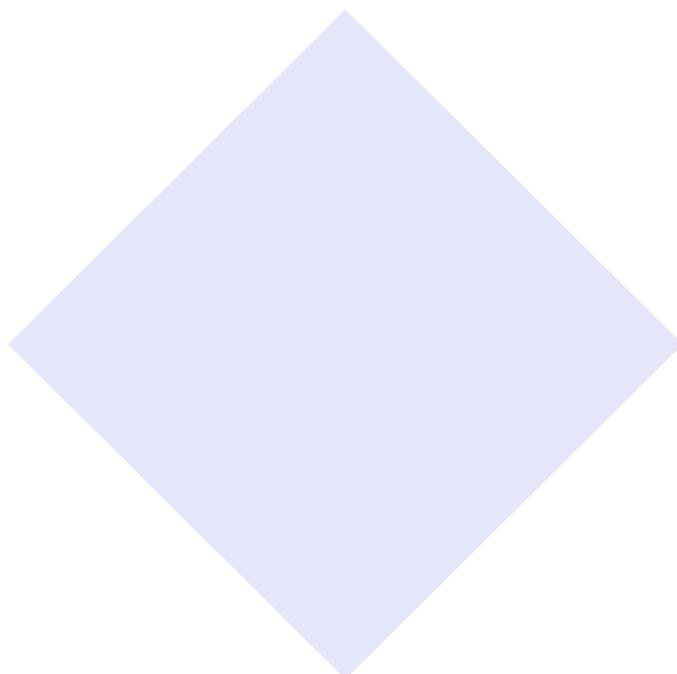


**Architectural Association  
School of Architecture**



**AA PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

**MASTER OF ARTS (MA)**

**2025–2026**

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## SECTION 1: THE SCHOOL ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

### 1.1 THIS GUIDE / WHERE WE ARE

The purpose of this Programme Guide is to provide information regarding the way in which the School and its programmes are organised. It also provides an introduction to terms and definitions, common principles of content and assessment, the way that the programmes are structured, how each Course is organised, credited, and regulated, and what you will be expected to do.

Other documents you will find essential in orienting yourself within the School include the following:

- [The AA School Academic Regulations](#)
- [The AA School Quality Manual](#)
- The Programme Handbook

Our principal buildings, where most of the academic programmes are based, are at 32-39 Bedford Square, 4 and 16 Morwell Street and 1 and 1A Montague Street in Bloomsbury, Central London. The Design and Make Programme is located in AA's Hooke Park, in Dorset.

### Address

AA School of Architecture  
36 Bedford Square  
London WC1B 3ES

### Telephone

+44 (0)20 7887 4000

### Contact Details

|                  | Role             | Email                      |
|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
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| Belinda Flaherty | School Registrar | registrar@aschool.ac.uk    |
| Leah Seyfert     | Coordinator      | leah.seyfert@aschool.ac.uk |

## 1.2 ACADEMIC ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

### Overall Academic Organisation

The AA School of Architecture is an independent school governed by the Architectural Association (Inc.). It consists of c. 900 full-time students, who study in the Foundation, Intermediate, Diploma and Postgraduate programmes. The AA School is made-up of four distinct parts:

- A one-year Foundation Programme for students contemplating a career in architecture or related arts subjects. The Foundation Award in Architecture, Art and Design is separate to and does not form part of the 5-year full-time course in architecture.
- The Intermediate and Diploma Programmes offering the 5-year full-time course in architecture:
  - The AA Intermediate Programme leading to the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and providing exemption from ARB/RIBA Part 1 after 3 years of full-time study (please note that students that complete the programme after June 2027 will receive RIBA Part 1 only);
  - The AA Diploma Programme leading to the Master of Architecture (MArch) and providing exemption from ARB/RIBA Part 2 after 2 years of full-time study.
- The postgraduate programmes comprising 11 distinct programmes of advanced full-time and part-time studies:
  - 10 taught Master level programmes (PGDip/MA/MSc/MArch/MFA/Taught MPhil)
  - A PhD degree. The AA is an Affiliated Research Centre (ARC) of the OU for the delivery and validation of the PhD degree.
- The AA Professional Practice and Practical Experience Examination leading to exemption from the ARB/RIBA Part 3 Examination, the entry requirement to professional registration as an architect. The course and examination are open to anyone who has successfully obtained their Part 1 and Part 2 qualifications (or equivalency from overseas schools of architecture) and also to qualified practitioners for the purpose of Continuing Professional Development.

### Enhancing Quality of Learning: Reviews and Monitoring

All programmes in the AA School are subject to systematic internal and external review on a regular basis. This includes review by the School's Academic Committee and Board (see details below), annual monitoring and periodic review for each programme, annual feedback from External Examiners, student feedback as well as annual and periodic review from the School's professional bodies and validation partners the Open University, ARB and RIBA.

### Academic Governance

The Academic Board (AB) is the sovereign academic body charged with responsibility for the academic governance of the AA School and its programmes of study. It is chaired by the Director of the AA School. The Academic Board delegates responsibilities to, and monitors the progress, effectiveness and recommendations of the AA School's Academic Committee (AC). The Academic Board demonstrates its accountability to the AA Council by submission of quarterly reports and an annual report.

## SECTION 2: DEGREE SPECIFICATION

| 2.1 MA DEGREE SUMMARY INFORMATION             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Awarding body                                 | Architectural Association School of Architecture                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                           |
| Partner institution(s)                        | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                           |
| Location of Study/campus                      | 36 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3ES                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                           |
| Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies | Office for Students / QAA                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Award and titles</b>                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                           |
|                                               | <b>Award</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Title</b>                                                                                                                              |
| Final award                                   | Master of Arts (MA)                                                                                                                                                                                                        | MA in Conservation and Reuse<br>MA in History and Critical Thinking<br>MA in Housing and Urbanism<br>MA in Spatial Performance and Design |
| Credits                                       | 180                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                           |
| Intermediate Award                            | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                           |
| FHEQ Level                                    | 7                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                           |
|                                               | <b>Duration of study (standard)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Maximum registration period</b>                                                                                                        |
| Full-time                                     | 12 months (4 terms)                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 24 months                                                                                                                                 |
| Sandwich                                      | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | N/A                                                                                                                                       |
| Part Time                                     | 24 months (4 terms)                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 48 months                                                                                                                                 |
| Distance                                      | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | N/A                                                                                                                                       |
| Start date for programme                      | September 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Course codes/categories</b>                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                           |
| UCAS code                                     | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                           |
| CATS points for course                        | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                           |
| QAA Subject Benchmark                         | Architecture 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Admissions agency</b>                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                           |
| UCAS                                          | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                           |
| Direct to School                              | ✓                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Admissions criteria</b>                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                           |
| Requirements                                  | Refer to AA School Academic Regulations                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                           |
| Language                                      | Refer to AA School Academic Regulations                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Contacts</b>                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                           |
| School Registrar                              | Belinda Flaherty                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                           |
| Programme Heads                               | Rod Heyes and Amandine Kastler (Conservation and Reuse)<br>Marina Lathouri (History and Critical Thinking)<br>Jorge Fiori and Lawrence Barth (Housing and Urbanism)<br>Theo Lorenz (Spatial Performance and Design (AAIS)) |                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Examination and Assessment</b>             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                           |
| External Examiners 2024-2025                  | TBC (Conservation and Reuse)<br>Hilde Heynen, Elke Krasny (History and Critical Thinking)<br>Keith Bradley, Paul Vermeulen (Housing and Urbanism)<br>Anna Marazuela Kim, Albena Yaneva (Spatial Performance and Design)    |                                                                                                                                           |
| Examination Board(s)                          | External Examiners, Programme Heads, School Director, Head of Teaching (Chair), Head of Learning, School Registrar (Administrator)                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Approval/review dates</b>                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                           |
|                                               | <b>Approval date</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Review date</b>                                                                                                                        |
| Programme Specification Validation            | May 2020, revalidated July 2024                                                                                                                                                                                            | Revalidation: July 2029                                                                                                                   |

## 2.2 MA PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

MA programmes are delivered over a 12-month period (September to September) consisting of two taught terms and a third and fourth term for the completion of studies.

MA awards consist of 180 credits at FHEQ Level 7, each credit equating to approximately 10 learning hours split between different modules of varying credit values and submissions.

