

UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:

**MA ARCHITECTURE**

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21**

*This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each unit can be found in the Unit Descriptors.*

## Section A – Material Course Information

Validating Body	University for the Creative Arts <sup>1</sup>		
Teaching Body	University for the Creative Arts		
Final Award Title and Type	Master of Arts		
Course Title	Architecture		
Course Location and Length	Campus: Canterbury	Length: 1 year full-time	
Mode of Study	Full-time	✓	Part-time
Period of Validation	2016/17 to 2020/21		
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable		
Type of Accreditation	The course does not have Professional Accreditation. UCA also offers a 2 year Master of Architecture course, prescribed by the ARB/EU and validated by the Royal Institute of British Architects for applicants wishing to gain exemption from Part 2 of ARB's Professional Examination and aiming to register as an Architect within the UK		
Accreditation due for renewal	Not Applicable		
Entry criteria and requirements <sup>2</sup>			
Successful applicants will normally be required to demonstrate the following:			
<u>Entry Criteria</u>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong personal statement indicating potential direction of any postgraduate study (or a completed UCA MA proposal form)</li> <li>• A good Honours degree or equivalent qualification in the subject or a related discipline and/or</li> <li>• Relevant work experience,(documented via a portfolio of high quality art or design work) demonstrating an ability to study at postgraduate level.</li> <li>• Consideration will also be given to applicants who can make a strong case for admission in relation to a particular project and can demonstrate their potential to satisfactorily complete the course.</li> </ul>			
<u>Minimum English Language Requirements</u>			
If a candidate's first language is not English a certificate is required as evidence of an average IELTS score of 6.0 (with a minimum of 5.5 in each individual component) or equivalent.			
A candidate may be offered a place on the condition that they improve their English language and study skills. UCA offers two pre-sessional English language courses that can improve an IELTS score by a maximum of 1.0 and 0.5, or equivalent.			
<u>Mature Applicants</u>			
Applications from mature students are welcomed. Mature students may apply on the strength of a portfolio			

<sup>1</sup> Regulated by the Office for Students

<sup>2</sup> This should be the standard University Criteria unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board and include UCAS entry profile for undergraduate courses.

and previous experience (or accredited prior learning).

Disabled Students

Applications from students with disabilities are considered on the same criteria and principles as all other applicants. All students with a disability are encouraged to indicate this on their application form in order that advice can be offered on the facilities and services available. Prospective students with a disability will be encouraged to visit and discuss their requirements with the Learning Support Manager.

Overall methods of assessment <sup>3</sup>	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
Course	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours <sup>4</sup>	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
Course	13.1%	86.9%	0.0%
	235 hours	1565 hours	0 hours
General level of staff delivering course	The University's current recruitment policy for Lecturers and Senior Lecturers states that they must have either an MA or equivalent professional practice in a relevant discipline or field. All lecturing staff are encouraged to work towards a teaching qualification or professional Recognition by the Higher Education Academy and this is a requirement for Senior Lecturers. Senior Lecturers are required to be professionally active or engaged in research in their discipline. All Lecturers and Senior Lecturers undertake scholarship in their disciplines. There are also Sessional Staff to link courses with professional practice and Technicians to provide technical support.		
Language of Study	English		
Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement: The course subscribes to the Master's Degree Characteristics published by the QAA.			
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)			

<sup>3</sup> As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

<sup>4</sup> As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

### The course structure

The structure of all of the University's awards complies with the University's [Common Credit Framework](#). The Common Credit Framework includes information about the:

- Rules for progression between the stages of a course;
- Consequences of failure for reassessment, compensation and exit awards;
- Calculation and classification of awards;

Unit codes and titles	Level	Credit value	Elective/Core	If elective, is this most popular choice?
CARC7001 - Contexts and Methods	7	30	Core	N/A
CARC7002 - Exploratory Practice	7	30	Core	N/A
CARC7003 - Project Development	7	60	Core	N/A
CARC7005 - Final Realisation	7	60	Core	N/A

