

University of Cambridge: Programme Specifications

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ARCHITECTURE TRIPOS

1 Awarding body	University of Cambridge
2 Teaching institution	Department of Architecture
3 Accreditation details	Architects Registration Board (ARB); Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
4 Name of final award	BA (Hons) and ARB/RIBA Part 1
5 Programme title	Architecture
6 UCAS code	K100
7 JACS code(s)	K100
8 Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	Architecture
9 Qualifications framework level	6 (Honours)
10 Date specification produced/ last revised	May 2011
11 Date specification last reviewed	May 2013

Teaching Provision and Facilities

There are 13 UTOs in the Department, all of whom contribute to lecture courses; a further UTO who is a joint appointment in the Faculty gives lectures; a wide range of specialist contributors participate in lecture courses; some UTOs teach in the studios and the Department has a number of visiting studio teachers (currently 18 in number), who are practising architects and who run or assist in studio teaching; studio reviews and crits are attended by critics who are practising architects; student one-to-one supervision takes place in the studio and additional teaching is provided by the Colleges, who employ UTOs, graduate students etc. to provide supervision.

Undergraduate teaching takes place in the main Faculty premises, shared with the Department of History of Art, at 1-5 Scroope Terrace. The two Departments also share a Faculty Library of approximately 30,000 volumes. Students are provided with a work space in the studios, and have access to computers and network facilities throughout.

Educational aims of programme

The programme aims to:

1. produce graduates equipped to play leading roles in the architectural profession, in related areas of design and construction, and in scholarship;
2. emphasise an understanding of architecture in its cultural context.

Programme outcomes

The programme establishes both the basis for a body of technical, historical and theoretical knowledge and applies this knowledge to the study of the principal questions of building and the built environment. Design is the core discipline in architectural education and studio project work forms the major educational activity throughout the course. Students are encouraged to discover how the requirements of project work can be elicited, interpreted and translated into a design proposal by considering their complete cultural context and evolving a form appropriate to them. The application of knowledge acquired through lectures is central in this process. The programme outcomes have reference to the benchmark statement for Architecture and the RIBA/ARB Criteria for validation.

A Knowledge and understanding

Students gain a knowledge and understanding of:

1. Histories and theories of architecture, urban design and landscape design and their relevance to the design process.
2. Fundamental principles of building technologies (alternative materials, processes and techniques) to do with environmental design, construction methods and structural design and how they may be integrated in design proposals.
3. Regulatory frameworks and codes of practice that guide building construction.
4. The influences of the built environment on the design of individual buildings, urban planning concepts, the structure of past and present societies and wider global issues.
5. How buildings are designed and built in the context of practice and the construction industry, the professional qualities needed for decision making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.
6. The role of the architect in society and the professional and ethical responsibilities of architects.

Teaching/Learning methods and strategies

Acquisition of 1, 2, 4 and 5 is through a combination of lectures, seminars, small group supervisions, classes, site visits, coursework and project work throughout the course, and through a supervised dissertation in year 3.

Acquisition of 3 and 5 is through lectures, seminars, small group teaching and site visits throughout the course.

Acquisition of 5 and 6 is through site visits, seminars, small group supervisions, and coursework in relation to a series of case studies analysed in years 2 and 3, but students are introduced to these issues from year 1 in project work and in lectures and classes.

Throughout the course students are encouraged to undertake independent reading and research to supplement and consolidate what is being taught/learnt and to broaden their individual knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Assessment

Testing of the knowledge base is through a combination of written examinations (1-6), graded essays(1 and 4), a dissertation (any of 1-6) and assessed coursework in the form of case study reports (2-6), and technical design exercises, presentations and reports (2-3). Evidence of a good grasp of the knowledge base and how it influences design decisions is also assessed during the examination of studio project work (1, 2, 4, 5).

Skills and other attributes

The project work set within the studio course is central to the acquisition of the intellectual, practical and transferable skills outlined below. The studio is the focus for both individual and collective activity: students learn from one-to-one supervision, from each other and from regular reviews by teaching staff and external critics at which the whole studio is present. Project work draws on the knowledge acquired in the other forms of teaching previously outlined (and referred to in section 11), and provides a spur to pursuing more focused interests.

