The University Of Sheffield.

Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from The University of Sheffield

1	**Programme Title**	Architecture
2	**Programme Code**	ARCT26
3	**JACS Code**	K100
4	**Level of Study**	Masters
5a	**Final Qualification**	MArch (linked to BA Architecture K100 course)
5b	**Position in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications**	M level
6a	**Intermediate Qualification(s)**	Not applicable
6b	**Position in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications**	Not applicable
7	**Teaching Institution** (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	**Faculty**	Social Sciences
9	**Department**	Architecture
10	**Other Department(s) involved in teaching the programme**	Not applicable
11	**Mode(s) of Attendance**	Full-time
12	**Duration of the Programme**	2 years
13	**Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body**	ARB (Architects Registration Board) RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects)
14	**Date of production/revision**	January 2006, March 2017, August 2021, March 2024

15. Background to the programme and subject area

The **MArch in Architecture** is a professionally accredited course in architecture that is validated by the RIBA and ARB (see section19). The MArch is validated at RIBA Part 2 level.

The programme will be a full time, 2 year Masters. This is a requirement of professional recognition.

Architecture is often defined as the marriage of the arts and sciences. Whilst it is true that architecture draws on creativity and ideas on the one hand, and rigorous analytical techniques on the other, the subject of architecture significantly differs from the arts and sciences. The distinct character is given through the act of designing spaces; this allows the designer to express and explore ideas, using both creativity and analysis. Architecture brings together conceptual, contextual, ethical and material considerations in the realisation of space or form.

The design studio is thus central to the MArch in Architecture programme at Sheffield, facilitating the testing of creative and critical ideas, whilst at the same time developing fundamental architectural skills. Design work is fully supported by taught courses that range from the humanities to technology. This combination of studio and lectures develops the intellectual requirements of a University education, as well as preparing students for a professional career. Teaching draws on the exceptional research base of the School which means that lectures and design teaching are delivered by people at the forefront of their discipline. The ethos of the School combines innovation with rigour, qualities that are sought after by future employers.

The programme at Sheffield takes issues of sustainability seriously, addressing the social, economic and environmental responsibility of the architect. It promotes these values through innovative methods of teaching, which develop each student's own critical faculties and self-awareness. The programme does not promote any one style or approach over another but encourages each student to develop their own response to the social, physical and environmental contexts presented by projects and coursework. Our aim is to develop individuals who are self-critical, confident enough to make appropriate decisions, and aware of the wider responsibilities of the architect.

Further information is available at the departmental web site: http://www.shef.ac.uk/architecture

16. Programme aims

Programmes offered by the School of Architecture have the following general aims consonant with the Mission Statement of the University of Sheffield:

1. to provide high quality teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels that is informed and invigorated by the research and scholarship of its staff in order to provide a stimulating culture of learning and enthusiasm for the subject.
2. to educate able and well-motivated students from a wide range of backgrounds.
3. to support students in developing intellectual curiosity, critical thinking and independent judgement.
4. progressively to develop competencies in a wide range of transferable and employment skills.
5. to instill in students a commitment to self-improvement and the development of life skills.
6. to emphasise informed applicant choice and equal opportunities in the admissions process.
7. to provide a supportive environment for students and involve them in the ongoing development of the course.
8. to enable students to maximise their potential in all aspects of the course.

More specifically the MArch in Architecture has the following additional aims:

9. to develop an ability to produce coherent and well resolved architectural designs.
10. to develop the ability to integrate knowledge of technical issues, including construction, structure, servicing, sustainability and environmental issues.
11. to develop an understanding of the influence of historic and cultural background of architecture.
12. to develop an understanding of the relationship of architecture to other allied disciplines.
13. to develop the ability to use an appropriate range of visual, verbal and written communication methods.
14. to develop knowledge of the professional context of architecture.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding: On successful completion of the programme, students will have:	
K1	an understanding of conceptual ideas, research paradigms, methods and approaches within histories and theories of architecture and urban design, the history of ideas, and the related disciplines of art, cultural studies and landscape studies and its application in critical debate.
K2	an understanding of the nature of research and its relationship with design and theory.
K3	an understanding of briefs and critical appraisal techniques, to ensure that the design response is appropriate to the site and the physical and social context, and for reasons such as sustainability and budget.
K4	an understanding of current regulatory, legal and professional requirements that guide building construction and practice, including the needs of the disabled, health and safety issues, building regulations and development control.
K5	knowledge of a wide range of architectural strategies and theoretical approaches.
K6	an understanding of the influences on the contemporary built environment of individual buildings, the design of cities, past and present societies and wider social and global issues.
K7	an understanding of the various technologies relevant to their project along with an understanding of how these are part of the current and emerging trends within the architectural profession and the procurement of buildings.
K8	an understanding of current environmental design issues and their impact on world resources and human well-being.
K9	an understanding of project delivery and its aspects, including the relationships between the parties involved in the procurement process.
K10	an understanding of forms of contracts in the construction industry and the way that forms of contract affect the cost control mechanisms of an architectural project.

