Programme Specification: Architecture (MArch), RIBA Part 2

Course record information

Name and level of final award	• Master of Architecture - Master of Architecture (RIPart 2) The award is Bologna FQ-EHEA first cycle degree or diploma compatible
Name and level of intermediate awards	
Awarding body/institution	University of Westminster
Teaching institution	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution	Recognised Body
Location of delivery	Primary: Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
QAA subject benchmarking group(s)	Subject Benchmark Statement for Architecture 2020 QAA Subject Benchmark Statements
Professional statutory or regulatory body	Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Architects Registration Board (ARB)
Westminster course title, mode of attendance and standard length	• Master of Architecture (RIBA Part 2) FT, Full-time, September start - 2 years standard length
Valid for cohorts	From 2023/4 for both Level 6, and Level 7

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: https://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/how-to-apply

Recognition of Prior Learning

Applicants with prior certificated or experiential learning at the same level of the qualification for which they wish to apply are advised to visit the following page for further information:

https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/guides-and-policies/student-matters/recognition-of-prior-learning

Aims of the programme

Consisting of two years full time study (levels 6 & 7), the MArch fulfils the RIBA / ARB Criteria and regulatory framework for architectural registration which allows it to offer Exemption from the Part 2 Examination. It also gives academic enhancement to the vocational requirements set out by these professional bodies.

The programme is designed to reflect the varied backgrounds and interests of the entrants as well as the pluralist nature of the subject. Building on their previous studies and experience, students are provided with a framework through which to direct their studies towards the interests and themes that will shape their identity as architectural designers and practitioners.

The core aims of the Master of Architecture are:

- To meet the professional requirements of architecture with a broader knowledge and understanding of the subject than that gained at undergraduate / Part 1 level, as well as to enable critical reflection by students on the experience that they gained in their first period of practical training;

- To meet the intellectual aspirations of the subject of architecture, and to impart a deeper knowledge and understanding and ability that allows students to engage in increasingly self-directed and mature study, including aspects of subject specialism and original research;

- To include and teach knowledge and skills which enable the successful student to transfer to a further period of practical training experience and professional registration, and/or to progress to an MA course or higher degree in a specialist area of architecture or a cognate subject.

The course has holistic purpose and legible shape, which broadly speaking distinguishes between two types of learning (cognitive and tacit knowledge) acquired in parallel via aligned but not necessarily integrated studio and non-studio modules (named hereafter as 'Architectural Productions' and 'Architectural Reflections'). Comprehensive understanding achieved through interaction between these two domains of learning is the culminating ambition of the course. This learning ambition fulfils the QA code descriptor for Masters courses and Subject Benchmark Statement for integrated Masters programme in architecture.

The Graduate Attributes for RIBA/ARB Part 2 are:

- Ability to generate complex design proposals showing understanding of current architectural issues, originality in the application of subject knowledge and, where appropriate, to test new hypotheses and speculations. (GA2.1)

- Ability to evaluate and apply a comprehensive range of visual, oral and written media to test, analyse, critically appraise and explain design proposals. (GA2.2)

- Ability to evaluate materials, processes and techniques that apply to complex architectural designs and building construction, and to integrate these into practicable design proposals. (GA2.3)

- Critical understanding of how knowledge is advanced through research to produce clear, logically argued and original written work relating to architectural culture, theory and design. (GA2.4)

- Understanding of the context of the architect and the construction industry, including the architect's role in the processes of procurement and building production, and under legislation. (GA2.5)

- Problem solving skills, professional judgment, and ability to take the initiative and make appropriate decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances. (GA2.6)

- Ability to identify individual learning needs and understand the personal responsibility required to prepare for qualification as an architect. (GA2.7)

Employment and further study opportunities

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 Graduate Attributes fall into five general categories that frame academic and professional learning in terms of the personal characteristics specified below.

GA.1 Critical and creative thinkers

- Graduates should have a strong foundation in critical thinking in their discipline/field and be able to demonstrate the capability to think creatively.

GA.2 Literate and effective communicator

- Graduates should be digitally literate, able to apply to IT and other technologies within their subject context and should be effective communicators.

GA.3 Entrepreneurial

- Graduates should be entrepreneurial, enterprising in outlook and be active problem-solvers able to work collaboratively as part of a team.
- Graduates should be able to self evaluate and manage their own performance and digital identity.

GA.4 Global in outlook and engaged in communities

- Graduates should have a global perspective and respect diversity.

GA.5 Social, ethically and environmentally aware

- Graduates should understand environmental, economic, social and/or cultural issues and impacts of practice in their field.
- Aware of the finite nature of resources and systems.
- Future and Resilience Focussed.