## 2.3 DEGREE CREDIT FRAMEWORK

| <b>GENERAL MA CREDIT FRAMEWORK</b><br><b>12 months – 180 Credits</b>               |             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Core Studio / Thesis                                                               | 100 credits |
| Core Module 1                                                                      | 20 credits  |
| Core Module 2                                                                      | 20 credits  |
| Core Module 3                                                                      | 20 credits  |
| Core Module 4                                                                      | 20 credits  |
|                                                                                    | 180 credits |
| For programme specific credit frameworks please refer to the programme pages below |             |

## 2.4 TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

### Teaching and Learning

The first three academic terms of taught courses for MA programmes consist of lectures, workshops, seminars and writing workshops, with submissions required for each module. The fourth term is devoted to the individual work needed to complete the studies.

### Evaluating and Improving Quality/Quality Indicators

|                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AA Academic Committee / Academic Board    | Annual Monitoring Reports are submitted to the Academic Committee each September, reflecting on examiner reports, student and staff feedback, and student progression and achievement data. The Academic Committee then reports findings to the Academic Board.<br>Refer to AA School Quality Manual for further detail. |
| Professional Accreditation and Validation | Revalidation for the MA takes place every 5 years<br>Next revalidation: July 2029<br>Refer to AA School Quality Manual for further detail                                                                                                                                                                                |

### Assessment

All submissions are assessed and marked by two or more members of the programme's regular academic staff and confirmed by the Internal Assessment Board. Marks and feedback are provided to students within 15 working days/3 weeks of initial submission. This timeframe is not inclusive of closure weeks. In exceptional circumstances where this timeframe is not met, students will be informed of when marks and feedback will be released at the earliest opportunity. Student work is then reviewed by the MA External Examiners, whose role is to ensure fair and objective marking and the maintenance of high academic standards across the School's MA programmes. The MA Examination Board has the responsibility for confirming the final marking of all submitted work and decisions on distinctions and resubmissions. Marking of all course work is on a scale of 0–100% with a pass mark of 50% and grading as shown below:

|              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| 80% or above | Distinction           |
| 70–79%       | High Pass             |
| 50–69%       | Pass (Low Pass = 50%) |
| 49% or below | Fail                  |

To qualify for the MA, students must attain the 50% threshold mark on both the coursework average, and on the final project average mark. An overall final mark is then calculated as the weighted average of coursework and Dissertation/Design Thesis. Large differences (of more than 10 percentage points) in the marking of the assessors are moderated by the Programme Head or an appointed assessor from the Programme staff when necessary.

## Grading Outcomes and Criteria

**Distinction:** Demonstrates an exceptional level of achievement overall, significantly exceeding the assessment criteria required to attain a Pass. The submission is complete under the requirements of the brief set. Coherence of thought is expressed throughout the work, with an exhaustive appreciation of topic and a rigorous application of critical reflection and insight. Developmental and final work is documented in a highly effective manner in a well-structured and skilfully presented submission.

**High Pass:** Demonstrates a high level of achievement overall, exceeding the assessment criteria required to attain a Pass. The submission is complete under the requirements of the brief set. Coherence of thought is articulated throughout the work, with a comprehensive appreciation of topic and a thorough application of critical reflection and insight. Developmental and final work is documented clearly in a coherently structured and well-presented submission.

**Pass:** Demonstrates a good level of achievement overall, meeting all aspects of the assessment criteria required to attain a Pass. The submission is complete under the requirements of the brief set. Coherence of thought is evidenced throughout the work, with an appreciation of topic and an appropriate level of critical reflection and insight. Developmental and final work is documented clearly in a suitably presented submission.

**Low Pass:** Work attaining the standard of Pass, but which has previously been assessed as Fail and/or has been submitted after the advertised date/time. Low Pass is capped at 50%.

**Fail:** Unsatisfactory level of achievement overall, which fails to meet all aspects of the assessment criteria required to attain a Pass. The submission is incomplete under the requirements of the brief set. The work is assessed as being incoherent, demonstrating little appreciation of topic, development or effort. The submission is insufficient in quantity and demonstrates a lack of engagement. An appropriate level of critical reflection and insight is not evidenced. Developmental and final work is not documented to an appropriate level of clarity, or presented to a suitable standard. This assessment is also the automatic result of failure to meet minimum attendance requirements. A submission receiving a Fail assessment can only achieve a Low Pass outcome upon successful resubmission. Students who have no further opportunity to undertake repeat studies are asked to leave the School.

## 2.5 AWARD CLASSIFICATION

The MA degree is awarded as either:

- A pass.
- A 'Distinction' when the overall final mark is 80% or higher.

Other grading from coursework is registered in the School's database and is available on transcripts but do not appear on certificates.

## 2.6 AA MASTERS TO PhD PATHWAY

Upon successful completion of Master's study, graduates from the MA, MSc, PG MArch, MFA and Taught MPhil programmes are given the opportunity to develop their Master's thesis into a proposal to apply for the AA PhD programme. Applications to the PhD through this pathway can be considered for commencement in the academic year immediately after the student's graduation from their Master's programme.

## 2.7 LEARNING SUPPORT

Every student has continuous access to a design studio with storage space, along with access to all of the AA School's facilities at Bedford Square in London and in Hooke Park, Dorset. Introductory sessions are provided by the relevant academic resources departments at the beginning of the academic year to all students.

On-site resources at Bedford Square include a large wood and metal workshop, a model making workshop for materials such as clay and plastics, a digital prototyping lab, an audio-visual lab, a digital photography studio, an IT lab with both Mac and PCs, a drawing materials and print shop, the AA bookshop, AA library and AA archives. The AA also has its own bar and restaurant at Bedford Square.

Hooke Park in Dorset is the AA's satellite campus that hosts short residential workshops for visiting groups of students from throughout the school. Hooke Park is a 150-hectare working forest inside that provides the primary source of timber for student-led construction projects and also has large workshops, an IT lab, catering facilities and accommodation for students visiting from London.

The AA Writing Centre supports students in the development of their written communication skills and helps to strengthen reading, critical research and creative writing capabilities across all programmes and year groups.

AA Wellbeing offers students confidential, one-to-one wellbeing support and workshops. The team is available to explore students concerns, anxieties and emotional difficulties to support their wellbeing and academic progression. Difficulties may include the effects of bereavement, loss, lack of confidence, mood regulation, relationship difficulties or managing mental health.

The AA's London based Public Programme is an extensive series of public events dedicated to contemporary architectural culture: exhibitions, members' events, lectures, seminars and conferences, along with regular book launches hosted by the AA bookshop. Evening lectures are available online to view at Hooke Park. A weekly published school events lists is published through the communications studio.

School-wide facilities and resources are described in more details on the [AA Website](#).

## SECTION 3:

# MA IN CONSERVATION AND REUSE

### 3.1 PROGRAMME INTRODUCTION

Human capacity for making is incredibly diverse and both reflects the fundamental structures of society and contributes to their formation. There is a reciprocal relationship between fabrication and prevailing ideas about aesthetics, economy, politics, religion, and technology. As a result, all objects are embedded in 'spheres of implication' and are entangled in the networks of people and concepts that shaped them. Understanding existing things, appreciating their genesis in all its complexity, analysing their value, and respecting their significance, is at the core of the programme. However, this is not only an intellectual exercise, and the programme aims to forge practitioners who are able to work in existing situations, make good judgements, and bring about change with precision, optimism, and grace.

How does the programme work?

Through a series of seminars, lectures, classes, clinics and workshops, students will become familiar with the history of conservation – of buildings, landscapes, objects and environments – and fluent in the underlying theoretical frameworks. Students are encouraged to be sceptical of conventional narratives around materials and technique and to develop their own understandings of construction as part of social and cultural networks. Expertise and heightened sensitivities are required to work well with existing situations and students are supported to learn about good examples of reuse and to acquire practical skills. The programme explores future-orientated practice, speculating on how regulatory frameworks, commercial attitudes, and practical actions should be transformed under the pressure of climate change and biodiversity loss. At every step, students are prompted to recognise and understand normative practice, to analyse such norms, and to be critical of conventional expectations. The hope is that this will broaden their competence, extend their ways of thinking, and potentially transform their practice.

What is the approach?

This is not a narrow conservation skills course or a heritage studies programme, although it contains elements of both. Conservation practice can be rigorous, based on deep understandings, and sensitive to circumstance and significance. The programme respects work of this kind and explores how it can be applied to reuse projects beyond canonical architectural settings. However, conservation practice can also be dogmatic, procedural and narrow – focused on artefacts rather than processes, on stasis rather than flourishing, fettered by history rather than inspired by it. To counter this, the programme also seeks to transplant the lively, intuitive and optimistic spirit of some reuse projects to the practice of conservation. Good practice requires skills, tenacity, independence and rigour – range and depth. The approach to learning reflects these needs being both varied and intense. Students have the opportunity to dive deep into their own fascinations even as the course helps them orientate themselves in a complex and wide-ranging intellectual and practical landscape.