### Section B - Course Overview

- The course is located in the established and respected Canterbury School of Architecture and shares studio facilities and staffing with the wider UCA MA programmes. Doing so creates significant formal and informal opportunities for intellectual exchange between the disciplines of art, architecture and design.
- In particular the MA Architecture shares a common structure with the MA Interior Design, offering a high degree of scope for collaboration across disciplines. The framework of assessment for these courses are configured to allow a student with sufficient capability to demonstrate achievement of required accredited elements of the first year of the Master of Architecture (RIBA Pt.2 accredited) course.
- Students are required to develop individual research agendas that inform and activate personal practical projects. Knowledge is built through one to one tutorials, lectures, seminars and applied project exercises; using dialogue and activism to frame understanding of cultural contexts and theoretical positions.
- The course is conceived as a laboratory for spatial investigation and innovation. Architectural and systemic issues of fabrication, meaning, representation, new media, interaction, cognition, emergent technologies and their capacity for use and misuse in modes of spatial delivery all provide contemporary theoretical themes and frameworks within the course.
- Students are encouraged to interrogate and extend their knowledge of spatial theory through highly experimental projects. It utilizes the range of craft and digital workshops and laboratories available at UCA Canterbury to facilitate a methodology of extended 1:1 scale prototypes and tests, rigorously recorded, iterated and refined to develop advanced applied design research capabilities. It fosters a process of risk taking and inculcates an inherent understanding of the importance of repeated design failure in the creative process.
- The course welcomes applications from students from a wide range of visual arts backgrounds that wish to extend or redefine the theoretical and practical base of their spatial understanding and project realisation abilities. Regular guidance and critical feedback from a wide range of subject experts and leading professional practitioners facilitates this to the highest level.
- The course culminates in the well-respected Canterbury MA Graduation show. As such it provides, prepares and requires students to address the challenge of independently realising and comprehensively articulating full-scale spatial installations for a high profile and public arts event.
- The course offers a full time or part-time mode of study and can be completed over 1 or 2 years enabling those in work to undertake postgraduate study.
- Access to research active staff facilitates opportunities for MA-PhD progression with former students having successfully embarked on such a path.

### Section C - Course Aims

The MA Architecture is part of the postgraduate school's MA programme that has the following overarching aims:

- A1: To provide a flexible but structured cross-disciplinary postgraduate community and creative intellectual context in which students can pursue a rigorous, self-directed research project
- A2: To enable and encourage extended critical debate and dialogue within such a community that fosters a high degree of individual critical reflection
- A3: To develop independent learners capable of advancing and integrating their own practical skills, theoretical knowledge, research methodologies and professional practice towards the embodied outcome of a systematic production of a specific and original body of work
- A4: To provide students with the means for establishing and understanding the place of such work within the context of relevant and contemporary academic and professional practices and debates.
- A5: To encourage research strategies that reflect the contemporary context in theoretical discourse and creative practice and form the basis for informed speculation upon and wider articulation of potential future directions.

The MA Architecture also has the following specific aims:

- A6: To encourage the development and refinement of experimental, innovative approaches to representation, fabrication and conceptualisation in the ultimate delivery of an ambitious spatial outcome.
- A7: To provide a specific interdisciplinary context that particularly facilitates and builds upon interrogation of the systemic spatial outcomes of the relations between: occupation, cognition, technological production, modes of record and configurations of enclosure.

### Section D - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

#### Knowledge

- LO1: Initiate and implement an individual self-directed research project using research methods, materials, techniques and modes of representation appropriate to contemporary architectural practice
- LO2: Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of, and critical engagement with, relevant practical, theoretical and professional contexts and be able to situate and interpret their own work within these

#### Understanding

- LO3: Understand and build upon historic and contemporary relationships between art, design and architecture and to use this broader perspective to provide an integrated, innovative approach to contemporary practice
- LO4: Demonstrate an ability to analyse, synthesise and evaluate a range of external sources to inspire, inform and implement the generation and development of original ideas and solutions within a systematic research project

### Application

LO5: Execute the independent realisation of a final built project to an ambitious degree of scale or complexity; showcasing development of experimental and innovative approaches to fabrication, technology, materiality, production and or representation within contemporary spatial practice

LO6: Identify the potential for their work within specific professional contexts and developed appropriate spoken, written and visual communication skills to clearly articulate their concepts, methods and proposals to both specialist, broad and international audiences

LO7: Demonstrate a reflective and evaluative approach to their own work, acting independently and decisively in identifying, implementing and sustaining future research thought and experimental practice at professional levels.