Most students who complete the Master of Architecture with ARB/RIBA Part 2 Exemption progress on to working in architectural offices, and, subsequent to taking the Part 3 Examination, become registered architects. Some students progress to take Masters or PhD degrees, and then go into research and/or teaching. Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. employability skills. The MArch course is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring students benefit from the following:

- Career development skills which are embedded in all courses.
- Opportunities for part-time work, and work-related learning activities are widely available to students.
- The course team includes many practising architects and researchers involved in practice-led research and development.
- 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 student.

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 6 course learning outcomes: upon completion of Level 6 you will be able to:

- L6.01 Problem Solving: Precise articulation of a question, problem or hypothesis, derived from a broad and logical investigation. (PPP)

- L6.02 Agenda Building: Ability to identify individual learning needs and specific entry points into creative practice and research inquiry. (KU GA)

- L6.03 Material Technique: Utilise digital fabrication to achieve interaction between ideas, research and new techniques of making. (KU PPP)

- L6.04 Multi-Media Approach: An ability to combine verbal and visual media to articulate the link between design thinking and traditional scholarship. (GA)

- L6.05 Cultural Context: Understand the relevance of cultural inquiry, and to translate this into a disciplinary-specific language that is comprehensible to different audiences. (KU)

- L6.06 Critical Practices: Ability to critique and appraise received professional conventions and practices. (GA PPP)

- L6.07 Digital Design: Ability to successfully apply digital media as part of a design process; and in a critical and informed manner. (KU PPP)

- L6.08 Technical and Environmental Strategies: Ability to apply technical knowledge and resources to creatively engage with environmentally sustainability, and structural and material performance in architecture. (KU)

Level 7 course learning outcomes: upon completion of Level 7 you will be able to:

- L7.01 Synthetic Judgement: The ability to translate cognitive, abstract knowledge into tacit understanding, situated know-how, and real-world problem-solving. (PPP)

- L7.02 Leadership and Research: Ability to undertake self-directed study, and engage with group activities, providing communication, direction and organisational input as and when required. (GA PPP)

- L7.03 Real-World Engagement: The ability to engage through research and design with relevant contemporary issues and real-world contexts including a broad community of producers, stakeholders, public funding streams and entrepreneurial initiatives. (GA PPP)

- L7.04 Agenda Building: Ability to analyse current trends and deficiencies in a cultural or technological context, and to identify potential opportunities for intervention and active experimentation. (PPP)

- L7.05 Design Research: Ability to translate research-based inquiry into research-led design processes; and to articulate a clearly identified design thesis that can be tested against the emerging cultural, technological and environmental needs of society and professional practice. (KU PPP KTS)

- L7.06 Informed Design: the ability to integrate knowledge of conventional and emerging principles of architectural design, together with a broad range of technological, professional and historical subjects associated with architecture culture. (KU PPP KTS)

- L7.07 Responding to Criticism: Ability to constructively absorb feedback from tutors, peers and experts and use this to inform and develop coherent arguments and proposals. (KTS CS)

- L7.08 Critical Practices: The ability to explore and challenge the boundaries of existing disciplinary practices; and to evaluate and interpret their relevance and currency within a professional and disciplinary context. (GA PPP)

- L7.09 Professionalism and Employability: Ability to compare and judge individual academic output against professional standards, and to identify gaps and opportunities within existing disciplinary practices. (PPP KTS)

- L7.10 Critical Discourse: Ability to construct sophisticated and complex arguments, expressed verbally and through

illustrated text. (GA PPP KTS)

- L7.11 Ethical Practice: Ability to understand the ethical impact of design and research practices in relation culture, society and environmental sustainability. (GA PPP)

How will you learn?

Learning methods

The MArch fosters a caring learning environment in which students are encouraged to:

- Question received knowledge.

- Evaluate issues within a critical and theoretical framework.

- Think in a reflective way, and be increasingly capable of projective and speculative thought.

- Learn through practice (as in the sense of 'learning by doing' referred to here as "tacit knowledge" and "reflective practice").

- Make decisions at the appropriate time.

- Be multi-skilled and flexible in their approach.

- Be good communicators, both verbally and textually.

- Work in teams whenever necessary.

Teaching methods

The 'studio' environment is central to the teaching of architecture, and all design projects are carried out within its context. Replicating the conditions under which projects are carried out in practice is not fully achievable in an academic environment. Design Studio projects do not therefore aim to mimic proposals in the commercial world but to take advantage of their setting within the academic world to offer a learning vehicle, which, while informed by the world outside, allows for exploration of values, and experimentation with processes. A broad range of design projects are offered – and a broad range of responses encouraged. The level and nature of outcomes for the Design Studio Year 1 module are intentionally different to those in Design Studio Year 2, even though students from both years work alongside each other. The patterns of teaching/learning on the MArch, and through which the Professional Criteria are met, are classifiable into generic types.