Who teaches the programme?

The programme bridges between the academy and practice. Teaching will draw on the diverse staff at the AA with their wide-ranging academic and research activities. One of the defining characteristics of the course is its range and the resulting diversity of external contributors. Individual seminars are delivered by specialists with expertise in particular topics and are grouped thematically within modules. Unlike more conventional academic courses, the programme is organised as a smorgasbord, introducing students to a variety of academics and practitioners and encouraging them, through their assessments, to develop their own interests and identify their own role models. Experts and craftspeople both from within the AA and from outside will lead the delivery of practical skills workshops and provide a technical education. Experienced practitioners will be invited to describe their approaches and to reflect on the strengths and shortcomings of completed projects.

### 3.2 AIMS

Conservation is in the title of the programme and can be a problematic term for many architects who associate it with conservatism or understand it to mean preservation, restoration, or stasis. For radical practitioners – who see a pressing need for change – conservation might seem like the wrong path. However, underpinning the programme is a belief that conservation is the directing of continuity and change, that such change must emerge from a nuanced understanding of the world as it is, and that this should embolden practitioners rather than restrict them. The programme covers both the ethics of change, and the technical expertise required to carry it out. It aims to cultivate practical skills and unorthodox forms of practice while also nourishing the historical sense.

There is a growing interest in reuse in direct response to concerns about the environmental impacts of new construction. This sudden suspicion of new build, and reluctance to demolish, is both overdue and strangely familiar to anyone acquainted with architectural practice before the twentieth century. Gardeners might find this new sensitivity ironic because they have always worked with existing circumstances, leveraged found advantages, anticipated change over time, and understood that radical transformation can start in humble ways. The programme sides with the gardeners and promotes a critical approach. Is change necessary? How much change is necessary? How could existing conditions be adapted to a new lifeworld? How might time become an ally? How should practitioners act ethically in a wider capitalist system still fixated on growth?

### 3.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

| <b>INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES: MA in Conservation and Reuse; FHEQ LEVEL 7</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Learning Outcomes 'LO'</b>                                                 | Aligned to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and QAA Subject Benchmark (Architecture), on successful completion of the PGDip in Conservation and Reuse students will be able to:                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>A</b>                                                                      | <b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| A1                                                                            | Knowledge: A systematic understanding of knowledge across conservation and reuse of architecture, landscapes, and situations, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or insights at the forefront of related scholarship and professional practice.                                                                              |
| A2                                                                            | Ethics: An awareness of and ability to manage the implications of ethical issues.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| A3                                                                            | Method: A comprehensive understanding of techniques and methodologies applicable to their own research and advanced scholarship.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>B</b>                                                                      | <b>Cognitive and Intellectual Skills (Generic)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| B1                                                                            | Analysis: The ability to analyse complex issues both systematically and creatively, making sound judgements in the absence of complete data or in the context of incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge.                                                                                                                           |
| B2                                                                            | Synthesis: The ability to apply knowledge in an original manner, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.                                                                                                               |
| B3                                                                            | Evaluation: A conceptual understanding enabling the critical evaluation of current research, advanced scholarship, and methodologies, especially in the disciplines of conservation and reuse of architecture, landscapes, and situations; and the ability to develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses. |
| B4                                                                            | Application: The capacity for self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>C</b>                                                                      | <b>Practical and Professional Skills (Subject Specific)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| C1                                                                            | Application of Skills: The capacity for decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations, exercising initiative and personal responsibility with an awareness of good practice.                                                                                                                                                     |
| C2                                                                            | Technical Skills: The ability to develop new technical skills to a high level.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>D</b>                                                                      | <b>Key and Transferable Skills (Generic)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| D1                                                                            | Learning: The capacity for independent learning required for continuing professional development, using the full range of learning resources. When applicable, the ability to work effectively within a group as leader or member and the skills to manage conflict effectively.                                                           |
| D2                                                                            | Self-evaluation: The ability to critically reflect on their own and others' learning in order to improve their practice                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| D3                                                                            | Management: The ability to competently and autonomously plan and undertake research                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| D4                                                                            | Communication: The ability to communicate research and conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

### 3.4 ASSESSMENT

#### Assessment Mechanisms

All submissions are assessed and marked by two or more members of the programme's regular academic staff and confirmed by the Internal Assessment Committee. Student work is then reviewed by the PGDip external examiners, whose role is to ensure fair and objective marking and the maintenance of high academic standards across the School's PGDip programmes. The PGDip Examination Board has the responsibility for confirming the final marking of all submitted work.

Late submissions are penalised in line with AA School policy, work submitted up to seven days after the deadline will be marked and 10 marks (on a scale of 100) will be deducted for that element, for each calendar day of lateness incurred. Any piece of work submitted 7 or more days after the deadline will not be assessed and assigned a mark of 0, unless the student submits personal circumstances and these are accepted. Mitigating circumstances for late submissions are considered as detailed in the AA Academic Regulations.

#### Assessment Criteria

All learning outcomes must be met in order to achieve a pass overall. The assessment of submitted work is based on the following overall assessment, in addition to specific ones given for each module. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

#### HISTORY AND THEORY:

##### Research and knowledge acquirement

Research into the chosen area of study is independently undertaken, demonstrating a comprehensive understanding and critical awareness of the relevant social, political, historical, theoretical, economic, environmental and/or ethical contexts, concepts, ideas and/or precedents at the forefront of the discipline, being addressed through systematic enquiry.

##### Approach and development

The work submitted demonstrates an inventive and original approach to the consolidation and development of research, with a consistent process of synthesising acquired knowledge is evidenced in the work. The structures, methods and/or tools utilised in the production of the work demonstrate initiative, self-directed learning, the ability to work in a group where necessary, and the skills to make complex decisions.

##### Argument and communication

The work demonstrates the ability to devise and sustain complex arguments, contextualised effectively in a wider field of relevant ideas with a critical position determined. Conclusions and/or reflections are well executed, with good judgement shown in the absence of complete data. Written and visual communication skills are evidenced to a high standard throughout, and the work demonstrates the abilities developed to undertake further research.

#### TECHNOLOGY:

##### Context and analysis

The work demonstrates a systematic understanding and critical awareness of relevant contextual factors such as site conditions, social, political, historical, economic, environmental and ethical issues that influence the technical strategy developed in the project and its overall impact on the climate where necessary. A range of critical precedents, methodologies, practices and/or tools at the forefront of the discipline are investigated to inform the environmental and technical parameters of the brief.

##### Resolution and communication

The work demonstrates the ability to analyse and refine technical concepts, communicating sound judgements and a critical understanding of the implications of technical design decisions at a range of scales over the lifecycle of the project. Through resolution, the project addresses the aesthetic, programmatic and functional requirements of the brief. The work is structured and organised effectively and communicated through advanced visual, verbal and written communication techniques.

**PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE:****Knowledge acquisition**

The work analyses and reflects upon developments and insights at the forefront of the profession of architecture. Relevant contextual information and/or precedents are critically evaluated in order to inform the parameters of an appropriately clear and complete representation of the subject matter.

**Integration and synthesis**

The work demonstrates the ability to work independently and in a group where necessary, integrating and synthesising contextual information and acquired knowledge through a systematic method, evidencing self-direction, originality and the ability to respond critically to the subject matter.

**Clarity of communication**

The work elucidates concepts, facts and opinions in an analytical manner, evidencing the ability to construct and maintain a critical position. The work is structured and organised effectively, demonstrating good use of written and visual communication skills and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

**6.5 CREDIT FRAMEWORK**

| Term                 | Course Title                                                                        | Credits |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 1 (FT) 1 (PT)        | Core Module 1: Introduction to history, theory and ethics of conservation and reuse | 20      |
| 2 (FT) 6 (PT)        | Core Module 2: Value and contemporary issues in conservation and reuse              | 20      |
| 1 (FT) 5 (PT)        | Core Module 3: Comparative construction and carbon awareness                        | 20      |
| 2 (FT) 2 (PT)        | Core Module 4: Understanding, assessing and changing existing things                | 20      |
| 3 (FT) 7 (PT)        | Core Module 5: Circularity, reuse and practical skills                              | 20      |
| 3 (FT) 3 (PT)        | Core Module 6: Future-orientated practice                                           | 20      |
| 1-4 (FT)<br>1-8 (PT) | Core Studio/Thesis: Module 7: Design Thesis                                         | 60      |

**6.6 TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS****Module structure**

Modules 1, 2, 3, and 4 are principally taught through a seminar structure. The syllabus for each module is both deep and wide and has been divided between *intensive* seminars - which teach critical content and require discussion of the concepts to make sure they are properly understood - and more straightforward *extensive* class content. These modules are each taught within a term.

