UNIVERSITY OF LEADING THE WAY WESTMINSTER

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	**BA (Hons) Architecture** The BA (Hons) Architecture is a BA degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA first cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Diploma of Higher Education in Architecture Certificate of Higher Education in Architecture
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Central London (Marylebone Campus)
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month:	Three years full time. September start.
QAA subject benchmarking group(s):	Architecture
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	Validated by the RIBA and prescribed by the ARB on a five year cycle with Annual Monitoring.
Date of course validation/review:	February 2016
Date of programme specification approval:	July 2016
Valid for cohorts :	2016/17 level 4, 2017/18 level 5 and 6.
Course Leader	Julian Williams
UCAS code and URL:	K100 westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate

Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum entry requirements for all undergraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements.

More information can be found here: westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/how-to-apply

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. Students who complete the course 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.

What will you be expected to achieve?

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

- The overall **knowledge and understanding** you will gain from your course (KU).
- **Graduate attributes** are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA).
- **Professional and personal practice learning outcomes** are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course(PPP)
- **Key transferable skills** that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)

Level 4 learning outcomes

Upon completion of level 4 you will be able to:

L4.1 (Design practices)
Design straightforward architectural proposals to concept design stage using basic propositional, imaginative, creative and critical practices grounded in academic knowledge, and awareness of relevant technologies. (PPP)

L4.2 (Technical knowledge)
Relate a basic knowledge of building materials and construction processes and techniques to the development of design proposals. (KU) (GA)

L4.3 (History, theory and urban design knowledge)

Demonstrate a basic understanding of the histories and theories of architecture and urban design and their inter-relationship with the allied fields of the arts and design, through the appraisal of existing buildings, places and spaces. (KU)

L4.4 (Critical thinking and research)
Identify evidence, arguments and assumptions that underpin judgments within the discourse relating to architectural culture, theory and design; and relate strategic or conceptual level ideas that provide organizing and ordering frameworks to the design process in developing architectural proposals. (KTS)

L4.5 (Communication)
Communicate architectural ideas and proposals clearly and effectively using a range of current visual and written media selected through a guided process of critical evaluation (PPP) (GA).

L4.6 (Reflective practice/learning needs)
Discuss your individual learning needs and responsibilities, and explore your academic interests in the context of course study options. (KTS) (GA)

L4.7 (Social and ethical awareness)
Identify the ethical issues involved in developing design ideas and proposals. (PPP)(GA)

Level 5 learning outcomes

Upon completion of level 5 you will be able to:

L5.1 (Design practices)
Design architectural proposals to concept design stage using propositional, imaginative and iterative creative and critical practices grounded in a body of professional practice and academic knowledge, and understanding of relevant technologies. (PPP)

L5.2 (Technical knowledge)
Integrate a basic knowledge of building materials, construction processes and techniques, and structural strategies, and an awareness of ecologically sustainable environmental design principles and technologies, in developing architectural proposals. (KU) (GA)

L5.3 (History, theory and urban design knowledge)
Critically evaluate the histories and theories of architecture and urban design and their inter-relationship with the allied fields of the arts and design, through the focused study of contemporary architectural issues. (KU)

L5.4 (Critical thinking and research)
Appraise evidence, arguments and assumptions that underpin judgments within the discourse relating to architectural culture, theory and design; and apply strategic or conceptual level ideas that provide organizing and ordering frameworks to the design process in developing architectural proposals. (KTS)

L5.5 (Communication)
Communicate architectural ideas and proposals clearly and effectively using a range of current visual and written media selected through a guided process of critical evaluation (PPP) (GA).

L5.6 (Reflective practice and learning needs)
Identify and communicate your individual learning needs and responsibilities, and self-appraise your academic interests in the context of course study options. (KTS) (GA)

L5.7 (Social and ethical awareness)
Critically examine the ethical issues involved in developing design ideas and proposals and reflect on your experience of architectural practice against current professional codes of conduct. (PPP)(GA)

L5.8 (Professional practice knowledge)
Outline the role of the architect in professional practice and the construction industry through the examination of the legal, development control and procurement processes involved in realising architectural designs. (KU)

Level 6 learning outcomes

Upon completion of level 6 you will be able to:

L6.1 (Design practices)
Design relatively complex architectural proposals to developed design stage using self-guided propositional, imaginative and iterative creative and critical practices grounded in a body of professional practice and academic knowledge, and understanding of relevant technologies (PPP).

