as journals, diaries, reports, sketchbooks, logbooks and letters. There are no formal class tests or written examinations; all assessment is through coursework submission.

Parity of grading is ensured by double marking of written submissions. Every member of the design staff is in attendance at the Portfolio Review when the work of individual students is scrutinised and grades awarded. All design grades are ratified by a panel of External Examiners at the end of the academic year.

In design projects, students learn to conceptualise, make proposals and evaluate them against module assessment criteria. Studio tutors give guidance on how these are understood in the context of a Studio design project.  By the end of Third Year (Level 6), students are required to integrate knowledge and skills learned in the lecture-based courses into concurrent design projects. Students are also expected to carefully plan their time and study with increasing independence as the Programme unfolds.

Personal Development Plans (PDPs) have recently been developed for the Programme. Such documentation allows students to monitor and reflect upon their respective progress in all aspects of the Course, identify strengths and possible weaknesses, record achievements and enhance confidence and self-awareness. PDPs also provide a detailed record, which may be discussed with Personal Tutors and the Course Leader with respect to the improvement of existing knowledge bases and skills and may eventually be used in the compilation and preparation of CVs.   In consequence, Studio Supervisors are familiar with the work of all Studios across the Programme, variations in content and complexity between sites and briefs

being carefully evaluated.  All Studio Supervisors are required to attend Portfolio Reviews and subsequent grading sessions.

**Assessment Methods**

Assessment methods vary from module to module, specific requirements being contained in the Handbook. Students receive both formative and summative feedback on all coursework submissions. In Design, formative assessment of Learning Outcomes is carried out during Crits and summative assessment at Portfolio Reviews when all Studio Supervisors are in attendance. Studio Supervisors are therefore familiar with the work of all Studios across the programme, variations in content and complexity between sites and briefs being carefully evaluated. Studio Supervisors are required to attend Portfolio Reviews and subsequent grading sessions.

The lecture-based components of the Programme are assessed in the form of essays, reports, verbal presentations and diaries. There are no formal class tests or written examinations, continuous assessment being adopted throughout the Programme. Parity of grading is ensured by double marking of written submissions.

A panel of experienced External Examiners who visit the Department on at least two occasions during the academic year ratifies all grades, cumulatively representing a student's Academic Portfolio.

# Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Undergraduate students study 120 credits per year.

| Credit Level 4 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Module code** | **Module title** | **Status** | **UK credit** | **ECTS** |
| AARC402 | DES1A: Architectural Design and Skills | Core | 30 | 15 |
| AARC403 | DES1B: Architectural Design and Skills | Core | 30 | 15 |
| 4ARC415 | CC1A: Modern Architecture and Art | Core | 15 | 7.5 |
| 4ARC416 | CC1B: Architectural Traditions | Core | 15 | 7.5 |
| 4ARC418 | TS1A: Introduction to Technical Studies | Core | 15 | 7.5 |
| 4ARC417 | TS1B: Drafting and Fabrication | Core | 15 | 7.5 |
| **Award of Certificate of Higher Education available** | | | | |
| **Credit Level 5** | | | | |
| **Module code** | **Module title** | **Status** | **UK credit** | **ECTS** |
| AARC500 | DES2A: Concept Design | Core | 30 | 15 |
| 4ARC527 | TS2A: Making Architecture | Core | 15 | 7.5 |
| 4ARC523 | CC2A: An introduction to Architectural Theory and Representation | Core | 15 | 7.5 |
| AARC501 | DES2B: Developed Design | Core | 30 | 15 |
| 4ARC526 | CC2B: Contemporary Issues in Architecture & Urbanism | Core | 15 | 7.5 |
| 4ARC528 | TS2B: Site Diary | Core | 15 | 7.5 |
| **Award of Diploma of Higher Education available** | | | | |
| **Credit Level 6** | | | | |
| **Module code** | **Module title** | **Status** | **UK credit** | **ECTS** |
| AARC600 | DES3A: Concept Design | Core | 30 | 15 |
| 4ARC626 | TS3A: Applied Technology | Core | 15 | 7.5 |
| 4ARC630 | CC3A: Extended Essay | Core | 15 | 7.5 |
| AARC601 | DES3B: Developed and Technical Design | Core | 30 | 15 |
| 4ARC627 | TS3B: Technical Exploration Notebook | Core | 15 | 7.5 |
| 4ARC625 | CC3B: Preparing for Practice | Core | 15 | 7.5 |
| **Award of BA available** <br> **Award of BA Honours available** | | | | |

## Course Diagram: BA (Hons) Architecture (K100)

| level | semester | architectural design | cr | technical studies | cr | cultural context of architecture | cr | professional studies and management | cr |
|-------|----------|----------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|-----|
| | | communication skills are taught across all categories | | | | | | | |
| 4 | semester 1 | DES 1A AARC402 Architectural Design and Skills 1 | 30 | TS1A 4ARC418 Intro to technical studies | 15 | CC1A 4ARC415 Modern Architecture and Art | 15 | | 15 |
| | semester 2 | DES 1B AARC403 Architectural Design and Skills 2 | 30 | TS1B 4ARC417 Drafting and fabrication | 15 | CC1B 4ARC416 Architectural Traditions | 15 | | 15 |
| 5 | semester 1 | DES 2A AARC500 Concept Design | 30 | TS2A 4ARC527 Making Architecture | 15 | CC2A 4ARC523 Intro to Architectural Theory and Representation | 15 | *intro to TS2B* | 15 |
| | semester 2 | DES 2B AARC501 Developed Design | 30 | | | CC2B 4ARC526 Contemporary Issues in Architecture and Urbanism | 15 | TS2B 4ARC528 Site Diary | 15 |
| 6 | semester 1 | DES 3A AARC600 Concept Design | 30 | TS3A 4ARC626 Applied Technology | 15 | CC3A 4ARC630 Extended Essay | 15 | *intro to CC3B* | |
| | semester 2 | DES 3B AARC601 Developed Design and Technical Design | 30 | TS3B 4ARC627 Technical Exploration Notebook | 15 | *CC3A extended essay assignment* | 15 | CC3B 4ARC625 Preparing for Practice | 15 |
| | | | 180 | | 75 | | 75 | | 30 |

# Academic regulations

The BA Honours Architecture and its intermediate awards operate in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in 2008.