Module 5 is also taught through a seminar structure with both *intensive* and *extensive* class content.

However, although the content is concentrated in term 3 (FT) and term 7 (PT) workshops appear throughout the year and will be delivered at Hooke Park.

Module 6 is divided into three parts - Law, Procurement and Expanded Modes of Practice. Law and Procurement are taught in term 3, in similar ways to modules 1-4, but Expanded Modes of Practice is offered throughout terms 1, 2, and 3, providing opportunities for early cross-pollination between classroom-taught subjects and everyday practice.

Fundamental to the MA is integrated design teaching, and Module 7 (Design) runs as a red thread throughout the course, beginning with the selection of a situation and initial design research actions and culminating with a completed *design thesis* in term 4 (FT) or term 8 (PT). Approximately every four weeks, the programme contains *design landmarks* where students are expected to present and discuss their emerging design work in response to specific themes or methods. To support these events, Module 7 offers a series of skills classes tailored to the themes of the *design landmarks*.

## Timetable

For a full-time student, there are typically two teaching days per week in the first three terms, for a part-time student, one teaching day per week in terms 1-3 with additional design classes on a second day, and one teaching day per week in terms 5-7. A typical teaching day is organised in the following way:

|       |                                                            |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 09.00 | <i>Intensive seminar</i>                                   |
| 10.30 | Break                                                      |
| 11.00 | <i>Intensive seminar discussion</i>                        |
| 12.30 | Lunch                                                      |
| 13.30 | <i>Extensive class</i>                                     |
| 15.00 | Break                                                      |
| 15.30 | Visit/skills workshop/one-to-one feedback/module 6 content |
| 17.00 | Finish                                                     |

The breaks are important because they provide an opportunity for students to compare notes and consult staff informally. Elements of Modules 5, 6 and 7 will appear throughout the year. The structure of teaching days in the summer (term 4 and term 8) is different with all students attending one day per week.

## Scope

### Modules 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

In the classroom, some content will be delivered by staff and some content will be prepared and delivered by students. This will take the form of conventional presentations but also round-table dialogue, fireside chats, fishbowl discussion groups, think-pair-share events, and other non-performative participation. Outside the classroom, we will visit sites, situations, and practices. We will see conservation and reuse work underway – in museums, libraries, archaeological digs, and construction sites. Each term, students will visit Hooke Park, as part of Module 5, to develop practical skills and to explore techniques for documenting and caring for some unusual twentieth-century buildings. Part-time students are only *required* to visit Hooke Park in year 2 of their studies when module 5 is assessed. However, they will also be invited to participate in year 1.

### Module 7

Learning is structured around four-weekly *design milestones*, with different emphases, that blend proposition and intuition with research and analysis from the very start of the course. The *design milestones* represent objectives that the student will define in dialogue with the staff. There is scope to customise these milestones to suit the nature of the individual *design thesis*. The part-time timetable follows a similar pattern of design milestones and assessment tasks but at a different tempo.

To support students to reach the *design milestones*, teaching sessions include individual and group tutorials, skills building workshops, and clinics. Module 7 intensifies in term 4 (FT) and in terms 4 and 8 (PT) as the student dedicates the summer(s) to developing and eventually completing the *design thesis*.

### Module 6

Sessions will include a combination of lectures, practice talks, in-class conversations with practitioners, and site visits to studios, offices and projects. This includes both traditional and radical approaches to help students imagine a range of ways to bring about change. In term 1, The focus is on traditional modes of practice as background to the existing situation. In term 2, learning is focused on progressive reuse practices. Term 3 concentrates on justice and involves activist practitioners.

## Assessment

Modules 1, 2, 3, and 4 are each assessed by the submission of a single *enquiry* prepared by the student. The *enquiry* can be a stand-alone piece of work, or it can be connected to design Module 7 and contribute to the intellectual underpinning of the *design thesis*. Some students might prepare stand-alone *enquiries* and go on to complete a *design thesis* that is not directly connected to any of this research. Other students might understand some, or all, of their *enquiries* as contributing to, and forming a scaffolding for, their *design thesis*. The course structure is designed to be sufficiently open to allow a spectrum of approaches. For each module, academic staff will give students a choice of *suggested topics* and formats for their *enquiry* which could include a conventional written essay, annotated drawings or models, a photographic essay, a report etc. Alternatively, instead of choosing from the *suggested topics*, students can devise their own self-directed *enquiry* provided the topic is discussed and agreed in advance with teaching staff and that it meets the following requirements:

The *enquiry* has an explicit research question  
The *enquiry* will embody robust intellectual significance  
The *enquiry* has a clear and rigorous method

All *enquiries* are limited to 5,000 words or equivalent. Students who want to pursue self-directed *enquiries* must gain approval for their research proposals and evidence how the proposed work is equivalent to the *suggested topics*. There is latitude for teaching staff to change the *suggested topics* from module to module and from year to year.

Each of the first four modules runs within one term. Students must EITHER confirm their choice from the *suggested topics*, OR put forward a self-directed research proposal, by the end of the sixth week of term (although they can decide earlier). Students who suggest a self-directed *enquiry* will receive approval or rejection two weeks after they submit their proposal. If their proposal is rejected, they will have nominated a *suggested topic* as a fallback. The completed *enquiry* must be submitted in the first week of the following term. This will mean students have approximately eight weeks to complete their *enquiries* for Modules 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Assessment of Modules 5 and 6 follows the same principles but with two changes. Firstly, each module requires an *essay(s)* totalling 3,000 words or equivalent. Secondly, the subject of the *essays* must be chosen from the list of *suggested topics* and formats put forward by the teaching team. There is less time in terms **3 and 7** and the changes to the assessment method reflect both the timetable, the content of these modules, and the emerging focus on the *design thesis*.

Module 7 is structured around *design milestones* and MA students will present research approximately every four weeks from the start of the course, but this work is not assessed directly. Instead, there are three key assessment tasks. The first, at the end of term 1 (FT) or term 4 (PT), is the *outline research proposal* in which the student seeks agreement, in principle, from the staff to the proposed *design thesis*. The content of the *outline research proposal* will include material prepared in reaching the *design milestones*. While it's compulsory to submit an *outline research proposal*, this piece of work is not graded, does not attract credits, and students can reconsider their research proposal once they are further into the programme. The second task, at the end of term 2 (FT) or term 6 (PT), is the *final research proposal* which will a) describe the proposed *design thesis* in detail, b) set out the research landscape in which it sits, and c) go before an ethics committee for approval. The final assessment is based on the completed *design thesis*, submitted before the one-year (full-time) or two-year (part-time) anniversary of starting the course.

Part-time students will participate in module 7 in both years but will only be required to make formal submissions in the second year of study. They will benefit from having completed more of the taught courses before committing to a thesis. However, in the first year of study, they need to complete 50% of the work required for the module and what they produce will become either the first chapter of a larger thesis, or act as a prototypical project which is redefined and developed in year 2.

## SECTION 4:

# MA IN HISTORY AND CRITICAL THINKING

## 4.1 PROGRAMME INTRODUCTION

History and Critical Thinking (HCT) programme develops and communicates knowledge that connects contemporary issues with systematic historical enquiry and methodological issues.

At stake in the writing of history is a political engagement with the social, material, cultural and environmental exigencies of the present. The theoretical reflection on practices of historiography and the archive, language and translation, social, environmental, and territorial issues is central in providing resources to analyse and advance contemporary architectural thinking and forms of practice. On the one hand, specific architectural histories remain valid as sites of critical examination - for the ways they negotiate sources and perspectives; appropriate, augment and exclude voices; and shape our ways of thinking and making. On the other, the students are supported, epistemologically and methodologically, to discover and promote missing and marginalised voices, as well as engage with recent scholarship and new ways of thinking.

The programme is organised around seminars, open debates with guest speakers, visits to archives, writing workshops, and group readings, which allow students to continuously engage in conversations, expand their disciplinary knowledge in a broad historical and cultural arena and from a variety of viewpoints, enhance their analytical, critical skills, and develop new competencies in visual, verbal, and written communication.

