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**	Landscape Architecture
2	**Programme Code**	LSCU113
3	**JACS Code**	K310
4	**Level of Study**	Undergraduate
5a	**Final Qualification**	Bachelor of Science with Honours (BSc Hons)
5b	**QAA FHEQ Level**	Honours
6	**Intermediate Qualifications**	None
7	**Teaching Institution** (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	**Faculty**	Social Sciences
9	**Department**	Landscape Architecture
10	**Other Departments involved in teaching the programme**	None
11	**Mode of Attendance**	Full-time
12	**Duration of the Programme**	3 years
13	**Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body**	Accredited by the Landscape Institute if followed by the one year Master of Landscape Architecture
14	**Date of production/revision**	March 2021

15. Background to the programme and subject area

Landscape Architecture as a discipline embraces all aspects of the science, planning, design, creation and management of landscape, in both urban and rural environments, and at all scales, from the smallest garden to the greatest wilderness. It may be concerned with creating new landscapes, or with sustaining existing ones. The emphasis is on promoting landscapes that are aesthetically pleasing, functionally appropriate and ecologically healthy, while at the same time being able to accommodate the diverse and changing needs of society within an overall context of sustainability. It is, therefore, a rich and diverse subject which is both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary in nature, and which draws on the traditions of both the arts and sciences.

Completion of a full five-year professionally accredited Landscape Architecture programme, that includes a year in industry and the Master of Landscape Architecture year (see separate programme specification), allows students to enter the Landscape Institute as an Associate Member. As an Associate Member you are entitled to enrol on the Pathway to Chartership which is the route to full professional status as a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) and use of the title Chartered Landscape Architect. The Landscape Institute recognises five areas of practice: Landscape Design, Landscape Management, Landscape Science, Landscape Planning and Urban Design and the profession offers many diverse employment opportunities in both private practice and in the public sector. Work can range from urban design schemes in city centres, to working with communities on the improvement of urban green space, to preparing environmental impact assessments for different forms of new development, to give just a few examples.

Landscape Architecture programmes at Sheffield introduce students to the full range of activity in the subject area. In addition, students have the choice of programmes at undergraduate level which combine study of Landscape Architecture with a grounding in a complementary subject. These are the BA in Landscape Architecture with a specialism in Landscape Planning and the BSc in Landscape Architecture with a specialism in Landscape Ecology. Successful completion of one of these programmes provides students with an opportunity to subsequently undertake the MLA after an agreed period of relevant work experience. The third programme is the dual degree of BA Architecture and Landscape run jointly with the School of Architecture that leads to a dually accredited Master in Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

The **BSc in Landscape Architecture** is the only honours degree in the UK to offer a BSc in Landscape Architecture and to bring together the related disciplines of Landscape Architecture and Landscape Ecology by combining a thorough training in Landscape Architecture with a full appreciation of ecological concepts, principles and methods. The programme has been structured to produce landscape professionals with a clear understanding of the complexities of the environment we live in and with the skills to engage in its planning design and management in ways that are environmentally sensitive as well as creative.

This programme focuses on developing creativity and design skills within an ecological and environmental framework. The specialist modules in Landscape Ecology focus on the fundamental concept of ecology, plant populations and communities and the structure and function of ecosystems and their conservation and management. The programme has proved very attractive to students and has been successful in producing high calibre graduates whose combination of skills and knowledge are highly valued and in demand among professional employers.

The programme is taught exclusively in the Department of Landscape Architecture. The Department was rated 5 in the most recent HEFCE Research Assessment Exercise, and achieves excellent scores in the National Student Survey (NSS).

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

16. Programme aims

The overall teaching and learning aims of the Department of Landscape Architecture, which also reflect the mission and aims of the University of Sheffield, are to:

- Combine research informed discipline knowledge and develop competences in a wide range transferable and professional skills;
- Inspire and broaden understanding of academic study within its wider intellectual context;
- Develop communities of learning within the department and faculty which help foster a sense of belonging, common purpose and ownership of academic agendas;
- Enable each student to experience personal research led learning though individual and /or collaborative landscape related work;
- Provide opportunities for students to gain experience of engaging with communities beyond the University in design projects and/or volunteering with landscape related third sector and commercial partners;
- Develop cultural agility by providing opportunities for students to undertake part of their studies abroad;
- Provide consistent and effective academic support and involve all students in quality assurance;
- Subscribe to the concept and attributes of the Sheffield Graduate.