L6.2 (Technical knowledge)
Integrate a basic knowledge of building materials, construction processes and techniques, structural strategies and ecologically sustainable environmental design principles and technologies, in the development of technical design proposals (KU) (GA).

L6.3 (History theory and urban design knowledge)
Demonstrate a systematic comprehension of relevant histories and theories of architecture and urban design and their inter-relationship with the allied fields of the arts and design, through the self-directed study of a specialist area in some depth (KU).

L6.4 (Critical thinking and research)
Develop evidence, arguments and assumptions in order to make and present sound judgments within a structured discourse relating to architectural culture, theory and design; and synthesize strategic or conceptual level ideas that provide organizing and ordering frameworks to enable design ideas to be realized as architectural proposals. (KTS)

L6.5 (Communication)
Communicate relatively complex architectural ideas and proposals clearly and effectively using a range of current visual and written media selected through a self-directed process of critical evaluation (PPP) (GA).

L6.6 (Reflective practice and learning needs)
Manage your individual learning needs in the context of self-directed study, plan graduate practice opportunities and understand the personal responsibility required for further professional education. (KTS) (GA)

L6.7 (Social and ethical awareness)
Critically evaluate design ideas and proposals in the light of your ethical responsibilities and appraise your experience of architectural practice against current professional codes of conduct (PPP)(GA).

L6.8 (Professional practice knowledge)
Describe the role of the architect in practice and the construction industry and the professional qualities needed for decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances through the examination of professional practice management. (KU)

How will you learn?

The learning and the teaching of the course
Activities across the four main areas of the programme include:

Design studio

Design is taught through studio discussions, seminars, individual and group tutorials, and workshops, all focused on supporting students with the development of their project work. There is specialized support in the use of computers, drafting and representational techniques, and workshop equipment. Teaching is enriched with studio visits to sites, exhibitions, galleries and projects, and optional field trips. Critical discourse (‘crits’) involves discussion and feedback at interim and final stages of project work: these combine focused teaching input with formative assessment of student work.

Students learn and progress by attending studio sessions and through developing design project work that involves learning to conceptualise, make architectural proposals and evaluate them, guided by Studio Tutors. Students learn to respond to the critical appraisal of their work in tutorials and crits (formative assessment), research and integrate ideas and knowledge gained through co-requisite modules and peer and tutor led studio investigations and discussions. Students are encouraged to use creative approaches supported by extensive iterative design processes using a wide range of media. The level of self-directed learning increases through the course.

Cultural Context (History, Theory and Contemporary issues)

Students are taught in lectures, seminars, and individual and group tutorials.
Students learn by attending teaching session; undertaking self-directed reading, writing and research under tutor support and guidance, and progressing with coursework set by tutors. Learning is further developed through presenting and communicating formative work and research proposals to tutors and peers, and through critically appraising the work of peers. The level of self-directed learning increases through the course.

Technical studies

Technical studies is taught through lectures, seminars, individual and group tutorials, workshops, and technical crits that combine focused teaching input with formative assessment of student work.
Students learn by attending teaching sessions; undertaking self-directed reading, making building and construction site visits, attending construction site progress meetings and progressing with coursework and project work set by tutors. Investigation and independent study into areas of technical interest is undertaken with tutor support and guidance. Learning is further developed through presenting and communicating formative work and research proposals to tutors and peers, and through critically appraising the work of their peers. The level of self-directed learning increases through the course.

Preparation for Professional Practice

Students are taught through lectures, workshops and presentations that combine focused teaching input with formative assessment of student work.
Students learn by attending teaching sessions, and undertaking coursework set by tutors or through a period of work experience or mentoring in industry. They progress by recording, presenting and communicating their experience to tutors and peers. Through their Personal Development Plan (PDP), students reflect upon their progress over the course of their studies, consider their career opportunities and prepare for graduate employment.

How will you be assessed?