In the seminars, specific histories, theoretical references, and practices are examined to identify and interrogate forms of architectural knowledge, understand the social and political realities that have determined the material and discursive production of the built environment, explore techniques, modes of visual and graphic representation, institutional structures and pedagogies. The students engage with architectural histories, philosophical texts, media studies, and critical theories to formulate precise questions, and reflect on the plurality of historical realities from within the spatial, the graphic, and the visual.

Writing is essential to the programme, considered as a pedagogical project, a practice of thinking and a tool to articulate and communicate ideas in a precise, effective manner. It is systematically developed through the year as a critical, cognitive, transformational and collaborative form of communication. Not only are words used to describe the role and agency of architecture unpacked and reflected upon against a background of intellectual, cultural, and political histories, but also different forms of writing –thesis, essays, short experimental pieces, critical reviews, commentaries, book proposals and interviews are explored alongside a consideration of drawings, photographs, film and literature. The aim is to explore, adopt and adapt elements of disciplines and practices in one's own writing, while preserving one's own voice.

A diversity of voices and expertise are brought into the programme through the participation of historians, critics, archivists, architects, and artists, in HCT and PhD Debates and Open Seminars, the aim of which this year is to bring together voices in architectural history and criticism to create space between writing as practice of collective doing and making and ecological and political realities.

The location of the HCT programme within the vibrant community and diverse cultures of the AA enables the dialogue between theoretical debates and design speculation and makes the programme distinct within the school and from other history and theory programmes. This year, HCT and Diploma Unit 4 will collaborate to contribute to the wider project of the school on 'Climate Matters'.

Our staff members come from diverse backgrounds and are involved in a wide range of academic, professional and research activities at the AA and elsewhere. Their combined teaching experience, research, publications and professional activities are a core asset to the programme enabling connections with peer institutions all around the world and ensuring a continuous input of innovative thinking, knowledge and interdisciplinary tools.

HCT graduates gain well-developed historical and theoretical understanding of conceptual and practical issues in architecture, allowing them to pursue doctoral studies, to reorient their professional development into other fields such as museum and gallery work or journalism, or to become involved in research and teaching in the field of architecture.

HCT also provides research facilities and supervision to research degree candidates (MPhil and PhD) registered under the AA's joint PhD programme, a cross-disciplinary initiative supported by all the Taught Postgraduate programmes.

## **4.2 AIMS**

The ambition of the programme is threefold: to provide conceptual tools to explore social, political, economic and institutional structures and their impact on architectural histories and forms of production; to understand contemporary discursive and material organisations from a historical, critical, environmental, interdisciplinary and transnational point of view; and to highlight the ways in which architecture is entangled with other spatial practices and alternative forms of knowledge production and dissemination.

### 4.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

| <b>INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES: MA in History and Critical Thinking; FHEQ LEVEL 7</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Learning Outcomes 'LO'</b>                                                        | Aligned to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and QAA Subject Benchmark (Architecture), on successful completion of the MA in History & Critical Thinking students will be able to:                                                                                                                       |
| <b>A</b>                                                                             | <b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| A1                                                                                   | Demonstrate a sound understanding of architecture in its built forms, histories and theoretical assumptions and in relation to well-established social, political, economic, and environmental contexts and transnational spaces.                                                                                               |
| A2                                                                                   | Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of spatial and aesthetic regimes in relation to processes of modernisation; how interpretations and uses of the terms modern, modernity and the contemporary are historically and culturally determined.                                                                              |
| A3                                                                                   | Demonstrate a critical awareness of current architectural thinking and practices as well as the ways in which they relate to and engage with other material, social and cultural dispositions.                                                                                                                                  |
| A4                                                                                   | Demonstrate critical capacity to interpret knowledge and evaluate research methods, modes of analysis and description, systems of architectural representation.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| A5                                                                                   | Read and analyse texts in order to assess their relation to architecture and develop a critical view of the arguments put into the design and the knowledge produced through its mechanisms and effects.                                                                                                                        |
| A6                                                                                   | Relate cultural objectives to forms of architectural practice and design speculation, to situate architecture's agency and economies within wider social and political realities.                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>B</b>                                                                             | <b>Subject Specific Skills and Attributes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| B1                                                                                   | Evaluate critically advanced scholarship, complex arguments and theories as well as their relation to design practices.                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| B2                                                                                   | Develop a critique of theories and practices and present the interpretations and conclusions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| B3                                                                                   | Undertake independent research with minimum guidance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| B4                                                                                   | Write a well-structured essay that shows evidence of initiative and self-directed learning as well as skills to make appropriately complex decisions, to present original ideas and conclusions, to formulate an argument clearly and effectively, and to use referencing and bibliography, commensurate to the level of study. |
| <b>C</b>                                                                             | <b>Transferable Skills and Attributes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| C1                                                                                   | Use their analytical and critical skills to evaluate and create new knowledge, of a quality to extend the forefront of the field.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| C2                                                                                   | Undertake advanced research activities and engage in their dissemination through doctoral studies, writing, teaching, curating, editing and publishing.                                                                                                                                                                         |

## 4.4 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The assessment of submitted work is based on the following overall assessment, in addition to specific ones given for each module. All learning outcomes must be met in order to achieve a pass overall. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

### Research and Knowledge acquirement

- Demonstration of research independently undertaken into the chosen area of study, showing evidence of critical awareness and sound understanding of established social, political, historical, theoretical, economic, environmental contexts relevant to the area of study.
- Capacity to address concepts, ideas and references at the forefront of the discipline through systematic enquiry into interconnected histories.

### Approach and development

- Demonstration of creative approach and decision-making process to engage with the chosen subject matter.
- Discursive process of synthesising acquired knowledge in a critical way.
- The structures, methods and tools utilised in the production of the work demonstrate initiative, self-directed learning, and the skills to make complex decisions.

### Argument and communication

- The ability to devise and sustain complex arguments, situated effectively in a wider field of relevant ideas with a critical position determined.
- Conclusions and reflections well executed, showing evidence of good judgement in the absence of complete data.
- Written and visual communication skills evidenced to a high standard throughout.
- Demonstration of the ability developed to undertake further research.

## 4.5 CREDIT FRAMEWORK

| Module                                                                  | Course                                                                              | Term  | Credits                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------------|
| Core Module 1 –<br>Historiography, Modernity,<br>Archive                | Writing History                                                                     | 1     | 15                                     |
|                                                                         | Unpacking the Archive: Evidence and Mediality                                       | 1     | 15                                     |
| Core Module 2 –<br>Interdisciplinary Issues in<br>Contemporary Practice | Architecture Agents and Economies                                                   | 2     | 15                                     |
|                                                                         | Climate Peace                                                                       | 2     | 15                                     |
| Core Module 3 – History,<br>Theory and Critical Writing                 | Writing Architecture: Intertwined Practices                                         | 2     | 15                                     |
| Core Module 4 – HCT &<br>PhD Debates                                    | Writing-With: architecture and land (Open<br>Debates)                               | 2     | 15                                     |
| Core Studio/Thesis –<br>MA Thesis                                       | Thesis Research Seminar (Weekly)<br>Theory/Critical Writing Workshop<br>Annual Trip | 3     | 0 (supporting<br>programme<br>content) |
|                                                                         | Final Thesis                                                                        | 3 + 4 | 90                                     |

## 4.6 TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

The MA Programme takes place over 12 months. The year is divided into 4 terms of 10-12 weeks each, in which a total of 1800 learning hours are distributed over 45 weeks, resulting in an average of 40 hours per week.

Most of the course teaching takes place in the first two terms. Six courses distributed in 4 modules are to be taken during Terms 1 and 2, after which students will attend the Thesis Research Seminar and produce a written thesis in Terms 3 and 4. Each course is weighing 15 credits and the entire coursework accounts for 90 out of the 180 credits given. Terms 3 and 4 are dedicated to research and writing the final thesis. The Thesis Research Seminar in Term 3, consisting in the Theory/Critical Writing Workshop, weekly seminars in which students present and discuss work in-progress, the Thesis Reviews in June as well as the annual trip support the process toward the final MA Thesis, which is to be submitted in September and accounts for 90 credits.

The regular courses and other events delivered by the programme in Terms 1 and 2 are held over two or three days each week in single or double sessions. Courses in Term 1 focus on issues of historiography, and histories, theories and practices of the archive. Courses in term 2 focus on disciplinary, social, territorial, and environmental questions. Language and critical writing are integral to all courses. Individual tutorials are arranged at convenient times outside these time slots. Collaborations with AA Design Units, participation in juries, architectural trips, and visits to archives, this year in London and Paris, enable students to engage with design speculation, built structures, and archival material.