B Intellectual thinking skills – students are able to:

1. Address the issues raised by analysis of both the brief and the physical, social and cultural context of an architectural project, and weigh up how such concerns should inform the development and refinement of design proposals
2. Reflect upon and explore a variety of design ideas and ambitions and investigate how they can be articulated and refined in the design process;
3. Establish a coherent argument for a particular design strategy by demonstrating how an integrated response to technical, social and aesthetic concerns has determined design strategy;
4. Evaluate and learn from the work of others :
5. Form considered judgements about the spatial, technical, aesthetic and social qualities of a design with reference to the wider physical, political and cultural environment ;
6. Plan, conduct and write up a programme of individual supervised research.

Teaching and learning methods and strategies

Skills 1-5 are acquired and developed through the project work set in the studio course. Skills 4 and 5 are also encouraged and exercised in seminar discussions and in coursework. Research and writing skills (6) are developed through essays presented in supervisions (small group teaching) and the individually supervised dissertation exercise of year 3. The mathematical and analytical skills required to address technical issues are honed via the examples and problems set by lecturers in technical courses.

Assessment

The maturity of skill in design is assessed through the examination of the portfolio of studio project work. Analytical skills are assessed through the examination of both project work, coursework reports and written examinations.

Skill 6 is assessed principally through the examination of the year 3 dissertation.

C Practical skills – students are able to:

1. Develop coherent inventive architectural designs that integrate spatial thinking with thinking on technical, historical, and socio-cultural issues.
2. Produce drawings and models using the conventions of architectural representation in appropriate media to explore, test and convincingly communicate design ideas.

3. Develop proposals that take account of the codes of practice and health and safety considerations that guide design.
4. Work collaboratively as part of a team.
5. Prepare and compose brief technical reports and technical presentations.
6. Exercise informed judgements in the development of sustainable design.
7. Use technical, historical and theoretical literature effectively in architectural research.
8. Use IT skills in a relevant and creative manner for design, analysis and communication.

Teaching and learning methods and strategies

Practical skills are developed principally through studio project work, coursework and through the teaching and learning programme outlined above (and in section 11).

Skill 1 is taught and developed via studio project work.

Skills 2 and 9 are taught, explored and developed via studio project work, studio-based representation classes in year 1, and CAD classes and coursework in years 1 and 2, and the dissertation of year 3.

Skill 3 is taught in lectures and honed in project work.

Skill 4 is acquired via group project work in studio and coursework assignments.

Skill 5 is taught via classes in year 1 and feedback on reports written and presentations made as part of coursework assignments.

Skill 6 is taught through lectures, site-visits, and explored and developed through studio project work.

Skill 7 is taught and developed through essays, coursework assignments and the dissertation exercise of year 3.

Skill 8 is taught and developed through CAD classes, coursework, project work and the dissertation of year 3.

Assessment

Practical skills are assessed through the examination of studio project work, coursework presentations and reports, and the year 3 dissertation.

D Transferable skills – students are able to:

1. Communicate effectively in writing, verbally and through drawings and models;
2. Transfer techniques and solutions from one field of architecture to another;
3. Appraise and manage time and resources;
4. Communicate with and respond appropriately to advice from expert consultants;
5. Apply representational and analytical skills in the description and appraisal of design issues and solutions;
6. Adopt an open-minded approach in the appraisal of and response to design issues, requirements and opportunities;
7. Work autonomously in a self-directed manner;
8. Listen and critically respond to the views of others;
9. Respond to a broad constituency of interests and sensitively address social and ethical concerns.

Teaching and learning methods and strategies

Transferable skills are developed through the teaching and learning programme outlined above (and in section 11).

Skill 1 is taught through feedback on presentations, essays, coursework reports and project work.

Skill 2 is acquired as a result of having to consider architectural problems at a range of scales and in a range of cultural contexts in project work.

Skills 3, 6 and 7 are introduced and discussed in studio and in supervisions (small group teaching) in year 1 and developed via studio project work throughout the course and via the dissertation of year 3.

Skills 4 and 5 are developed through project work and coursework assignments.

Skills 8 and 9 are explicitly addressed in the discussion of comparative examples in group reviews of project work.

Assessment

Skills 1, 6, 8 and 9 are assessed primarily through written and portfolio examinations.

Skill 4 is assessed through portfolio examination.

Skills 5, 6 and 9 are assessed through coursework reports, written examinations and the examination of studio project work.

The other skills are not formally assessed.

