Programme Specification[1] (Date 2026 – 27)

Architecture Tripos

Programme title	*Architecture Tripos*
Name of final award	*Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and Master of Architecture (MArch)*
Awarding Body	*University of Cambridge*
Teaching institution	*University of Cambridge Department of Architecture*
PSRB/Accreditation details and date the course was last accredited	*Architects Registration Board (ARB); Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)*
UCAS code	*K100*
HECoS code(s)	*100122 (architecture)*
ATAS code	
Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	*Architecture*
Qualification framework level	*Level 6 (Honours)*
Date specification approved	*27 January 2026*
Linked course	Design KH11

Brief overview of the course *(Please explain the purpose of the programme in a brief paragraph of no more than 5-6 sentences.)*
The Architecture course provides the initial stage of academic, technical and practical training necessary to pursue a professional career in architecture anywhere in the world, although its contents can easily be applied in other fields as well, such as the arts, design, media or academia. The course combines practical studiowork with teaching in the arts, humanities, and technical subjects: the history and philosophy of architecture; contemporary culture and urbanism; construction; structural and environmental design; sustainability and conservation; practice management. The course benefits significantly from the Department's extensive and highly-rated research, which feeds directly into all aspects of teaching.

[1] 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 academic year.

Educational Aims

What are the educational aims of the programme?

The Architecture Tripos is a four-year (3+1) course which provides a comprehensive body of technical, historical and theoretical knowledge and skills necessary to address the wide-ranging issues facing design and construction in the built environment. Design is the core discipline in this Tripos and studio project work forms the major educational activity throughout the course. Studios are led by Design Fellows who are practising architects or designers. From the 2nd Year, students may choose which particular studio they would like to join in order to undertake projects which focus on their particular interests. Students are encouraged to discover how the various elements and aspects of project work can be elicited, interpreted and translated into a design proposal by considering the complete cultural context and evolving appropriate forms in response. The course is intended to prepare students for a career in Architecture but is sufficiently expansive to enable graduates also to move into wider fields, such as the media, design, planning or academia.

This course incorporates the accreditation/validation criteria of the Architects Registration Board (ARB Stage 1 – MArch) and Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA Part 1 – BA (Hons) and RIBA Part 2 (MArch)) required for professional practice as an architect in the UK.

Learning Outcomes - *What is a student expected to learn from the programme? These should have been included on the new course proposal when the course was first approved.*

(Please refer to the guidance on Learning Aims and Outcomes and the Office for Students sector-recognised standards for sector expectations of the graduates of higher education qualifications)

Knowledge and Understanding (K)

By the end of the programme, students have an understanding of:

K-1 Histories and theories of architecture, urban design and landscape design and their relevance to the design process.

K-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.

K-3. Regulatory frameworks and the codes of practice that guide building construction.

K-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.

K-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.

K-6. The role of the architect in society and the professional and ethical responsibilities of architects.

Skills and other attributes

The project work set within the studio course is central to the acquisition of the intellectual, practical and transferable skills listed 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 and provides a spur to pursuing more focused interests.

Intellectual thinking skills (S) :

Students are able to:

S-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.

S-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.

S-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.

S-4 Evaluate and learn from the work of others.

S-5 Form considered judgments about the spatial, technical, aesthetic and social qualities of a design with reference to the wider physical, political and cultural environment.

S-6 Plan, conduct and write up a programme of individual supervised research.

Practical skills (P):

Students are able to:

P-1 Develop coherent inventive architectural designs that integrate spatial thinking with thinking on technical, historical, and socio-cultural issues.

P-2 Produce drawings and models using the conventions of architectural representation in appropriate media to explore, test and convincingly communicate design ideas.

P-3 Develop proposals that take account of the codes of practice and health and safety considerations that guide design.

P-4 Work collaboratively as part of a team.

P-5 Prepare and compose brief technical reports and technical presentations.

P-6 Exercise informed judgments in the development of sustainable design.

P-7 Use technical, historical and theoretical literature effectively in architectural research.

P-8 Use IT skills in a relevant and creative manner for design, analysis and communication.

Transferable skills:

Students are able to:

T-1 Communicate effectively in writing, verbally and through drawings and models.

T-2 Transfer techniques and solutions from one field of architecture to another.

T-3 Appraise and manage time and resources.

T-4 Communicate with and respond appropriately to advice from expert consultants.
T-5 Apply representational and analytical skills in the description and appraisal of design issues and solutions.
T-6 Adopt an open-minded approach in the appraisal of and response to design issues, requirements and opportunities.
T-7 Work autonomously in a self-directed manner.
T-8 Listen and critically respond to the views of others.
T-9 Respond to a broad constituency of interests and sensitively address social and ethical concerns.

Programme structure

Please give a brief outline of the course structure and how it supports progress. Please note details of individual papers/modules are not needed. What elements does the programme contain? If you have a part-time route show how this is aligned with the full-time course.

The programme is only offered as a full time course. Students may graduate with a BA (Hons) at Year 3, or continue to Year 4 and graduate with an MArch.

Studio-work occupies 2 days per week in every Year resulting in design portfolios, models and presentations. Studio teaching introduces practical and technical skills, while lectures, seminars and supervisions cover the academic aspects of Architecture so students can understand the subject in its historic, social, cultural and economic context. Each successive year builds on the previous one and ultimately students will have covered the Level 6 and Level 7 educational requirements of the ARB and RIBA.

From Year 2 students choose one of four Studios each year. Each Studio follows its own specific project/theme for the whole year. Students choose which Studio they would like to join, based on their preference for the site/project or theme. The lecture courses feed into project work and accreditation requirements start to be incorporated into both lectures and studio-work.

