

**UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS**

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:**

**MA URBAN DESIGN**

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/18]**

*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>	
Final Award Title and Type	Master of Arts	
Course Title	Urban Design	
Course Location and Length	Campus: Canterbury	Length: 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time
Period of Validation	2016/17-2020/21	
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable	
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable	
<p>Entry criteria and requirements<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Normally, students will be accepted on to the course with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A good honours degree in architecture, planning, landscape architecture or related spatial design area of study. This is defined as an upper second class or above in a related subject area. However, applications from students who have not achieved an upper second overall will be considered if they can offer additional evidence to demonstrate their potential to satisfactorily complete the course.</li> <li>▪ A portfolio of spatial design work. This will be an acceptable means of gaining entry to the course for those applicants who may have relevant employment experience and skills but little experience of higher education.</li> <li>▪ In addition all applicants should supply a strong personal statement (indicating the potential direction of their postgraduate studies).</li> </ul> <p>Minimum English language requirements: If your first language is not English a certificate is required as evidence that you have an average IELTS score of 6.0 or equivalent. If you are applying as an international student from a country outside the EU and require a visa to study in the UK, you will also need a minimum of 5.5 in each individual component.</p> <p>You may be offered a place on a course on the condition that you improve your English language and study skills. We offer <u>pre-sessional English language courses</u> which can improve your IELTS score by a maximum of 1.0 and 0.5, or equivalent.</p>		

<sup>1</sup> Regulated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England

<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.

Overall methods of assessment <sup>3</sup>	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
	0%	0%	100%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours <sup>4</sup>	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
	13.1%	86.9%	0%
General level of staff delivering the course <sup>5</sup>	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.		
Mode of Study	Full-time	X	Part-time X
Language of Study	English		
Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement: The course subscribes to the 'Masters degree characteristics' published by QAA.			
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)			

<sup>3</sup> As confirmed for the KIS course stage data: the overall percentage in terms of Written exams; Practical exams and Coursework

<sup>4</sup> As confirmed for the KIS course stage data: the overall percentage by stage

<sup>5</sup> Include general information about the experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the course, for example Professor, Course Leader, Senior Lecturer

## The course structure

The structure of all of the University's awards complies with the University's Common Credit Framework. All students are registered for a particular award. Exit awards are available to students in line with 6.7 of the Common Credit Framework.

Unit codes and titles	Level	Credit value	Elective/ Core	If elective, is this the most popular student choice?
CURD7001 Urban Contexts and Methods	7	30	Core	
CURD7002 Exploratory Practice	7	30	Core	
CURD7003 Project Development	7	60	Elective	Yes – 2 options in unit: non-placement and placement. Non-placement option most popular
CURD7005 Project Development (by dissertation)	7	60	Elective	No
CURD7004 Final Project	7	60	Elective	Yes
CURD7006 Final Project (by dissertation)	7	60	Elective	No

## Section B - Course Overview

The MA Urban Design course will develop and advance your understanding of the economic, ecological, social and political dynamics shaping the urban environment and encourages you to build advanced urban design skills. The course explicitly addresses the contemporary themes, trends and challenges of current urban transformation processes, and actively engages with the emerging roles and future practices within the expanded urban design field.

The course is designed to develop your understanding of contemporary issues in urban design, planning and urbanism through sustained critical and creative engagement. The taught programme will help you to develop a range of strategies, tools and skills, including research methods and critical theories. The core of the curriculum is project based, supplemented by lectures, seminars, workshops and independent study.

The MA Urban Design course is embedded within the thriving postgraduate environment

at UCA Canterbury. In collaborative research and design studios students work closely with their peers on the MA Architecture, MA Interior Design and Master of Architecture (RIBA/ARB Part 2) courses. The MA Urban Design students have access to leading practitioners in the field of Urbanism and Architecture and access to the School of Architecture's specialist studios equipped with digital design tools and fabrication equipment. The wider Canterbury campus offers a range of specialist facilities including workshops supporting 3D making in a range of media, digital media and photography. All MA students are able to access these resources to develop their practice and methods.

Students also share a common lecture and seminar series with the MA Architecture, MA Interior Design and MArch (RIBA/ARB Part 2) students and are encouraged to participate in inter-disciplinary sessions and reviews of work with MA Fine Art and MA Curatorial Practices students.

Exploiting UCA Canterbury's geographic location in the Southeast of England, with its rich and complex history of urbanisation, its adjacency to the metropolitan area of London and its infrastructural links to continental Europe, the School of Architecture at UCA has developed close collaborations with a variety of regional partners including Design South East and Local Authorities. These relationships support shared formats that expose students to regional stakeholders of urban transformation processes, including Design Review Panels, local authorities, architecture, urban design and planning practitioners, representatives of the building industry and other urban communities.