## **Section E - Learning, Teaching and Assessment**

### Learning and Teaching Strategy

Learning and teaching within the MA is founded upon a pedagogic implementation of aspects of conversation theory and second order cybernetic discourse. Key to the approach is the primacy of establishing an intellectual creative space for individual learners to form a feedback loop between the practices of embodied making, reflective thought and public critical dialogue. The course encourages candidates to develop individual creative methodologies and research agendas that can drive such a process; to empower them to take full ownership of them; and to assume responsibility for delivering ambitious, self-managed, final outcomes.

In order to facilitate the above emergence, the MA units generally move from periods of more structured teaching and explicit exploration in the early stages of the year, towards increasingly self-directed independent project work. Course staff carefully observe and support a learner's progress towards such capabilities. The following structured teaching techniques are generally utilised during the MA year:

- Weekly one to one studio based design tutorials in which the 'tutor' aim is to act as a conversational guide and creative facilitator; explicitly stepping back from the literal dictation of ideas to require a student to find their own way to determining and agreeing future courses of action.
- Regular constructive critical reviews and public debate; at key design stages and concerning personal research avenues, to refine communication and aid a culture of interdisciplinary exchange at post graduate level and beyond.
- Lectures and student led seminars for the presentation of theoretical issues and their extended discussion relative to studio research and practice.
- Repeated emphasis on the importance of physical fabrication and practical testing to encourage haptic discoveries, material techniques and real delivery as an inherent part of the generation of design research thinking.
- An encoding of degrees of iterative failure and the recognition of how these have resulted in learning as a recognised deliverable within each unit.

The nature of the MA candidate profile is such that a proportion of learners originate from cultural, linguistic and creative contexts that are in practice alien to the course ethos. To both utilize such diversity and facilitate best possible engagement methods, formal unit teaching on the course is supplemented by a planned series of seminars and group conversations, run weekly by UCA Learning Enhancement and Support staff, within the MA space and reflecting upon studio preoccupations. Engagement with such opportunities can be extended to meet particular individual student needs as and where appropriate.

Due to the course length, a defined period of work placement or specific work placement unit is not offered. Students may negotiate short absences in order to gain work experience where appropriate. In addition, the course has a high degree of engagement with industry; from visits to practitioners' studios; to a wide range of guest critics and lecturers engaging with the course at review and presentation moments; and finally by virtue of its location within Canterbury School of Architecture and exposure to the 'Multi-storey' annual guest lecture

series.

#### Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy for the MA measures development in two areas; individual understanding of key bodies of knowledge; and, practical application of a range of advanced skills to advance said knowledge. Such knowledge can be categorised into; contexts and concepts (critical, historical, cultural and professional), methodologies (of research and processes) and technical. The applied skills to be demonstrated by a student are; analytical/interpretative skills, creative/innovation skills, technical/practical skills, communication, and finally, independence.

A range of assessment methods are therefore used during the MA course, including written assignments, portfolio submissions, practical assignments, oral presentations, and formal peer review. These provide students with opportunities to demonstrate achievement of a range of communication skills (written, drawn and oral), built outcomes, as well as research-specific and technical knowledge. For each unit a timetable for assessment is published, together with a clear statement of assessment requirements, criteria and assessment methods.

Whilst assessment is the way in which the University measures performance and determines suitability for progression to the next stage of the course, it is also used to provide opportunities for feedback to students, as well as specific insights into the considerations of individual research. As such moments of formative assessment occur within the duration of key units (in addition to the summative assessment at the conclusion of each), in which students are provided with guidance to evaluate strengths or weaknesses and hence identify ways in which performance might be improved.

Detailed oral feedback is given in person at each formative or summative assessment point; a summary record of said feedback, in which the assessment criteria are mapped to appropriate unit aims and objectives, is subsequently made available online as per UCA's digital learning support strategy.

Final unit assessments are rigorously adjudicated to ensure that those passing both individual units and achieving a final masters award have achieved standards commensurate with the nationally defined expectations for awards at this level.

### **Section F - Enhancing the Quality of Learning and Teaching**

The course is subject to the University's rigorous quality assurance procedures which involve subject specialist and internal peer review of the course at periodic intervals, normally of 5 years. This process ensures that the course engages with the applicable national Subject Benchmarks and references the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

All courses are monitored on an annual basis where consideration is given to:

- External Examiner's Reports
- Key statistics including data on retention and achievement
- Results of the Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Feedback from Student Course Representatives