Programme structures and features and award requirements

The programme is only offered as a full time course, which lasts for three years and leads to the BA (Hons) degree and, subject to satisfactory completion of the studio work, to exemption from ARB/RIBA Part1.

Tripes Part IA

All students take the same studio and lecture courses leading to portfolio examination (Studio - worth 60% of the overall mark) and written examinations in connection with the five lecture courses (worth 40% of the overall mark) at the end of their first year:

- Studio
- Introduction to the histories and theories of Architecture to 1800
- Introduction to the histories and theories of Architecture from 1800 to the present day
- Fundamental principles of Construction
- Fundamental principles of Structural Design
- Fundamental principles of Environmental Design

Technical coursework counts for 40% of the mark in the Construction paper.

Technical coursework counts for 40% of the mark in the Environment paper.

Technical coursework counts for 40% of the mark in the Structures paper.

Progression requirements

A minimum of a studio pass (40%) in the portfolio examination and (at the discretion of the examiners) a pass (40%) in each of the written papers in addition to an aggregate pass-mark overall.

Outcomes developed and assessed: A1-6, B 1-2, C 2, 4-5, D 1-3, 5-8

Tripes Part IB

Students are offered a choice of two studios. In addition to the Studio work (worth 50% of overall mark) and related technical coursework (worth 10% of overall mark), a number of lecture courses and classes lead to five written examinations (worth 40% of the overall mark) at the end of the second year:

- Studio
- Essays on the history and theory of architecture, urbanism and design
- The history and theory of architecture, urbanism and design
- Principles of Construction
- Principles of Structural Design
- Principles of Environmental Design

The technical description and analysis of the studio project work comprises Construction, Environment and Structures coursework that counts for 10% of the overall grade. Key elements of the portfolio are also expected to address environmental design, construction and structures issues. Two coursework essays count for 100% of the mark in Paper 1.

Progression requirements

Minimum of a studio pass (40%) in the portfolio examination and, at the discretion of the examiners, a pass (40%) in each of the written papers in addition to an aggregate pass-mark overall.

Outcomes developed and assessed: A 1-6, B 1-4, C 1-2, 4-5, D 1-8.

Tripas Part II

Students are offered a choice of three different Studio courses whose portfolio work is examined separately at the end of the third year. In addition a dissertation of 7-9,000 words is undertaken, with the decision as to precise area of architectural research covered made by the individual student from a range of subjects/topics approved by the Faculty Board. In addition to the Studio work (worth 60% of overall mark) and the dissertation (worth 20% of the overall mark) a number of lecture courses and the case studies course lead to four written examinations (worth 20% of the overall mark) at the end of the third year:

- Studio
- Advanced Studies in Theoretical and Historical Aspects of Architecture and Urbanism (paper 1)
- Management, Practice, and Law (paper 2)
- Advanced Studies in Construction Technology, Structural Analysis and Environmental Design related to Case-Studies (paper 3)
- Architectural Engineering (paper 4)

Technical coursework counts for 100% of the grade in the Architectural Engineering paper, and a case-study notebook counts for 50% of the examination grade in the Advanced Studies in Construction Technology, Structural Analysis and Environmental Design related to Case-Studies examination paper.

Progression requirements

The award of the BA (Hons) degree and exemption from ARB/RIBA Part 1 requires a minimum of a sufficiently high studio pass (40%) in the portfolio examination and (at the discretion of the examiners) a pass (40%) in each of the written papers in addition to an aggregate pass-mark overall.

Outcomes developed and assessed: A 1-7, B 1-5, C 1-6, D 1-9.

Please note: this specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the opportunities provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each studio or lecture course can be found in the course handbook or on-line at <http://www.arct.cam.ac.uk>. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Part 2 Progression requirements

The BA (Hons) in Architecture is prescribed by the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and validated by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). Successful candidates progress to Part I of the ARB route to Registration. It is an absolute requirement that candidates achieve a pass in design studio (40%) to achieve Honours. Failure in studio will override the weighted calculations of the overall mark.

A pass (40%) in each of the written papers is required at the discretion of examiners. Students must demonstrate fulfilment of the ARB criteria to the satisfaction of the internal and external examiners, in addition to an aggregate pass mark overall.

Indicators of Quality

QA Teaching and Learning Review (2008) Entirely satisfactory standards
RAE score (2008) 30% 4*, 50% 3*, 20% 2*, 0% 1*, 0% U

RIBA validated and ARB prescribed course.