Design Studio, know as 'Architectural Productions I & II': Typically this consists of reviews, seminars, 1:1 and group discussions, tutorials, and portfolio instruction.

Alongside design sits is a series of seven non-studio, subject-led, areas of study (four in year one, three in year two) clustered together as 'Architectural Reflections I & II' respectively -

Digital Design: Technical instruction/lectures, supervised practical work.

Critical Practices: Lectures, group discussion, workshops.

Applied Technical Studies 1 and 2: Lectures, seminars, tutorials / reviews.

History and Theory / Dissertation: Seminars, lectures, group and individual tutorials.

Strategic Report: Lectures, seminars, group and individual tutorials.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Responding to the diverse city in which we are based, we are committed to the inclusivity and accessibility of our course. We are proud of our diverse student cohorts and see this diversity as one of our attributes. We encourage applications from students from the broadest possible range of backgrounds, as well as adopting best practice to ensure that our study resources, assessments and approach to learning and teaching are as inclusive as possible:

The course utilises a wide variety of learning and teaching methods including group work, seminar discussions, site/museum visits and practical design/making workshops. Central to this is the design studio system which brings together students from both levels of the course. Along with other thematically led seminar groups, the design studios provide a unique mix of methodologies and approaches, as well as an opportunity for more culturally inclusive and diverse content. Extending through many aspects of the course this element of choice enables students to make selections that reflect their individual strengths, and which recognise their unique identity as learners. Seminar and studio

groups also provide an environment in which students can work together on group assignments and actively discuss and debate contemporary issues. In this context they can also draw on, and discuss, their own experience or cultural heritage, and thereby challenge stereotypes and foster greater understanding. Guest speakers and other contributors are selected wherever possible to reflect a broad range of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, disability, age and gender.

The MArch course also seeks to engage with disability and neurodivergence through its content and to achieve broader engagement with diversity. Study materials are varied in both media and content and are shared via appropriate online platforms including Blackboard and Panopto to provide the greatest possible level of accessibility. We are actively decolonising reading lists and the wider curriculum. Lectures and other content are chosen to reflect a wide range of local and global issues as well as diverse forms of practice; and to explicitly address postcolonial perspectives. Lectures are also recorded, and key documents offered in modifiable formats. Where possible these documents are provided in advance and remain available for future reference.

Assessment is based entirely on coursework produced in a diverse range of formats with no timed assessments. These largely take the form of project portfolios containing drawings, models, moving image etc. as well as more conventional forms of written assessment. Students are encouraged to develop individual projects that build on their specific strengths, interests, and cultural perspective. Regular formative assessments and feedback through crits and tutorials within the context of studio and seminar groups also provide an environment in which the individual needs of each student can be supported. And a Personal Development Plan also allows them to reflect on their ambitions for the course and beyond.

Assessment methods

Assessment is based entirely on coursework produced in a diverse range of formats with no timed assessments:

<u>Architectural Productions</u>

Design Studio: design portfolio – drawings, models, multi-media.

<u>Architectural Reflections</u>

Digital Design: annotated graphic portfolio.

Critical Practices: essays and reports.

Applied Technical Studies 1 and 2: drawings and reports.

History and Theory / Dissertation: seminar, essays, dissertation.

Strategic Report: written report.

Assessment for each piece of coursework is co-ordinated by the relevant Module Leader. In accordance with University Regulations, the pass mark for Level 6 modules is 40%, and 50% for Level 7.

There is an extensive process of cross-reviewing (leading to formative feedback), interstudio marking, moderation, and synoptic assessment, combinations of which lead to summative feedback. The course thus offers a combination of assessment types that aims to support student progress. Also, all March II students are required to attend a viva interview with an external examiner as part of the final assessment.

All assessment mediates between learning outcomes and professional standards. As such assessment vehicles measure knowledge acquisition and understanding of pedagogical principles related to the primary goal of the MArch programme – reflective practice.

Graduate Attribute	Evident in Course Outcomes
Critical and creative thinker	L6.01, L6.02, L6.03, L6.04, L6.06, L6.07, L6.08, L7.04, L7.05, L7.06, L7.07, L7.08, L7.09, L7.10
Literate and effective communicator	L6.03, L6.04, L6.05, L6.06, L6.07, L7.02, L7.07, L7.10
Entrepreneurial	L6.03, L7.01, L7.02, L7.03, L7.04
Global in outlook and engaged in communities	L6.05, L7.01, L7.03, L7.05, L7.06, L7.08, L7.11
Socially, ethically and environmentally aware	L6.05, L6.06, L6.08, L7.01, L7.03, L7.05, L7.08, L7.09, L7.11

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. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Modules are described as:

- **Core** modules are compulsory and must be undertaken by all students on the course.