Together with its collaborative network of partners, the MA Urban Design course acts as a think tank for regional development and as a task force for local change. Working with practising professionals, students identify future audiences for their ideas and prepare for the next stage of their career.

The MA Urban Design course equips its graduates with the essential skills to succeed in contemporary urban design practice within both, the private and the public sector. It will also assist you in finding a career in higher-level research and/or teaching.

## Section C - Course Aims

The MA Urban Design has the following generic aims:

- A1 To provide a flexible but structured interdisciplinary context in which students can pursue rigorously a self directed research project whose outcomes are embodied within the systematic production of a specific and original body of work.
- A2 To encourage the development of each student's own critical reflection as the basis for developing as independent learners capable of advancing their own skills, knowledge and professional and research practice.
- A3 To provide students with the means for establishing and understanding the place of their own work within the context of relevant and contemporary academic and professional situations and debates.

A4 To encourage the development of research strategies that reflect the contemporary context in theoretical discourse and creative practice and form the basis for informed speculation about future directions.

A5 To provide a balance, appropriate to the demands of individual projects, of taught elements, individual research and collective debate.

The MA Urban Design has the following specific aims:

A6 To encourage the development of experimental and innovative approaches to urban design through a rigorous investigation of contemporary theories, practices and modes of representation.

A7 To provide a specific interdisciplinary context in order to understand and build upon relationships between art, architecture and urban design and to use this broader perspective to provide an integrated, innovative approach to contemporary practices.

#### Section D - Course Outcomes

##### Knowledge & Understanding

In relation to knowledge and understanding, successful completion of the course will enable the student to be able to:

LO1 Initiate and implement an individual, self-directed research project into particular issues affecting urbanism and the city, using research methods, materials, techniques and modes of representation appropriate to contemporary urban design practice. In particular the course emphasises an approach to Urban Design that recognises the dynamic nature of the city and looks to establish tools and techniques that can support community participation in change and solutions that are derived from a close understanding of the economic, social and ecological forces acting upon the city.

LO2 Demonstrate a thorough understanding of, and critical engagement with, the relevant practical, theoretical and professional contexts of their project and be able to situate and interpret their own work within this context. Students will be able to understand and build upon relationships between art, design, architecture and urban design and to use this broader perspective to provide an integrated, innovative approach to contemporary practice

LO3 Demonstrate an ability to employ analysis, synthesis and evaluation to a range of external sources and to their own practice to inspire and inform the generation, development and application of original ideas and solutions.

##### Application

Successful completion of the course will enable the student to be able to demonstrate the application of skills and other attributes in the following areas:

LO4 Demonstrate an ability to communicate complex and speculative concepts about

urbanism and the city, and proposals for its transformation effectively in spoken, written and visual forms. This will include the development of experimental and innovative approaches to the practices and representation of contemporary urban forms and processes.

LO5 Identify the potential for their work within specific professional contexts and developed appropriate communication skills for engagement with audiences, in particular those who are not familiar with architectural and urban design conventions including communities of lay citizens.

LO6 Demonstrate a reflective and evaluative approach to their own work, which allows them to act independently and decisively in identifying, implementing and sustaining individual research and practice at a professional level.

## Section E - Learning, Teaching and Assessment

### Learning and Teaching Strategy

The MA Urban Design is project based supported by seminars, tutorials, workshops, work in progress sessions, critiques and a series of short tutor-led projects. At postgraduate level, the student is expected to identify, develop and manage their own MA project and further develop the skills needed for autonomy of research. Through a proactive relationship with their tutors, students will lead their project work and be supported by staff through consultative and advisory tutorial guidance.

The ability of students to carry out independent research and to manage and appraise the development of their project is a defining attribute of this postgraduate course. The progressive move from staff-directed to autonomous learning is an integral part of the structure of this course, and teaching and learning practices encourage students to develop the abilities of student-centered or independent learning as thoroughly as possible.

On-line teaching and learning support is provided principally through myUCA and e-mail, although other on-line means of communication are encouraged. All MA students receive an induction into the use of myUCA as part of their introduction to the course. Course sites are used in several ways. They are the main means of communication between course staff and students providing timetable information, tutorial times and announcements. They also provide a database for MA students containing course documentation, archives of student work and links to important web based resources.