Assessment of the student's learning at a formative stage is through crits and presentations, interim portfolio submissions, and the review of written work. Summative assessment includes final portfolio submissions, 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 of submitted coursework.
At each level of the course for design-based modules, Design Studio Leaders are involved in a marking moderation process during Portfolio Reviews to ensure parity of grading. Leaders are therefore familiar with the work of all Studios in the year, allowing for variations in content and complexity between sites and briefs to be carefully evaluated. A panel of External Examiners ratifies grades at the end of the academic year.

Employment and further study opportunities

London offers unrivalled opportunities for students seeking full and part-time employment in the field.
As an intrinsic part of the Site Diary module (level 5), students meet practitioners and gain direct experience of professional site practices. In the Preparing for Practice module (level 6) students may undertake 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 course, 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:

- Direct progress to further academic studies at Master's level in a specialized field.
- A minimum of one year's practical training before applying for postgraduate architectural studies at March level (RIBA Part II). During this time students must keep a Personal Experience Development Record (PEDR). Students are encouraged to enroll on the Year Out Short Course that provides support and guidance for students in employment and those still looking for work. The Career Development Centre offers guidance and job opportunity notices to graduates.
- Employment in allied fields of design and construction.

University of Westminster graduates will be able to demonstrate the following five Graduate Attributes:

- Critical and creative thinkers
- Literate and effective communicator
- Entrepreneurial
- Global in outlook and engaged in communities

- Social, ethically and environmentally aware

University of Westminster courses capitalise on the benefits that London as a global city and as a major creative, intellectual and technology hub has to offer for the learning environment and experience of our students.

The BA (Hons) Architecture course aims to create graduates who are:

Creative and critical thinkers:
Creative and critical thinking and are embodied in the creative skills that are central to architectural design. The graduate is able to:

- Contribute to the collaborative practice of design.
- Respond creatively to problematic scenarios and has the creative capacities to develop new approaches to resolving practical problems and scenarios using conceptual level thinking.
- Use a critical thinking approach to guide creative practice, grounding design synthesis in analysis and evaluation.

How is this learned?

- Design is an iterative, process shifting dynamically along range of creative and critical actions from initial research through to synthesis and back again. The design process initiates and guides continuous activities of self-directed learning and knowledge acquisition. Design is learned through practicing and is central to Design Studio.
- Learning to design involves the development of both intuitive and rational analytical skills, combining creative and critical thinking. It involves the simultaneous resolution of multi-dimensional criteria through a conceptual level approach.
- Presentations and crits are opportunities for reflexive thinking on the creative and critical process of design itself.

Literate and effective communicators:
The capacity to represent and communicate architectural ideas and proposals is key to the practice of architecture. The graduate:

- Communicates architectural proposals using representational techniques informed by current methodologies.
- Shares architectural ideas and approaches through oral and written form in a range of contexts from colleagues and collaborators through to formal presentation scenarios.

How is this learned?

- Visual presentations supported by oral communication are key elements of learning in design studio modules. Formative assessments may involve the explication of developing design coursework within an exploratory mode of learning to make and receive judgments, or the presentation of completed design proposals in formats that emulate professional practice contexts.
- The cultural context elements of the course develop capacities to communicate through dialogue, oral presentation and critical writing.

Entrepreneurial:
Architectural practice reflects many characteristics of entrepreneurship.
The graduate:

- Understands the value of creative thinking as part of a resourceful approach to initiating, identifying and responding to practical opportunities.
- Evaluates their skills and abilities and suitability for roles through reflexive practice capacities.
- Understands the complexity of developing ideas through to realization.

How is this learned?

- Design Studio encourages students to develop creative and inventive approaches grounded in personal investment and values.
- The value of knowledge and skills and the motivation for gaining them is understood in the context of practical action and professional practice.

- Design is taught in small studio groups that encourage open-ended learning and student initiated opportunities.

Global in outlook and engaged in communities:
The graduate:
- Is aware of the global context of architectural practice and architectural traditions.
- Has a developed understanding of the professional community of architecture and the opportunities for engagement within it.
- Understands the importance of cultural values and diversity and is able to apply creative and critical approaches to engaging with users and community contexts.