Skills and other attributes: On successful completion of the programme, students will:	
S1	possess the ability to produce and demonstrate coherent and well resolved architectural designs that integrate knowledge of: the social, political, economic and professional context that influences building construction.
S2	be able to demonstrate that they can analyse and appraise design options, and draw conclusions which display methodological and theoretical rigour.
S3	have the ability to use architectural representations having critically appraised the most appropriate techniques available.
S4	be able to independently define, and critically appraise, their ideas in relation to a design and to the work of others.
S5	have the ability to work as part of a team.
S6	be able to produce a comprehensive written report, examining a range of issues relevant to a design project.
S7	be able to explain architectural design proposals and the related social, political, economic and professional context of the project.
S8	be able to demonstrate the synthesis of all the design thinking related to technologies and the sustainable environment.
S9	demonstrate knowledge of the principles and theories of contemporary sustainable environmental design and how this relates to the design and construction process.
S10	be able to appraise and form considered judgements and develop a research proposal, a research strategy, theoretical programme and a project such as a dissertation, independently defining and critically appraising their ideas in relation to a specialist area.
S11	have the ability to express their critical position in a coherent written form following academic standards.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

The programme uses a wide range of teaching techniques:

Approximately half of the programme is delivered through **studio teaching**, with regular individual and group tutorials, workshops and project reviews. The design studio is promoted as a place of integration of skills and knowledge; thus all of these teaching and learning methods combine to develop design understanding and research, analytical and communication skills of the students in order to meet the appropriate objectives listed in K1-10 and S1-S11 above. Specific tutorials and workshops on technology and management are given to ensure that a range of technical and procurement issues are fully integrated into project designs. Associated reports demonstrate how these issues have been considered and integrated into the design approach. Reviews between studios are used to ensure that students are exposed to a wide range of approaches and criticism. A range of diverse project types and architectural approaches is offered through the variety of studios and live projects that are offered by different tutors. The different studios each have their own teaching patterns. Students select to join one of a number of studios on offer. To ensure students gain an awareness of differing approaches to design, they may not follow the same studio in fifth and sixth year. An individual learning contract with each student reinforces the need to cover a full range of skills. The School of Architecture also prides itself in its pioneering teaching of communication skills for architects.

The remainder of the modules employ a variety of techniques, including:

1. **lecture series,** used at both levels, in order to impart essential knowledge relating to K1-K10 above. They are given by both internal staff and external visitors.

2. **workshops sessions,** frequently used in combination with lectures, to explore practical issues and develop key skills listed in S2, S4, S5 and S7.

3. IT based workshops, to develop skills in using design-based software and multimedia applications;

4. **seminars**, are usually student-led and allow students to present research work undertaken in the design studio. They are encouraged to analyse, understand and respond to that information, developing areas K1-9, S2, S4, S7-9.

5. **tutorials**. Aside from the design studio mentioned above, small group and individual tutorials are used

to support the preparation for written assessments, dissertation and reports (S6, S10 and S11). Students are allocated to individual tutors, according to their areas of specialist knowledge and expertise.

6. **independent study**, which is essential to the successful completion of the programme. Independent study is important to both the work undertaken in the design studio and in the supporting modules; in the former it has a central role in the design process, where a student's own design proposals develop around issues identified in small group and individual tutorials; in the latter, it is generally geared towards the assimilation and further clarification of material gleaned from lectures and workshops, the preparation for assessments, and the broader development of knowledge of the field of study. Supervised independent study is central to the researching and writing of the dissertation and sixth year reports.

7. **field trips and site visits,** which are generally associated with the different design studios, are used to expand the range of students' experience of architecture. Visits are made to particular buildings and to sites of more general urban, natural and historical interest, both in the UK and abroad. Such visits support both analytical and design work and contribute to the development of all the programme learning outcomes, but in particular K5-8.

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

Studio based courses make up at least 50% of the total credits taken at both levels. The learning and assessment processes mirror one another, and take place and develop concurrently. Formative assessment occurs through dialogue with oneself, with other students, with and among tutors in tutorials and reviews, where judgments concerning quality are generally reached by consensus. Summative assessment will generally occur through the submission of coursework, usually in the form of a portfolio. This will, in particular, address the design and technical aspects of the course (K5, K7, K8, S1-3, S8, S9), but students are also expected to demonstrate awareness of cultural, theoretical, historical (K1, K2, K6, S4, S7) and professional aspects (K3, K4, K7, S5) in their design.

