

Programme Specification 2025-2026

Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice in Architecture

Awarding body	University of Cambridge
Teaching institution	University of Cambridge, Institute of Continuing Education
Accreditation details	None
Name of final award	Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice in Architecture
Programme title	Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice in Architecture
UCAS code	N/A
HECoS code(s)	<i>[leave blank, will be completed centrally]</i>
Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	Architecture
Qualifications framework level	Level 7
Date specification produced	November 2024

* Cognate Faculty endorsement provided by: Faculty of Architecture and History of Art

The mission of the Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) is to support the University of Cambridge's promise to prioritise and enable learning throughout life and to promote the widest possible access for learners to the University. ICE uses the expertise of its staff, the collegiate University, and its wider networks to deliver a broad portfolio of research-informed world-leading qualifications. ICE delivers supportive and inclusive education and welcomes learners seeking to engage with higher education for the first time, returning after an extended break, seeking opportunities to learn later in life and looking to advance their careers.

The Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice in Architecture is delivered by the Faculty of Architecture and History of Art in partnership with the Institute of Continuing Education (ICE). The Postgraduate Certificate forms part of the Institute's programme of credit-bearing professional development qualifications offered at Level 7 to part-time adult students. In the UK, the training of an architect culminates with the Part 3 examination. Passing this examination qualifies the candidate to register with the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and thereafter be called an architect, and take up corporate membership of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). Thus, it is the formal entry into the profession. The Part 3 Examination is recognised by the Architect's Registration Board and the Royal Institute of British Architects as the final qualifying examination for obtaining registered status and professional membership.

The Postgraduate Certificate is aimed at individuals who have completed RIBA/ARB Parts 1 and 2 with at least two years' practical training experience in architectural or related practice under the direct supervision of an Architect registered in the EU. At least 12 months of this supervised practice must be undertaken in the UK, under the direct supervision of a UK-registered Architect.

Students may apply to the Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice in Architecture in their second year of practical experience, but must have 2 years of supervised practice in order to undertake the examinations.

Educational aims

The programme aims to:

- prepare students for the examination which leads to registration as an Architect and entry to the profession;
- develop students' knowledge and judgement regarding practice, law and management within architecture;
- act as a forum to engender debate about the major concerns for the profession and the construction industry, both in the UK and further afield.

Learning outcomes

The programme is based on the ARB document *Prescription of Qualifications: ARB Criteria*, revised in June 2011. These criteria are 'held in common' by the RIBA and describe the requirements for recognition of Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 courses in architecture in the UK. It is at Part 3 that the candidate has to demonstrate sufficient knowledge, skill and judgement.

As a result of studying this programme students should meet the following learning outcomes.

Knowledge and understanding

A successful candidate should be able to demonstrate authorship, knowledge, and effective communication skills, and reasoning and understanding in relation to all issues within the Professional Criteria outlined below.

1. Professionalism
2. Clients, users and delivery of services
3. Legal framework and processes
4. Practice and management
5. Building Procurement

Potential candidates should view the full text of the Criteria before embarking on any Part 3 course; this can be seen on the ARB website (<http://www.arb.org.uk/>¹)

Skills and other attributes

Cognitive/Intellectual Skills

By the end of the course the students should have the ability to:

1. critically evaluate theories and concepts underpinning the profession as an applied area of study as evidence to support recommendations made, reviewing reliability, validity and significance
2. identify and define a concept or idea with potential for independent scholarly research and application in a new context
3. apply principles underlying the law relevant to architectural practice and building procurement
4. analyse the appropriateness and completeness for its purpose of forms of documentation including written and graphic communication
5. assess the architectural services required to deliver a project effectively and the establishment of appropriate scope of works for all members of the project team; to

¹ Note that this website is external to the University; though accurate at the time of publication, future accuracy and applicability of content is outside of our control.

- co-ordinate and integrate the work of other consultants and have an awareness of the terms of their appointments
6. analyse new situations or abstract data using objective and logical criteria to make informed and critical judgements
 7. act in accordance with the requirements of professional conduct and the concept of 'professionalism'
 8. follow codes and standards regulating the profession of architecture
 9. demonstrate that health and safety matters are integral to every stage of the design process and execution for those aspects of design for which the architect is responsible
 10. prepare, in consultation with the client, and others where appropriate, an acceptable brief and budget; to effectively communicate with the client at every stage
 11. assess the architectural services required to deliver a project effectively in all aspects

Transferable Skills

1. self-evaluation, through demonstrating confidence in the application of their own criteria of judgement, challenging received opinions, and reflecting on action.
2. they will seek and make use of feedback autonomy, through taking responsibility for their own work, and critically analysing it
3. strategic thinking, through demonstrating their ability to apply a strategy to an idea, project or problem to achieve an effective conclusion
4. situational analysis, through demonstrating their ability to analyse a situation or information and competently undertaking reasonably straight-forward research tasks with minimum guidance
5. communication and presentation skills, through engaging effectively in debate in a professional manner and producing detailed and coherent project reports presented in a professional and confident manner
6. problem-solving skills, through identifying and defining complex problems and applying appropriate knowledge, tools, and methods to their solution
7. leadership, management, and team work skills, through interacting effectively within a team learning group, and recognising, supporting and being proactive in the various aspects of leadership; they will demonstrate ability to negotiate in a professional context and manage conflict

Programme structure

The programme is offered at Level 7 and attracts 60 credits.