PDP (personal development planning) is an intrinsic element of the approach to student learning on this course. Through each of three phases of the MA course students have the opportunity to engage in activities that will assist them in identifying their skills and knowledge, reflecting on their achievement and relating this to their career aspirations. Key elements of this are the development of the MA Project Proposal in terms of goal setting, the ongoing use of the Research Journal as a vehicle for critical reflection and the final stage focus on publication and dissemination in identifying career opportunities.

It is our aim to develop in MA students a high level of competence in practical, visual, oral

and written expression.

Students gain credits through successful completion within the University's Common Credit Framework. Master of Arts degrees will be awarded on the basis of meeting the credit requirements and quality thresholds.

#### Placement and Exchange

The School of Architecture encourages and accommodates placements/internships wherever possible, although these are neither requisite nor guaranteed. Due to the length of the course, we do not offer a defined period of work placement or a specific work placement unit. However, students may negotiate short periods of absence in order to gain experience in a particular area or travel for the purposes of their research. A flexible approach will always be maintained; however, it is preferable that any placements/internships take place during semester 2. Students are not expected to be away for more than 7 weeks during this semester.

The same applies to international exchanges: The university has a number of ERASMUS partners who will host students for shorter or longer periods of time. Exchanges are organized through UCA's International Office. Students must complete a learning agreement with the host institution before undertaking an exchange. Normally, full-time postgraduate students are not encouraged to undertake a period of exchange longer than 7 weeks (or half a semester).

#### Employability and Employer Engagement

The course supports and encourages students to participate in live projects and competitions as part of the development of their individual MA Project. This mainly occurs in Phases 2 & 3 of the course and students are expected to take responsibility for ensuring an appropriate balance between external demands and their own project requirements. In Phase 1, live projects may be a feature of Unit 1.2 but this varies year on year. Where applicable, live projects will be included in this unit in order to begin the process of locating students' research within the regional context. These projects and platforms expose students to regional stakeholders of urban transformation processes, including Local Authorities, Architecture, Urban Design and Planning practitioners, representatives of the building industry and other urban communities. These formats are seen as important in developing professional skills and industry links, as well as offering alternate perspectives on developing research.

The School of Architecture offers an extensive range of lectures and active workshops by leading practitioners in architecture, urbanism and design, including a vibrant public lecture, MULTISTORY, which students play an active role in organising. More widely across UCA postgraduate students have the opportunity to learn about and collaborate with film-makers, fashion and graphic designers and fine artists via the galleries programme, conferences and symposia and the vibrant studio culture on our campuses.

The potential for live projects is extensive both in the fields of architecture, fine art, installation and site specific work through our network of contacts within the School of Architecture and collaboratively with the School of Fine Arts.

#### Assessment Strategy

Assessment has a key role to play as part of a series of strategies that support critical

and reflective practice. Assessment points provide clear stages of major review and reference for students and opportunities for guidance on both the quality of work in relation to masters level benchmarks and specific insights into the considerations of individual research projects. It therefore provides an invaluable learning tool that enables students to evaluate their performance and progress in both general and specific terms.

Final unit assessments also ensure that those passing the individual units and achieving the final masters award have achieved standards commensurate with the nationally defined expectations for academic awards at this level.

The assessment strategy for the MA Urban Design course is concerned with development in two areas, understanding of bodies of knowledge and the application of a range of advanced skills in the deployment of this knowledge. These bodies of knowledge can be categorised briefly as follows; contexts and concepts (critical, historical, cultural and professional), methodological (research methods and processes) and technical. The applied skills that need to be demonstrated by a masters student are analytical and interpretative skills, creative/innovation skills technical/practical and communication skills, and finally, independence.

The knowledge focus of individual units varies, the three common units of the course concentrate on one specific area while the project units adopt a more integrated approach and the assessment criteria for each unit reflects this. The development of applied skills is progressive throughout the course structure and so these are evident in all units to a greater or lesser degree. In both cases, knowledge and applied skills, the specific requirements for assessment are articulated in the unit assessment criteria.

The relationship between learning outcomes, assessment criteria and marking descriptors at each phase of the course ensures a focus on method and process as appropriate to the overall learning outcomes. Learning outcomes for each unit are stated as integrated outcomes combining both knowledge and the deployment of skills. The assessment criteria for each unit are always set out in accordance with the structure outlined above, as such they break down the demonstration of learning into a series of separate elements. In order to make clear this relationship, learning outcomes are mapped against assessment criteria in each unit descriptor.

All courses use assessment feedback sheets to clarify and guide the deliberations of assessors and to enable this evaluation process to be accessible to students.

## 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 national Subject Benchmarks in Art & Design 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