The organisation of Terms 1 and 2 centres on core modules:

- **Historiography, Modernity, Archive**, which is delivered in the two weekly courses - Writing History (Marina Lathouri)  
Unpacking the Archive: Evidence and Mediality (Marina Lathouri with Guillermo S. Arsuaga and Guest Tutors)
- **Interdisciplinary Issues in Contemporary Practice**, which develops in the two courses - Architecture Agents and Economies (William Orr)  
Climate Peace (John Palmesino)
- **History, Theory and Critical Writing**, which unfolds through the seminar series - Writing Architecture: Intertwined Practices (Marina Lathouri)  
HCT & PhD Debates - Writing-With: architecture and land (Marina Lathouri with Guest Speakers)

The above seminars, which are recurring and compulsory, along with additional activities, are essential to the knowledge of the course and contribute to the learning outcomes of the students. Students have the option to audit other courses during any of the first three terms, considering the student's field of interest.

Students' work is supervised through a combination of intensive seminars with presentations in class, regular writing exercises, individual tutorials as well as the thesis seminar. All function to develop the students' analytical skills and expression and to assist them with the identification of their research interests and topics for assessed work in the form of essays, short writing pieces, interviews, research questions, and the final thesis.

## SECTION 5:

# MA IN HOUSING AND URBANISM

## 5.1 PROGRAMME INTRODUCTION

**Housing and Urbanism** focuses on the key issues driving urban transformation and the role of architecture in promoting and supporting critical change. We emphasize the lived city and the central role of residential life in the intensity and dynamism of the urban process. We treat housing as the cornerstone of an emerging urban vitality and its design as central to the modification of wider, complex urban systems. Design learning and investigation form the core of our programme, but a complementary aim is to deepen students' grasp of the politics of the city. In all our work, we integrate the study of form and process.

We work across scales, from detailed plans of contemporary housing to the mobility infrastructure of the regional metropolis. While many courses in urbanism grasp the broad overview of cities and regions, Housing and Urbanism investigates the way specific design reasoning enables actors and decision-makers to take essential next steps in generating change. The capacity for critical synthesis drives all our work and enables students to understand their project as the coalescence of a range of urban forces and trends. Offered as a 12-month taught-degree programme, the MA curriculum in Housing and Urbanism centres on design-led research leading to an individual thesis focused on the theoretical, historical, and architectural underpinnings to contemporary urban challenges. A collaborative Design Workshop forms the central element of the coursework and the student experience during the first two terms, with lectures and seminars informing students' design work and broadening their scholarly understanding of urban trends and histories. In the third term we make the transition from course-led study to individual thesis work, and the final term is devoted entirely to students' individual design thesis development and completion.

Each year, we focus on a set of specific research themes which organise our workshops and international collaborations, while always maintaining our commitment to the interrelationship between urban projects and civic action. We investigate the foundations of urban resilience and complexity, and research how design supports multi-sectoral decision making involving both government and private actors. In this era of global uncertainty generated by conflict and climate change, we emphasize the potential of innovation in our lived environments to support and strengthen democratic practice. We examine the hopes for leadership, responsibility, and innovation that may emerge from the current situation, and the role that architects and urbanists may play in encouraging a high level of ambition among our political actors and civic leaders.

Housing and Urbanism holds to a comparative and international tradition. While London as an outstanding global city forms our primary research laboratory, we undertake an annual European study trip to investigate leading-edge projects elsewhere, such as Berlin, Paris, Copenhagen, or Vienna. In addition, Housing and Urbanism collaborates each year with a host city and university in an intensive workshop addressing a specific live challenge under conditions of complexity and rapid change. Our partner cities have included Warsaw, Bogotá, Recife, Taipei, Hanoi, Shanghai, Rio de Janeiro, and Mexico City. This past year, we worked with the city of Brno, Czechia, and will continue this collaboration, while also initiating new partnerships in South America. Housing and Urbanism students become part of this vibrant network of international urban learning.

## 5.2 AIMS

The Housing and Urbanism Programme seeks innovative urban strategies through the integration of architecture, politics, and research into the contemporary urban process. Students are taught to think and design across scales, from the dwelling to the metropolitan region, and to value associational practice and civic action in their approach to urban projects. We demonstrate how exemplary architectural projects offer lessons to students interested in effective urban strategy and transformation. Our approach derives from an internationally comparative and historically informed study of the urban process, well grounded in a solid understanding of contemporary trends and realities. Students' thesis projects should demonstrate a balanced concern for critical reflection, innovation, and viability, and present a synthetic understanding of urban issues through the application of architectural and urban reasoning.

### 5.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

| <b>INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES: MA in Housing and Urbanism; FHEQ LEVEL 7</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Learning Outcomes 'LO'</b>                                               | Aligned to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and QAA Subject Benchmark (Architecture), on successful completion of the MA in Housing and Urbanism students will be able to: |
| <b>A</b>                                                                    | <b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>                                                                                                                                                                 |
| A1                                                                          | Demonstrate a good grasp of the theories and concepts which help understanding the interplay of social/political and spatial processes in the city.                                                |
| A2                                                                          | Demonstrate critical and analytical capacity in the use of those conceptual tools.                                                                                                                 |
| A3                                                                          | Demonstrate good knowledge of historical precedents.                                                                                                                                               |
| A4                                                                          | Demonstrate good knowledge of the history of ideas in the fields of urbanism and housing.                                                                                                          |
| A5                                                                          | Demonstrate good knowledge of tools and methods of spatial analysis and intervention.                                                                                                              |
| A6                                                                          | Apply their analytical capacity to a real context and situation.                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>B</b>                                                                    | <b>Subject Specific Skills and Attributes</b>                                                                                                                                                      |
| B1                                                                          | Represent graphically their understanding of a given situation.                                                                                                                                    |
| B2                                                                          | Connect their analysis to concrete design strategies and proposals.                                                                                                                                |
| B3                                                                          | Identify and use tools of spatial design and intervention appropriate to a given situation.                                                                                                        |
| B4                                                                          | Contribute to professional teams working on urban and housing projects.                                                                                                                            |
| B5                                                                          | Develop and test by and through design a central thesis.                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>C</b>                                                                    | <b>Transferable Skills and Attributes</b>                                                                                                                                                          |
| C1                                                                          | Use their analytical capacity in other areas of urban development studies.                                                                                                                         |
| C2                                                                          | Engage in urban research as a member of an interdisciplinary team.                                                                                                                                 |
| C3                                                                          | Contribute, as part of an interdisciplinary team, to the formulation of urban development strategy.                                                                                                |

### 5.4 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The assessment of submitted work is based on the following overall assessment, in addition to specific ones given for each module. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

#### Context and analysis

- An awareness of the historical and theoretical context of the issue(s) addressed.
- A sound critical and analytical grasp of the main concepts employed or discussed.
- An ability to understand urban spatial conditions and processes and/or analyze and employ exemplary urban projects in the development of an argument.
- Referencing of sources of information using agreed conventions.
- Ability for comparative analysis and meaningful generalisation.

**Approach and development**

- A capacity to develop a clear point of view and consistent line of argument both through written work and design.
- A capacity to apply knowledge gained in the Course to the development of the written and design work.
- Effective and appropriate use of visual material to develop the thesis argument.
- use of critical faculties which will allow graduates to continue expanding their knowledge in the field.
- Good judgement and a responsible attitude toward the application of this knowledge.
- Capability to apply the newly acquired knowledge in architectural and design practices and research.

**Resolution and communication**

- Innovative thinking and creativity.
- Clear structure, writing and presentation of course work.
- An ability to develop a comprehensive design response to a particular urban challenge.