How is this learned?
- Project based learning requires engagement through research with users and community contexts, often directly through first hand contacts and research.
- Architecture is grounded in a global knowledge base encompassing histories, technologies and traditions; the ideas and approaches that flow from them are vital to architectural practice. Students develop a familiarity with this context throughout the course and through their own developing design practice.
- Field trips and formal exchange programmes give students the opportunity to directly experience the wider community of architecture, its built heritage and current endeavours.
- The diversity of our architecture student community is reflected in the range of values and approaches to their researches and work.

Social, ethically and environmentally aware
The graduate:
- Understands their ethical responsibilities and is aware of the current professional codes of conduct and is able to relate them to architectural practice.
- Is aware of the environmental impact of design decisions and is able to identify and implement processes to achieve ecologically sustainable designs.
- Understands the social responsibilities of architectural practice and the role it can play supporting social change.

How is this learned?
- Engagement with professional practice during the course introduces students to the ethical and professional codes of conduct.
- Design studio challenges students to consider the social, cultural and environmental impact of their design practice, and teaches them learn how to appraise approaches and decisions.

Course structure

This section shows the core modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Undergraduate students study 120 credits per year. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Credit Level 4				
Module code	**Module title**	**Status**	**UK credit**	**ECTS**
4ARCH010W	DES1A: Introduction to Design and Skills	Core	40	20
4ARCH011W	DES1B: Design, Materials and Fabrication	Core	40	20
4ARCH008W	CC1: A History of Architecture	Core	20	10
4ARCH009W	TS1: Introduction to Technical Studies	Core	20	10
Award of Certificate of Higher Education available				

Credit Level 5				
Module code	**Module title**	**Status**	**UK credit**	**ECTS**
5ARCH009W	DES2A: Design and the Environment	Core	40	20
5ARCH010W	DES2B: Design and Detail	Core	40	20
5ARCH006W	CC2: Architectural History and Urbanism	Core	20	10
5ARCH011W	TS2: Site Diary	Core	20	10
Award of Diploma of Higher Education				
Credit Level 6				
Module code	**Module title**	**Status**	**UK credit**	**ECTS**
6ARCH009W	DES3A: Design and Technical Exploration	Core	40	20
6ARCH010W	DES3B: Major Design Project	Core	40	20
6ARCH008W	CC3: Illustrated Research Essay	Core	20	10
6ARCH011W	PS3: Preparing for Practice	Core	20	10
Award of BA Honours (RIBA Part I)				

Professional Body Accreditation or other external references

Students and graduates are eligible to become student members of the RIBA (free) with significant membership benefits including free access to the British Architectural Library (8 minutes walk from the Marylebone Campus). Details can be found at:
architecture.com/RIBA/JoinTheRIBA/Individuals/StudentMembership/RIBAStudentmembership.aspx
The course is validated by the RIBA and prescribed by the ARB. Graduates gain exemption from the RIBA Part I examination.

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations

Course specific regulations

- **Condoned Credit at Level 4**
  As a result of 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, 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).

How will you be supported in your studies?

Course Management

The management structure supporting the course is as follows:

- The Year Heads are responsible for coordinating design studio tutoring and studio facilities; coordinating personal tutoring; general teaching and learning issues and design module leadership; student induction and orientation.
- The Course Leader is responsible for coordinating the overall management of the course, the development of the curriculum; admissions and marketing.
- The Head of Department holds overall responsibility for the course, and for the other courses offered by the Department of Architecture.
- The Dean of Faculty holds overall responsibility for the Departments within the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment.
- The Head of Personal Tutoring is responsible for coordinating the provision of pastoral care.

Academic Support

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Faculty Registry Office. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. 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

Learning Support

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students[1] 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.

Support Services

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

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2000. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

[1] Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

The course is also 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 Course Committees, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. Each Faculty puts in to place an action plan. This may for example include making changes on the way the module is taught, assessed or even how the course is structured in order to improve the course, in such cases an approval process is in place.

A Course review takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with review panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years e.g. from Course Committees is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through Course Committees students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Student representatives are elected to Committee to expressly represent the views of their peer. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the student representatives.

- Each Faculty also has its own Faculty Student Forum with student representatives; this enables wider discussions across the Faculty. Student representatives are also represented on key Faculty and university committees.

- All students are invited to complete a 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 seeks the opinions of students about their course and University experience. Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.