- **Option** modules give you a choice of modules and are normally related to your subject area.

- **Electives**: are modules from across the either the whole University or your College. Such modules allow you to broaden your academic experience. For example, where electives are indicated you may choose to commence the study of a foreign language alongside your course modules (and take this through to the final year), thereby adding further value to your degree.

- Additional information may also be included above each level for example where you must choose one of two specific modules.

Modules

Level 4

Module Code	Module Title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
no modules for this level				

Level 5

Module Code	Module Title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
no modules for this level				

Level 6

6ARCH001W Architectural Productions I
Incorporating 2 equally-weighted components

Design & Research 1
Design & Research 2

6ARCH002W Architectural Reflections I
Incorporating 4 equally-weighted components

Digital Design
Critical Practices
Applied Technical Studies 1
History and Theory

Module Code	Module Title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
6ARCH001W	Architectural Productions I	Core	60	30
6ARCH002W	Architectural Reflections I	Core	60	30

Level 7

7ARCH022W Architectural Productions II
Incorporating 2 equally weighted components

Design Hypothesis
Design Thesis

7ARCH023W Architectural Reflections II
Incorporating 3 components weighted 50% / 25% / 25%

Dissertation
Applied Technical Studies 2
Strategic Report

Module Code	Module Title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
7ARCH022W	Architectural Productions II	Core	60	30
7ARCH023W	Architectural Reflections II	Core	60	30

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. In addition, timetabling and limited spaces may mean you cannot register for your first choice of option modules.

Professional body accreditation or other external references

The course is validated by the RIBA and prescribed by the ARB. Graduates gain exemption from the RIBA Part 2 examination.

Course management

The management structure of the course is as follows:

- Studio and component leaders, as well as dissertation supervisors and other tutors play a significant role in the delivery of the course. This includes formulating the detailed content of the teaching and devising project briefs within the framework provided by the course modules.

- Supported by module and component leaders, the course leader is responsible for coordinating the overall management of the course, including the development of the curriculum, assessments and timetabling.

- In addition, the MArch runs a student rep system that allows regular feedback and provides students with a voice in the management and future development of the course.

- The Senior Tutor, or head of personal tutoring, hold responsibility for coordinating the provision of pastoral care.

- The Head of School, supported by Assistant Heads of School, holds overall responsibility for the course offered by the School of Architecture and Cities.

- The Head of College holds overall responsibility for the Schools within the College.

Academic regulations

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

Course specific regulations apply to some courses.

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 Campus Registry. 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. Further information on Blackboard can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/when-you-arrive/blackboard

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. Further information on the Academic Learning Development Centre can be found at westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students1 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 in their College. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student and Academic Services 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. Further information on the advice available to students can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/student-advice

The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University. Further information on UWSU can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/students-union

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

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel. University Panels normally include internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university. a representative from industry and a Student Advisor.

The course is also monitored each year by the College 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 evidence of student surveys, student progression and achievement and reports from external examiners, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the course and make changes where necessary.

A Course revalidation 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 revalidation panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years 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 student engagement activities at Course/Module level, students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Course representatives are elected to expressly represent the views of their peers. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the course representatives.
- There are also School Representatives appointed jointly by the University and the Students' Union who meet with senior School staff to discuss wider issues affecting student experience across the School. Student representatives are also represented on key College 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.
- Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.

Additional Details

Course-Specific Regulations

Award of a Masters in Architecture (MArch)

To be eligible for the award of a Master's in Architecture, a student must have:

- Passed all modules (obtained a minimum of 120 credits at level 6 and a minimum of 120 credits at level 7).
- Attempted modules worth no more than 360 credits in total (max. 180 credits level 6 and 240 credits level 7). A student may therefore be permitted to retake one 60 credit module at each level; or two at level 7 (provided they have not already retaken a module at level 6).

The University may award a Masters degree with Merit to a student where an average of at least 60% has been achieved in modules at Level 7.

The University may award a Masters degree with Distinction to a student where an average of at least 70% has been achieved in modules at Level 7.

Additionally the following course-specific regulations apply:

- To progress [from level 6 to 7] a minimum of 60 credits are required to be passed (Architectural Productions 1), and at least 6 of the assessment components for Architectural Reflections 1 must also be passed by the end of the July reassessment period.
- A student who has had a referral/retake in their Level 6 modules will still be eligible for a Merit or Distinction according to the marks for their Level 7 modules. However, any student who has a referral/retake in any of their Level 7 modules will be ineligible for either a Merit or Distinction.