**5.5 CREDIT FRAMEWORK**

| Term    | Course Title                                                                                                                 | Credits                      |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1, 2, 3 | <b>Core Module 1 – Design Workshop Group</b><br>Including:<br>Critical Urbanism<br>Sustainable Urbanism                      | 20                           |
| 1, 2, 3 | <b>Core Module 2 – Design Workshop Individual</b><br>Including:<br>Critical Urbanism<br>Sustainable Urbanism                 | 20                           |
| 1       | <b>Core Module 3 – Elective: Submit 2 of 3 Electives</b><br>Housing Form<br>Transnational Cities I<br>Urbanity and Democracy | 20 (10 credits per elective) |
| 2       | <b>Core Module 4 – Elective: Submit 2 of 3 Electives</b><br>Domesticity<br>Transnational Cities II<br>Urban Form             | 20 (10 credits per elective) |
| 3, 4    | <b>Thesis</b>                                                                                                                | 90                           |
| 3       | <b>Thesis Brief</b>                                                                                                          | 10                           |

**5.6 TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS**

The MA Course is structured around three primary types of teaching and learning activities: design workshops; lectures and seminars; and the Final Thesis. The design workshops offer an opportunity to explore and apply architecture to questions of urban change, to develop arguments and debate approaches through project design, and to develop graphic and presentational skills. Here, students learn the interrelationships among proposition, investigation, debate, and synthesis that bring architecture and design onto the terrain of research in urbanism. The lectures and seminars allow students to broaden and deepen their understanding of architectural thought, the politics of urban change, and to develop a critical capacity to integrate these types of knowledge. In each of these activities the programme takes a prospective and internationally comparative view, helping students develop an informed but experimental attitude toward the pursuit of specific projects which may initiate or nurture positive urban transformation. This attitude is carried over into the dissertation work, during which the student develops a critically synthetic project demonstrating effective next steps within the contemporary urban process.

Group work within the course – especially in the Design Workshop – is modelled upon architectural practice, where collaboration, shared purpose, review, debate and common decision-making are given priority. Students work in small subsets of two or three students within a larger team to develop complex design responses to specific urban briefs. This exposes students to the challenge of collaboration and the

opportunity to hone skills in listening, presentation, communication, and persuasion. One output of the Design Workshop takes the form of a group document and is assessed as a common piece of work. A second output is an individual piece of work deepening and developing each student's distinctive perspective. Both pieces of work build students' capacity to critically synthesise materials from the lecture series in Critical Urbanism and Sustainable Urbanism and apply these to their design work. The Design Workshop Individual Assignment, essays for the elective lecture courses, and the thesis all emphasize individual work, along with the depth of research and personal ownership over the topic that this implies.

While the Design Workshop emphasises the architectural foundations of urban strategy, the elective lecture and seminar courses are organized around three additional core themes: the political foundations of the urban process; the investigation of critical difference in urban form, and especially, the role of housing innovation in democratic city-building. These themes are approached from different vantage points in each of the elective courses, and students are required to submit essays for two of the three electives in each of the first two terms. This enables students to develop the breadth and depth of their studies.

In each of the three teaching and learning activities, there is a structured balance between individual and group activities. The primary emphasis of the programme is on the development of each individual student's interests and capacities, and the preponderance of assessed work is individually pursued. However, the programme also aims to cultivate students' capacity for teamwork, shared investigation, and informed debate through team-based design review sessions and seminars.

London provides an outstanding laboratory of urban transformation, and the exploration of the city and its processes are fully integrated into H&U teaching in the main Design Workshop, through lectures and group seminar work, and through guided investigation tailored to individual student research interests. However, London is not just a place, but a network of active professionals and decision-makers, and H&U students are brought into contact with the field of London's change-makers to better understand the practical and political framework of urban transformation. Equally, however, lectures are structured to highlight an international and comparative perspective and to promote knowledge sharing and innovation transnationally. Our study trips and workshop abroad extend and deepen this learning strategy.

## Learning Support

Housing and Urbanism pursues a culture of active engagement between students and staff in all areas of teaching and learning. Scheduled activities, such as lectures, seminars, and the Design Workshop, make up a substantial portion of each week during term-time, which means there is a high level of contact hours with faculty as a baseline. In addition, there are opportunities for individual tutorial every week with both design tutors and lecturers. Students are encouraged to seek tutorials with faculty both for their design work and for essay writing, and we also have a dedicated staff member to support the development of students' writing skills. During the Final Thesis period of the course, each student will have at least two dedicated faculty for regular design review and tutorials.

H&U faculty are engaged in real-world urban projects and/or urban policy development, and a core area of our culture as a programme is to bring a feel for the pragmatics of contemporary urban and architectural practice to the lecture hall and studio. At the same time, Housing and Urbanism is also a home for conceptual experimentation and development, debate, and innovation, and the fundamental reason for our high degree of contact time with students is to bring out the richness of this encounter. We maintain a studio with this culture of engagement in mind, to support both individual design work and writing, on the one hand, and group activities, such as teamwork and discussion sessions, on the other.

Our annual European study trip and Intensive Workshop Abroad are both accompanied by a full complement of H&U faculty, such that these extended activities become opportunities for a sustained learning experience. In addition, during these trips we integrate local practitioners, academics, and decision-makers into our discussions, so that students gain an understanding of different international perspectives on urban development and strategy, along with the projects which support and manifest them.

In addition to the core areas of teaching and learning inside the programme, H&U students have access to Media Studies courses from the wider AA School, and a broad range of lunchtime and evening lectures, symposia and conferences. There is also a full complement of further support facilities, such as workshops, 3-D printing facilities, and a library with extensive holdings.

## SECTION 6:

# MA IN SPATIAL PERFORMANCE AND DESIGN (AAIS)

## 6.1 PROGRAMME INTRODUCTION

The Master of Arts in Spatial Performance and Design at the Architectural Association School of Architecture understands the area of Spatial Performance and Design beyond usual definitions of architecture and performance and takes spatial performance as an area of spatial investigation that includes the socio-political effect of design and performance and how creative work and design acts within its given context through actual projects and applied networks in the overlap of the creative disciplines. In this way the studio forms an intense learning environment for networking within the creative fields through actual exposed and applied projects.

The Architectural Association Interprofessional Studio is leading in the field applied interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation. This programme takes a fast-track, hands-on approach to teaching spatial performance, design and architecture, covering everything from design, content creation and teamwork to organisation, fundraising, budgeting, contracting, press, and procurement, giving students practical, actual experience in all areas of the creative process.

Engaging with the shifting demands of the creative industries, the AAIS redefines the boundaries between disciplines such as architecture, design, performance, and visual arts through real-world projects and active engagement with social and creative contexts. Since its founding, the studio has established itself as a globally unique programme in its applied approach. Through its rigorous MA and MFA programmes, the AAIS creates a distinctive educational environment where students are encouraged to move beyond their established practices, acquiring new skills and perspectives that directly inform their work in real social and cultural settings. Since its founding the AAIS has continued to expand its influence, establishing significant partnerships and pioneering research into the roles of identity, responsibility, and intellectual empathy within the actual practice of creative work. This commitment to advancing the frontiers of applied interdisciplinary work ensures that the AAIS remains at the cutting edge of contemporary creative education, maintaining its unique position both nationally and internationally.

Challenging the frontiers of working in between art, architecture and performance, the AAIS aims to expose a hidden 'worknet' between multiple professions and their products and methodologies. The studio – operating as an interdisciplinary creative office where knowledge exchange is one of the core points of focus – reaches professions and stimulates students to develop a language with which to communicate across creative disciplines. The AAIS explores the creative disciplines as defined as visual art, the performing arts, design, and media practices. Though the AAIS recognises that such definitions are constantly evolving, the principle of the interprofessional studio is to challenge rather than uphold the accepted divisions of these disciplines. In today's creative professions many individuals define their work and interest as being at home in more than one discipline. The Studio gives these individuals an opportunity to step away from their existing professional or academic activities and develop new creative skills and techniques as well as enjoy the intellectual stimulation of the multidisciplinary overlap of the professions. It acts as an invitation to build a network of professionals and experts from creative backgrounds as diverse and complementary as performance, design, music, film, photography, fashion, communication and curation through workshops and symposia, combining each creative language to work and study within the AA on concrete projects reflective of the various fields of research. Students are expected to have independence of creativity whilst having no option but to integrate into the collective practise of the ensemble.

Contrary to typical interdisciplinary design approaches, where individual professions remain in their respective fields of expertise, the AAIS seeks to place students outside their comfort zone, acquiring knowledge from other disciplines that will ultimately influence, extend and adjust their own creative processes and practise.

The AAIS has many established connections throughout the creative disciplines both in academia and practice. These various connections are utilised during lectures, seminars, exercises, tutorials and talks. The AAIS's real applied projects within the creative fields serve as a generator for the year's work and guarantee a high level of focus, outcome and public participation.