The studio based courses also directly assess transferable skills such as group working (S5), the ability to express these skills is inherent in the submission of a successful portfolio of work. Much of the preparatory work in the design studio involves either independent study or group work, and without this the later work would not show signs of the required development. The design portfolio is often seen as an exemplar of the expression of transferable skills, in as much as it necessarily integrates a diverse set of skills and broad range of knowledge into a single, but complex, document.

Assessment of modules in supporting subjects (Theory and Research; Environment and Technology; Management; and Dissertation) uses appropriate combinations of the following:

- **essay writing and coursework** designed to test subject knowledge, communication skills, increasing autonomy in student learning, and the development of transferable skills (K1-3, K5, S3-6); as well as demonstrating evidence of knowledge of, and a critical attitude towards, the components covered in the course objectives.

- **written reports and a dissertation**, which test the student's ability to develop research in depth and formulate a coherent written argument (S10, S11).

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

The following **internal** documents and positions have been used. These generally reflect on the distinctive nature of the course in terms of research led teaching, student self-development, integration of all aspects of the course, and the aspiration for a rigorous knowledge base. They also inform the emphasis on social and environmental aspects within the course.

University Strategic Plan
http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/strategicplan

The research interests of School staff and the research strategy of the School of Architecture.

The following **external** documents have been used. These generally inform the benchmark level that is required for professional validation purposes, and cover the more generic requirements for architecture courses at this level.

Subject Benchmark Statements
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2024)
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf

The Architects Registration Board (ARB) Prescription of Qualifications: ARB Criteria.
http://www.arb.org.uk/qualifications/arb_criteria/arb_criteria.php

20. Programme structure and regulations

The programme provides a coherent course of study and progression across the two years. Due to the nature of the discipline and the requirements of external validation, almost 90% of the course comprises of core modules. Also due to requirements of external validation, students have to pass all components of all modules in order to pass each year and gain a degree.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available on-line at http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/regs

21. Student development over the course of study

The MArch is a continuation of the BA Architecture (K100) programme. Between completing the BA and embarking on the MArch, students will have normally completed a year or more working in practice.

In the MArch:

Year 1 - aims to develop student's skills, awareness and thinking and make the shift to a more mature post graduate level of study. Students are encouraged to become more self-reliant and take a greater responsibility for their individual development. The range of choices within the programme allows considerable freedom for students to direct their studies in a number of different directions, whilst still complying with the requirements of professional recognition.

All design project work is carried out working alongside Year 2 students, with associated research work often being carried out in groups with Year 1 and Year 2 students working together. This allows the Year 1 students to see directly the level of aspiration of the programme and to begin to engage in the issues with which the Year 2 students are working. The size of the individual studios and regular group tutorial sessions encourages students to seek advice from each other and to constructively discuss and critique each other's work.

External experts and practitioners are frequently brought in to teach alongside departmental staff. Whilst certain workshops are aimed specifically at Year 1 students and relate to the assessment for the taught course modules, the evolving nature of the workshops with different speakers each year, means that Year 2 students are also encouraged to attend. This further encourages dialogue and mutual learning between students in the two levels.

The idea of research, research methods and ethics are introduced in Year 1 teaching, giving guidance on how to develop a research strategy, programme and a project such as a dissertation/thesis. The dissertation is introduced in Year 1 and assessed in Year 2. This allows students time to fully develop their own research agenda and to relate their thinking to the wider context of the subjects studied in the other modules of the course.

Year 2 – the knowledge and awareness that students have gained in Year 1 is developed into a demonstrable and systematic understanding in Year 2. Particular emphasis is placed on the synthesis and integration of their thinking and in their design projects. By the time they have completed Year 2, students should be able to show methodological and theoretical rigour in the way that they generate, test, analyse and critically evaluate options, and draw conclusions in the full range of their work.

In the design studio there is a significant re-iterative element to the development of design skills. Student's abilities develop further with every design project that they undertake. The structure of Year 2 therefore follows a similar pattern of studio programmes to Year 1, but expects creative design solutions that are further developed, with a greater level of integration and detailed resolution. Year 2 projects are expected to be more ambitious, and are often at a larger scale, than work carried out in Year 1.

The majority of submissions in the other subject areas relate to the final design project carried out by each student. These are intended to reinforce the ability to successfully bring together a diverse range of complex issues into an original, coherent and comprehensive architectural project. Again, external experts and

practitioners are used, this time mainly in small group and individual tutorials, exposing the students to cutting edge ideas and solutions.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

An upper second or first class degree in architecture, together with exemption from RIBA Part 1 is normally required for entrance to the MArch programme, though other qualifications will be considered. Further information is available at: http://www.shef.ac.uk/architecture

23. Additional information

The programme includes field trips at both levels. These vary considerably in nature depending on the student's choice of studio. Trips are not subsidised by the department.

Further information is available at the departmental web site: http://www.shef.ac.uk/architecture/

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.