More specifically the BSc in Landscape Architecture has the following aims:

1. To provide a programme of study which is relevant to professional practice and which meets professional accreditation requirements;

2. To provide a broad environmental education by enabling students to study Landscape Architecture and to develop specialist knowledge and skills in Landscape Ecology;

3. To provide a curriculum that:

- develops students' knowledge, understanding and skills in landscape design and, in particular, emphasises holistic design; creativity and imagination; the progressive development of design skills; sensitivity to the needs of people and communities; and awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability;
- introduces students to the breadth of Landscape Architecture, including landscape design, planning and management;
- helps students to develop skills and abilities in both creative thinking and visual communication and in independent research, analysis and written/verbal communication;

4. To provide opportunities for students to obtain experience of professional practice, by contact with practitioners on the programme, and involvement in projects that simulate professional work;

5. To encourage progressive development of a range of knowledge and skills relevant to both the

undergraduate degree programme and the later, Master in Landscape Architecture (MLA), stage of the professionally accredited programme;

6. To encourage active learning through practical projects involving both independent study and the achievement of collective goals through teamwork:

7. To incorporate a diversity of assessment methods designed to test a wide range of competencies and skills.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:	
K1	Knowledge and understanding of the physical and natural systems and processes that shape the landscape and the way that they can influence its planning, design and management.
K2	Knowledge and understanding of the range of social, economic and cultural influences which contribute to the evolution of urban and rural landscapes and of the social dimensions of planning, designing and managing landscapes for people.
K3	Awareness and basic understanding of the scope and interdisciplinary nature of the profession of landscape architecture and of the different specialist areas within it, its interface with other professions and other environmental disciplines, especially ecology, and the values and ethics relevant to practice as a landscape professional.
K4	Knowledge and understanding of landscape theories and histories, including design approaches and practices and the philosophies that underpin them.
K5	Knowledge and understanding of the nature, characteristics and performance of the inorganic and organic elements and processes employed in the creation of landscapes and of their implications for future maintenance and management.
K6	Knowledge and understanding of the fundamental concepts of Landscape Ecology, focusing on plant communities and ecological survey techniques (flora and fauna), ground contamination, and the structure and function of ecosystems and their conservation and management.
K7	Knowledge and understanding of the interactions between Landscape Architecture and Landscape Ecology, for example in the areas of ecological approaches to habitat creation, environmental impact assessment and design.

Skills and other attributes **Subject specific skills:**	
S1	An ability to create design proposals for different kinds of landscapes in an innovative and integrated manner which is responsive to people, place and nature.
S2	An ability to manipulate landscape elements through design, including exploration and critical evaluation of alternative ideas.
S3	An ability to employ a range of visual, verbal and written media, including digital and non-digital communication methods, to both develop and express landscape architectural ideas.
S4	An ability to appreciate the different qualities of design solutions and to both give and receive design criticism.
S5	An ability to carry out in practice a range of relevant techniques including site survey and analysis, social surveys, preparing briefs, assessing the environmental effects of development, ecological field work and experiments, ecological surveys and data analysis.
Transferable skills:	
S6	An ability to use a range of relevant computer software, including computer aided design, geographical information systems and image manipulation, graphic presentation, and data handling and analysis packages.
S7	An ability to communicate effectively using visual, verbal, and written skills in a variety of media and to employ these skills effectively to present, exchange and review ideas, theories, findings, conclusions and proposals.

S8	Abilities in self-management, time and task management and personal reflection.
S9	An ability to relate to and work with other people including group/team work skills.
S10	An ability to work independently to gather and analyse information and to identify solutions to problems.

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 and learning methods to achieve these learning outcomes.

The acquisition of knowledge and understanding relevant to landscape architecture and ecology (K1 - K7 above), is achieved by a combination of **lectures** and **seminars/ group tutorials**. Seminars/group tutorials allow lecture material to be explored in more depth and are a particular feature of modules in landscape ecology landscape planning and materials of landscape (K2, K3 and K6).

In the Department of Landscape Architecture lectures are reinforced by a series of **studio projects**, which are designed to reinforce knowledge and understanding (K1 – K7) and to integrate this with the development of specific skills in planning, design and management (S1 – S6). This is achieved by a process of 'learning by doing'. Projects usually involve **site visits** to sites in and around Sheffield to carry out site surveys and ecological fieldwork (K6). Sites might, for example, include an urban park, nature reserve or a city centre space to be redesigned in Sheffield, or an area of countryside outside the city proposed for development, for example as an opencast coal mine or a new area of housing. In addition **field trips** are an integral part of the programme and allow students to see examples of landscape projects on the ground in a variety of situations. This is an invaluable way of students learning about the realities of Landscape Architecture, seeing the work of both contemporary and historical designers, and gaining inspiration from experience of what can be achieved During the course there is a field trip which lasts approximately one week.