All students should make sure that they access a copy of the current edition of the general University handbook called Essential Westminster*, which is available at westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster. The following regulations should be read in conjunction with the Modular Fr*amework for Undergraduate Courses* and relevant sections of the current *Handbook of Academic Regulations*, which is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations.

**Condoned Credit at Level 4**
Due to course specific regulations condoned credit, as detailed in Section 17 of the University regulations, is not available to students at Level 4 on this course.

Please note condoned credit is not available, University-wide, at Levels 5 and 6.

**Progression**
To progress from Level 4 to Level 5 in full time study, a student must pass all core modules at Level 4 (120 credits). To progress from Level 5 to Level 6 full-time study, a student must pass all core modules at Level 5 (120 credits).

# Award

To qualify for the award of BA Honours Architecture, a student must have:
- obtained at least 360 credits including:
  - passed a minimum of 120 Credits at credit Level 5 or higher; and
  - passed a minimum of 120 credits at credit Level 6 or higher.
- attempted modules with a maximum value of 330 credits at credit Levels 5 and 6; and
- passed all modules within the course.

The class of the Honours degree awarded is decided by two criteria, the average of the best 105 credits passed at credit Level 6 being in the range of the class to be awarded, and the average of the next best 105 credits passed at credit Levels 5 and 6 provided the next best 105 credits passed are no more than one classification below this.

# Support for students

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce students to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which they will be studying, the Library and IT facilities and to the Faculty Registry. Students will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Students are allocated a personal tutor who can provide advice and guidance on academic matters.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at their Faculty. Students can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books).

Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available

with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students.

At University level, Services for Students provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The International Office provides particular support for international students. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support all students during their time at the University.

# Reference points for the course

### Internally

The Programme has been designed to reflect the University's mission to provide education for professional life and to comply with its policies on skills development and employability. The structure of the Programme also meets the University's requirements with respect to modular frameworks and academic regulations.

Particular reference should be made to: University Teaching and Learning Policy Statements, University Quality Assurance Handbook and Modular Frameworks; Handbook of Academic Regulations (2011); University of Westminster's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Strategy (2011); University Quality and Assurance Handbook (2010); University Skills Policy Statement (2011); Graduate Skills Handbook (2010).

A list of cognate courses delivered in the Faculty of Architecture and Built Environment can be accessed through its website (www.westminster.ac.uk/schools/architecture) or by reference to the University's Undergraduate Prospectus.

### Externally

These include:
QAA Benchmark Statement for Architecture (2010); 'Prescription of Qualifications: ARB Criteria at Parts 1, 2 and 3' (2010); 'Procedures for the Prescription of Qualifications', ARB; 'RIBA Validation Criteria', RIBA; 'Principles and Processes of Curriculum Design', Westminster Exchange (2009); QAA Codes of Practice; SEEC Skills Description (2009); European Directives on Architectural Education; RIBA Visiting Board reports published on the RIBA Website; External Examiner Reports published on the UoW Website.

# Professional body accreditation

The BA Hons Architecture is validated by RIBA and prescribed by ARB on a five year cycle with annual monitoring.

# Quality management and enhancement

### Course management
The Undergraduate Programme is managed by the Course Leader (Julian Williams) within the Department of Architecture, one of three Departments in the Faculty of Architecture and Built Environment on the Marylebone Campus. At the time of writing, the Department has around eleven full-time staff and in excess of thirty part-time visiting lecturers. These

arrangements provide a particularly varied and dynamic way of delivering the various facets of the Programme.

Departmental staff are subject to annual appraisals of their teaching by colleagues with further staff development being achieved through attendance at courses and conferences and also by research activity. Teaching staff also attend events organised by the Human Resources Department and Westminster Exchange.

**Course approval, monitoring and review**
The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2000 (revised 2011). The panel included internal peers from the University and external subject specialists from academia and industry to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers. Periodic course review helps to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers.

The course is monitored each year by the Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from each Course Committee, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. The Annual Monitoring Sub-Committee considers the Faculty action plans resulting from this process and the outcomes are reported to the Academic Council, which has overall responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards in the University.

**Student involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement**
Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways. The most formal mechanism for feedback on the course is the Course Committee. Student representatives will be elected to sit on the Committee to represent the views of their peer group in various discussions. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the Course Committee.

All students are invited to complete a Module Feedback Questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced. The University also has an annual Student Experience Survey which elicits feedback from students about their course and University experience.

Students meet with review panels when the periodic review of the course is conducted to provide oral feedback on their experience on the course. Student feedback from course committees is part of the Faculty's quality assurance evidence base.


For more information about this course:
Admissions Tutor: Natalie Newey (ext. 66857; email n.newey@westminster.ac.uk
Admissions and Marketing Office: Tel +44(0)20 7911 5020; David McGowan (Ext 5160: e-mail mcgowad1@westminster.ac.uk)
Website: www.westminster.ac.uk/sabe