Part IA – Year 1
Studio-work (two days per week); 6 compulsory papers covering practical and technical skills, and history and theory (pre- and post-1800). There is a compulsory one-week overseas field trip to a European city during the Easter vacation.

Part IB – Year 2
Studio-work (2 days per week); four compulsory technical papers; four option papers from a choice of eight offered each term in history and theory, integrated and technical subjects: students must take two each term.

Part IIA – Year 3
Studio-work (2 days per week); one compulsory paper in professional skills; four option papers from a choice of eight offered each term in history and theory, integrated and technical subjects: students must take two each term.

Part IIB
Studio-work (2 days per week); one compulsory paper in professional skills and a dissertation or equivalent project.

Teaching and Learning

Please indicate which methods are used, i.e., lectures, seminars, practical sessions etc. Include any activity that does not lead to summative assessment. How is the programme taught? How do students learn?

Knowledge and Understanding: K1, K2, K4 and K5 are acquired through a combination of lectures (with appropriate provisions made for students with SSDs according to University policy), seminars, small group supervisions, classes, site visits, coursework and project work throughout the course, and through a supervised dissertation in year ~~3~~ 4.

Acquisition of K3 and K5 is through lectures with appropriate provisions made for students with SSDs according to University policy), seminars, small group teaching and site visits throughout the course.

Acquisition of K5 and K6 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.

Intellectual skills: S1-5 are acquired and developed through the project work set in the studio course. Skills S4 and S5 are also encouraged and exercised in seminar discussions and in coursework. Research and writing skills (S6) are developed through essays presented in supervisions (small group teaching) and the individually supervised dissertation exercise of year 4. The mathematical and analytical skills required to address technical issues are honed via the examples and problems set by lecturers in technical courses.

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

- Skill P1 is taught and developed via studio project work.
- Skills P2 and P8 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 P3 is taught in lectures and honed in project work.
- Skill P4 is acquired via group project work in studio and coursework assignments.
- Skill P5 is taught via classes in year 1 and feedback on reports written and presentations made as part of coursework assignments.
- Skill P6 is taught through lectures, site-visits, and explored and developed through studio project work.
- Skill P7 is taught and developed through essays, presentations, coursework assignments and the dissertation exercise of year 3.
- Skill P8 is taught and developed through CAD classes, coursework, project work and the dissertation of year 3.

Transferable skills are developed through the teaching and learning programme outlined above.

- Skill T1 is taught through feedback on presentations, essays, coursework reports and project work.
- Skill T2 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 T3, T6 and T7 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 T4 and T5 are developed through project work and coursework assignments.
- Skills T8 and T9 are explicitly addressed in the discussion of comparative examples in group reviews of project work.

Assessment

Please list below summative assessments for the course and how they meet the learning outcomes listed above. Ensure these are aligned with your course regulations (Statutes and Ordinances).

Assessment	Learning Outcome
Summative assessments: Portfolios (electronic, and models) Presentations – group and individual Coursework: • Case Studies • Technical Reports and drawings • Questions requiring explanatory and calculated answers • Spreadsheet calculations	

Written Examinations Dissertation or Research Project Studiowork accounts for half the course. Academic, practical, technical and analytical knowledge and skills all combine in Studio work and are assessed in the projects, drawings, models and portfolios submitted and presented by the students. Every Learning Outcome category is examined: • A good understanding of the knowledge base and how it influences design decisions, (skills K1, K2, K4, K5); • Maturity of skill in design demonstrated by the students' imagination, designing abilities, and analytical skills (Skills I1-6); • All the practical skills (P1-8) are required and assessed in the products of studio-work, particularly in models, calculations and presentation of design solutions; as are • Transferable skills (T1, T5, T6, T8 and T9). The balance of the course is assessed by examination, coursework and dissertation (7,000-9,000 words). Examinations, and coursework in its different forms, will require the students to demonstrate their historical and current knowledge of architecture and its practice in the built environment. Written examinations will test K1 and K4), technical reports, calculations and drawings (K2, P2, P5), case studies (K1-6, I1-6), question and answer	**Knowledge and Understanding (K1-6)** 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 the 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. **Intellectual thinking skills (I1-6)** - 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

scenarios (any set of skills), and the dissertation (K1-6, I6) will show how the students can apply their knowledge and skills to produce an independent research project.	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 judgments 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. **Practical skills (P1-8)** – 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 judgments 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. **Transferable skills (T1-9)** – 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.

Progression and Career Destinations

Please describe the opportunities for the students' personal and professional development (including transferable and employability skills). Please include information relating to successful graduates' prospects for employment.

The award of the BA (Hons) degree 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. Progression to Year 4 – Part IIB, MArch requires an overall 2.i at the end of Year 3, Part IIA.

Many students use the transferable skills gained in the architecture degree to work in a wide variety of careers and students can choose to leave after three years with a BA(Hons).

The course actively maintains an alumni network, which students may access for career advice upon entry to the course. In addition, the Department holds annual Careers Days attended by practices interested in recruiting young people to develop into architectural practitioners. Studios are taught by practicing architects and designers. Architects, designers and structural engineers are also visiting professors and lecturers, so there are continuous networking opportunities for the students.

The employability of graduates is enhanced by the many practical and technical skills they have acquired, from construction skills to computer-aided design, programming, mathematics; and soft skills, such as the ability to produce and present project proposals, verbally, in writing and in drawings, graphics and designs.

Students graduating with a BA Honours will have exemption from RIBA Part 1; students graduating with an MArch [we hope] will have accreditation for ARB Stage 1.

Where programmes with a significant vocational or professional element are accredited by professional or statutory bodies details are given in the programme specification.

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