The programme consists of 3 workshops and the curriculum is designed to facilitate in-depth study, independent research and critical analysis of the subject areas to present an overall understanding of architectural practice. Thus, there are interlinking themes which appear in more than one course session. The three course sessions comprising the Postgraduate Certificate are designed to cover the major elements of the ARB document Prescription of Qualifications.

Students will be assessed by means of essays, written case studies and other assignments up to 11,000 words and the Professional Experience and Development Record, in addition to two written examinations and Oral Examination.

Courses will be delivered in a blended format, consisting of required intensive residential sessions, supported by self-directed learning in Study Groups. The Course Director and Professional Studies Advisers can be contacted for advice and feed-back between the

course sessions. The programme involves an estimated 75 contact hours with tutors and speakers in lecture and workshop settings, and through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). In addition there is self-managed time for preparation, assignments and further reading.

The programme is offered on a part-time basis and students will normally take up to 12 months to complete the Postgraduate Certificate.

Teaching methods

The programme is delivered through a combination of in-person teaching sessions and asynchronous approaches provided via the course virtual learning environment. Examples of the type of teaching methods used include, but are not limited to, live and pre-recorded lectures, seminars, group discussions, online readings, quizzes, data handling exercises, group activities and discussion forums. Peer-to-peer learning forms an important element of course teaching.

Assessment methods

The programme is assessed using multiple and inter-related strategies, including written individual essays, practical assignments, a case study, and written and oral examinations. These formally assessed elements are:

- The Professional Experience and Development record (PEDR)
- A Case Study (up to 8,000 words)
- Career Appraisal (up to 3,000 words) and CV (two pages A4 only)
- Written Examinations (2 papers)
- An oral examination

The Examination

The format of the Examination is approved by ARB/RIBA and consists of

- Written Papers

There will be two written examination papers: one paper of 2 hours and another of 3 hours duration. The latter will be 'open book' i.e. references are allowed. Paper 1 examines the more general issues of the syllabus while Paper 2 includes questions on The Contract and Practice and Project Management. In preparation for Paper 2 candidates will be issued in advance with details of the scenario when they submit the other documents on which they will be examined. The questions will not be seen until the formal examination. Candidates will be able to concentrate on considering their response to the problems posed. The examination questions are set by the Chair of Examiners and the Professional Course Director, in consultation with the External Examiner and the Professional Examiners.

- Oral Examination

This is the last part of the examination during which the examiners will draw together all the information submitted by the candidate, assess their interpersonal skills, ask additional questions and make final judgments about a candidate's suitability.

Entry and/or progression requirements

To be eligible for the Part 3 examination, applicants must have completed Parts 1 and 2 and have completed at least two years' practical training experience in architectural or related practice under the direct supervision of an architect registered in the EU. At least 12 months of this supervised practice must be undertaken in the UK, under the direct supervision of a UK-registered architect.

The experience should be approved by each applicant's Professional Studies Adviser. A minimum twelve months of the pre-requisite practical training experience must be undertaken after completion of Part 2; each period of practice must have lasted at least 3 months.

Students may apply to the Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice in Architecture in their second year of practical experience but must have 2 years of supervised practice in order to qualify to take the examinations.

In the UK, the training of an architect culminates with the Part 3 examination. Passing this examination qualifies the candidate to register with the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and thereafter be called an architect and take up corporate membership of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). Thus, it is the formal entry into the profession.

The Part 3 Examination is recognised by the Architects Registration Board and the Royal Institute of British Architects as the final qualifying examination for obtaining registered status and professional membership.

Under the EU Directive for Architects, nationals of European member countries registered with ARB are also entitled to practise as architects in other member states subject to satisfying some additional local adaptation requirements. UK registration as an Architect is also highly regarded throughout the rest of the world.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate proficiency in the English language and must be able to satisfy the current English Language Competence requirements of the University's Postgraduate Admissions Committee in the year in which they apply for admission to the course and outlined on the course webpage.

The pass mark for the course is 60%.

Candidates who have NOT been successful in the examination may take the examination a second time only. Candidates who have failed twice will not be eligible to take the examination again at this university. The second attempt must be made during the following academic year.

Students are required to pass all elements of the examination in order to pass the programme and achieve the award of the Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice in Architecture.

Student support

ICE provides all students with access to learning and welfare support via the Institute's virtual learning environment. This includes generic and subject specific learning resources and wider support services, including those focused on wellbeing.

Management of teaching quality and standards

The University ensures high standards of teaching and learning in the following ways:

- Participation in the biennial Education Monitoring and Review Process to explore provision, share good practice and suggest constructive courses of action
- Scrutiny of the reports of External Examiners for all teaching programmes
- Encouraging student engagement at both the local level, through involvement in Faculty and Departmental Committees, and at a central level by participation in nationally-benchmarked surveys
- Mentoring, appraisal, and peer review of staff, and encouraging staff participation in personal development programmes
- RIBA validated and ARB prescribed course.

Graduate employability and career destinations

Preparation for employment in general is provided in the opportunities for the acquisition of relevant transferable skills outlined in this programme specification. Where programmes with a significant vocational or professional element are accredited by Professional, Regulatory or Statutory Bodies details are given above.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this programme specification. At the time of publication, the programme specification has been approved by the relevant Faculty Board (or equivalent). Programme specifications are reviewed annually, however, during the course of the academical year, any approved changes to the programme will be communicated to enrolled students through email notification or publication in the *Reporter*. The relevant faculty or department will endeavour to update the programme specification accordingly, and prior to the start of the next academical year.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for all awards of the University is available online at: <https://www.camdata.admin.cam.ac.uk/>