The **design studio** is at the heart of the undergraduate programme. Here students tackle a range of increasingly complex practical projects based on real world problems requiring design solutions. Support and guidance is provided through **individual studio tutorials**, together with **small group tutorials**, and **design reviews**. Reviews are a particular feature of design education and are sessions in which students make a verbal presentation, which explores their approach and the development of their design solution. The presentation takes place within the student group, and involves critical appraisal by, and discussion with, both tutors and other students. Tutorials, reviews and the collaborative nature of the design studio are essential ways in which students receive formative feedback on their work. Design skills are developed initially through simple projects at Level 1, becoming more complex at Level 2 and finally culminating in a major integrated design project at Level 3, which tackles larger sites with diverse problems and requires further integration of knowledge, understanding and skills acquired throughout the programme.

Workshops and practical sessions play an important role in introducing and developing specific skills. They are particularly important in developing skills in the use of computer aided design, geographical information systems, digital image manipulation and graphics packages which are an essential part of modern Landscape Architecture (S6). They also play an important part in design teaching (S1 – S5) and in development of other transferable skills. Group work skills for example are introduced through an introductory workshop at Level 1 (S9). Practical sessions are used to develop ecological survey techniques in the field and the handling and interpretation of scientific data and report writing.

Independent study is critical to the successful completion of the programme and contributes to all learning outcomes. The transition from secondary to higher education is managed through a specific level one module that develops an appreciation of the University learning environment and seeks to develop skills in communication and independent study (S3, S6-S9). Independent study has a central role in all the studio projects, even though some modules may also have a group work component. Students work independently, with the help of studio tutorials, to integrate material from lectures and workshops, to develop their own solutions to specific problems, and to work these up into graphic presentations or reports for submission and assessment.

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

The overall emphasis in the programme is on both formative and summative assessment by means of tutorials and interim reviews and the submission of course work. Students are also required to develop their own portfolio of work, which demonstrates how their knowledge and skills have developed throughout their studies. Individual student reflection on their portfolio will also be used to help frame future learning strategies with personal tutors. The overall aims of the assessment strategy are:

- To provide regular formative assessment through tutorials and interim project reviews that enable students to reflect on and respond to critical feedback;
- To tailor assessment to the achievement of overall programme aims and objectives as well as module aims and learning objectives;
- To test the progressive development of knowledge and skills from Level to Level;
- To ensure that feedback on assessment is an integral part of student learning;
- To expose students to a diversity of assessment methods, thereby providing opportunities for development of a broad range of abilities;
- To provide clear assessment criteria for individual modules so that students have a good idea of what they must do to achieve high standards.

Written examinations play only a small part in the programme and are used to test subject knowledge on landscape architecture, history and theory (K1, K6). Regular short un-invigilated tests are used to help in specific areas such as plant identification (K5).

Studio Design/Ecology projects are a key part of the programme and allow students to demonstrate achievement in relation to their knowledge and understanding of landscape design/ecology theory, process and practice, including manipulation of landscape elements through design (K1, K3, K4, K5), as well as the skills they have developed, both those specific to Landscape Architecture (S1 to S5) and those transferable to other areas of work (S6 – S10). The studio project is also the forum in which knowledge and theory is integrated across a range of modules. Submissions for these projects include drawings and digital representations of design concepts and solutions, design portfolios, design files showing development of ideas and a record of formative feedback, observational journals of construction details and plant material, digital and physical models, virtual simulations, and verbal presentations at review sessions.

Written assignments are used to test both knowledge and understanding and skills, in areas relating to: the physical and natural systems and processes that shape the landscape (K1), the range of social, economic and cultural influences which contribute to the evolution of urban and rural landscapes and the social dimensions of planning, designing and managing landscapes for people (K2), landscape theories and histories, including design approaches and practices and the philosophies that underpin them (K4), and ecological principles and practice . **Project reports** in Landscape Ecology often involve both group and independent research and help to assess transferable skills in written and graphic communication (S7).

In general the transferable skills that are developed through the programme are not directly assessed but are rather an integral part of the work carried out in completing individual modules. Completion of both design projects and project reports, for example, requires demonstration of: appropriate communication skills, either visual, verbal or written or some combination of these; use of relevant computer software, including desktop publishing, geographical information systems, computer aided design or graphic packages; and personal and time management to meet deadlines for submissions. Other projects may also require group work skills, group presentations supported by digital technologies and/or independent research.

Work completed at Level 1 does not contribute to the degree classification but all modules must be passed to progress to Level 2. All modules at Levels 2 and 3 of the programme contribute to the final degree classification, and all modules must be passed to enable progression to the MLA. Grades awarded at Level 3 are weighted by a ratio of 2:1 compared with those awarded at Level 2. It is recognised that design skills in particular are developed cumulatively over three years of study and this weighting allows students to demonstrate the trajectory of their progression from Level 2 to Level 3 and ensures that Level 3 work is heavily weighted in the final degree classification.