## **6.2 AIMS**

The primary aim of the AAIS is to develop and explore the genuinely multi- and trans-disciplinary, collaborative conditions of contemporary design. The work of the students should be able to demonstrate a field of practise that clearly stretches beyond the established disciplines and in this way creates projects within an 'in-between' discipline that is more than just a mere addition to existing disciplines of the creative fields. The mode of learning is through theoretical reflection and applied projects. It is important that the student demonstrates the ability to work within a team whilst their own creative abilities and knowledge expand within this setting. This should be visible in all parts of the student's work and submissions. Inter-professional work seeks to place students to work outside of their comfort zones. The individuals cannot merely work alongside the other discipline but must fulfil the task of other creative fields, whilst at the same time guaranteeing the professional quality of their own discipline. In this way they become simultaneously students of many fields and a teacher of their profession, as they share their individual knowledge of their own discipline whilst learning from their peers. The AAIS programme is designed to extract from a world of growing professional interests and pursuits those minds most keenly aware of the potential to create, and then transfer knowledge across domains and disciplines.

### 6.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

| <b>INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES: MA in Spatial Performance and Design (AAIS);<br/>FHEQ LEVEL 7</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Learning Outcomes 'LO'</b>                                                                    | Aligned to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and QAA Subject Benchmark (Architecture), on successful completion of the MA in Spatial Performance and Design students will be able to:                                    |
| <b>A</b>                                                                                         | <b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| A1                                                                                               | Demonstrate, through the examination of selected case studies, a thorough knowledge of the historical and theoretical base of multidisciplinary approaches within Spatial Performance and Design as well as network and collaborative theories. |
| A2                                                                                               | Show a critical and analytical capacity in the use of those concepts within a given socio-political and cultural context.                                                                                                                       |
| A3                                                                                               | Study independently and develop their own creativity through exchange with fellow students.                                                                                                                                                     |
| A4                                                                                               | Demonstrate a good understanding of the creative disciplines, their differences as well as overlaps.                                                                                                                                            |
| A5                                                                                               | Express clear areas of initiative and responsibility and with this the capacity to take up other students' ideas and designs to bring an overall project forward.                                                                               |
| A6                                                                                               | Exercise organisational and management decisions in the context of relevant legal frameworks and regulations that enable creative projects.                                                                                                     |
| A7                                                                                               | Demonstrate a good knowledge of technical development and execution of Spatial Performance and Design.                                                                                                                                          |
| A8                                                                                               | Reflect and evaluate a theoretical framework of applied projects.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>B</b>                                                                                         | <b>Subject Specific Skills and Attributes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| B1                                                                                               | Organise and execute creative events and projects                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| B2                                                                                               | Connect and collaborate with experts throughout the creative disciplines                                                                                                                                                                        |
| B3                                                                                               | Document and communicate innovative design ideas and techniques                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| B4                                                                                               | Contribute to and communicate within interdisciplinary professional teams                                                                                                                                                                       |
| B5                                                                                               | Create, and transfer, knowledge across domains and disciplines                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| B6                                                                                               | Research contemporary and traditional techniques and methodologies within the relevant disciplines and be able to transfer and re-appropriate them to the projects at hand.                                                                     |
| B7                                                                                               | Formulate variations and further development of applied projects.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>C</b>                                                                                         | <b>Transferable Skills and Attributes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| C1                                                                                               | Be able to generate new forms of collaborations, events and projects beyond the established disciplines                                                                                                                                         |
| C2                                                                                               | Communicate effectively with a wide range of individuals visually, orally and in writing                                                                                                                                                        |
| C3                                                                                               | Demonstrate clear and appropriate formulation of hypotheses and arguments, and apply these with a research agenda                                                                                                                               |
| C4                                                                                               | Continue expanding knowledge using the skills acquired.                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## 6.4 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The MA aims at individuals, who want to form a theoretical foundation for their future career based on practical, applied experience. Alumni of the MA programme, upon graduation, will continue their research through further academic study, positions in academia or through curatorial and cultural practise. The Master of Arts focuses on theoretical research that is based on experience and helps to create a new theoretical basis for the approach of the growing field of trans-disciplinary and collaborative work.

With its academic and research driven emphasis the MA allows the students to focus on specific research question within the collaborative field that derive from their own actual experience within applied projects rather than hypothetical or historical questions.

Throughout their learning trajectory an MA student should see the applied projects as scientific experimental setups in regard to clearly defined questions and areas of investigation and reflect this within their individual logbooks and written submissions.

This experience-driven research allows the students to recognise problems and specific research questions in an applied mode within the year's project.

On this basis MA students establish a field of research that is relevant to their area of work and their specific career and thoroughly specify and analyse this in a final written academic Thesis of the MA studies, argue it through further case studies and define clear strategies and conclusions.

All learning outcomes must be met in order to achieve a pass overall. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas, specified in the individual modules below:

- Context and analysis, process and synthesis, and resolution and communication.
- Research and knowledge acquirement, approach and development, and argument and communication.
- Knowledge acquirement, integration and synthesis, and clarity of communication.

## 6.5 CREDIT FRAMEWORK

| Term | Course Title                                           | Credits                          |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1    | Core Module 1 – Workshop Series                        | 20                               |
| 2    | Core Module 2 – Event 1                                | 20                               |
| 3    | Core Module 3 – Event 2 and Site Activity              | 20                               |
| 2    | Core Module 4 – Applied Methods                        | 10                               |
| 1    | Seminar ABC: A Survey of Art in Six A to Zs            | 10                               |
| 1    | Seminar SUAW: Spatially Understanding Academic Writing | 0 (supporting programme content) |
|      | <b>Core Studio/Thesis</b>                              | <b>100 (as below)</b>            |
| 1    | Interprofessional Studio                               | 20                               |
| 2    | Design Studio                                          | 20                               |
| 4    | Event Portfolio                                        | 20                               |
| 4    | AAIS MA written Thesis                                 | 40                               |

## 6.6 TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

Within the first phase the programme focuses on seminars and workshops within the wide field of creative industries and interprofessional work as well as the planning and organisation of the year's events, constructions and installations. The seminar programme and workshops range from history and theory of networks and interdisciplinary collaboration to creative management and delivery, as well as project development, legal frameworks and intellectual property rights.

Every year there are additional workshops in relation to the year's specific events and collaborations on topics such as scenography, choreography, curation and performing arts. The theory seminars will be supplemented with workshops in relation to construction and manufacturing of the applied project.

Within the overall project each student will make collaborative design proposals. Working across the traditional boundaries of the disciplines, each the proposals will cover a wide spectrum of the event's design ranging from graphic design, fashion design, scenography and architectural proposals to the choreography and curation of the projects. Through internal debate and external critique these designs will be mediated and transformed within the overall design and framework of the events.

Term 2 will focus on the detailed design and organisation of the events. Students will prepare the necessary documents for the planning and manufacturing of the various constructions and designs and negotiate them with the relevant experts of the related fields. Depending on the year's events this will range from structural design to sound and light engineering and fashion manufacturing.

An important task of the year's programme is the organisation of the performances and events themselves. Students will co-organise the schedule of events, the involved artists and speakers, as well as public relations for the events.

The applied project series will take place between the end of Term 2 and the end of Term 3 when all events of Phase I will conclude. This phase will focus on the delivery and management of the events. As a team students will work on all parts of the execution of the year's events in close collaboration with experts of the relevant field the students will work on the hands-on fabrication of the sets and exhibition artefacts, the installation of required technologies as well as the direct organisation and management of the performances. In parallel the students are responsible for an overall documentation of the year's programme through film, audio recording, photography and writing, opening up the year's work to later discussions and transformation.

During the applied phase of Term 3 MA students start to formulate their abstract for their final Thesis based on the practical experience of the events and projects.

It should be noted, a difference to many other MA programmes, the Master of Arts in Spatial Performance and Design builds on the theoretical research of actual events and the applied work of the student. Throughout this second phase during Term 4 the MA students will develop their specific MA Thesis with a focus on academic reflection on the project. In this the student should develop a detailed theoretical elaboration of the year's project and focus on specific research question within the collaborative field that derive from their own actual experience within the applied projects. They should research the influence of the interprofessional approach and their specific area of investigation on the result of the products and research further potentials of this approach with a focus on the respective professional background through the specific case stories of the year and further current and historical case studies.

Students should be able to clearly identify and formulate relevant areas of investigation on the basis of their applied work and arrive at applicable conclusions and recommendations for projects within the related field. The students should develop through academic writing, as well as through related testing and drawings, alternatives and further developments of the actual project.

## **Learning Support**

In addition to design tutorials Master of Art students will have regular tutorial sessions to form their Thesis and academic writing skills with the seminar staff. The development of the Thesis argument and writing sessions should be clearly documented and logged as part of the term's documentation.