19. Reference points

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

External points of reference that have been used in developing the learning outcomes include the following documents:

The relevant requirements of the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), in particular;

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2014)
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf

Subject Benchmark Statements Landscape Architecture (2019)

The Subject Benchmark Statement explains the nature and scope of landscape architecture and the diversity of programmes of study which are available. It sets out the knowledge, skills and understanding common to all programmes in Landscape Architecture, together with those that are specific to programmes in Landscape Design, Landscape Management and Landscape Science.

The Landscape Institute's guidance notes: Criteria for the accreditation of higher education programmes (2012). https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/education/university-course-accreditation/. The Department is subject to annual reaccreditation by the Landscape Institute, that requires review from the Landscape Institute's Professional Review Group which visits the department each year to discuss programme developments with both students and staff.

Internal points of reference that have influenced the learning outcomes are:

The individual research and professional interests of members of academic staff;

Student input to programme development through module evaluation, end of programme reviews and discussion at year group meetings and staff/student consultative meetings;

Learning and Teaching Strategy (2016-21)
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.661828!/file/FinalStrategy.pdf

20. Programme structure and regulations

This is a **coherent programme** that allows students to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills required by landscape architects while also developing knowledge, understanding and skills in landscape ecology. During each Level, students take six 20 credit modules worth a total of 120 credits and which are evenly split across the two semesters. All modules are taught in the Department of Landscape. At level 1 the BSc and BA share a common foundation year. At Level 2 and 3, 60 of the available 240 credits are specialist modules in landscape ecology that are exclusive to the BSc. All other modules are taught jointly with the BA cohort. Where appropriate modules at each level and semester will share a common project site and design challenge. This has been designed in order to promote a more integrated approach to course delivery and to enable students to apply different strands of knowledge and theory to a common task.

All students completing the three-year programme graduate with a **BSc in Landscape Architecture**. The degree also forms part of a longer programme accredited by the Landscape Institute to provide entry into the landscape profession. Those wishing to progress to a career as a Landscape Architect undertake an agreed period of relevant work experience after completing their first degree, and then return for a further year to complete the MLA, which provides the formal qualification allowing entry to the Landscape Institute as an Associate member. Completion of the Institute's Pathway to Chartership then allows use of the title 'Chartered Landscape Architect'.

Students who wish to progress to the Masters in Landscape Architecture must pass all modules at each level and achieve a minimum degree classification of 2.2. Students that are awarded a 2.1 gain automatic progress. Students who gain a 2.2, and who wish to be admitted onto the MLA must apply in writing to the department and their acceptance onto the MLA will be determined on the basis of their work experience and portfolio of work.

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

Level 1 provides students with a broad introduction to Landscape Architecture and its history. The emphasis is on providing knowledge and understanding about landscape and the forces that shape it, about the nature of landscape architecture theory and practice and its social, economic and cultural context. It will introduce landscape planning and the key drivers that are responsible for shaping urban and rural environments. Students also begin to develop specific skills relevant to landscape practice including; graphic techniques, and an appreciation of design process and Landscape Character Assessment. An introductory course in: communication, presentation and research has been designed to support students in making the transition to University level learning.

Modules **will** cover:

- The nature of landscape and the physical and environmental factors which shape it.
- Landscape architecture as a discipline and the challenges that it seeks to address in planning, design and management.
- The basics of design including design theory, creativity, space making, drawing skills and techniques, use of plant material, use of computers, presentation of design material and the role of reviews, and the application of all of these in introductory design projects.
- Different landscape theories and histories, enabling students to develop and understanding of different perspectives on the subject and the way that these may influence approaches to design practice.
- Principles of landscape planning, including ideas about diversity and distinctiveness in landscape character, the nature of landscape change and the role of different land uses and development activities in shaping the landscape.
- Developing effective learning skills which include: group work, report writing and academic referencing, accessing online digital resources, the role of the tutorial, digital technologies and communication.

Level 2 aims to enthuse students about new aspects of landscape architecture and to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills across the spectrum of landscape and design. Studio work encourages further development of design skills and the acquisition of abilities in IT, including computer aided design. Landscape Ecology modules aim to extend and deepen students' understanding of relevant ecological concepts and habitat survey techniques. An extended fieldtrip gives the opportunity for students to evaluate examples of historic and contemporary Landscape Architecture and for each student to carry out their own independent research project.

Modules will cover:

- Creative and conceptual approaches to landscape design, focusing on different means of generating design ideas and furthering theoretical understanding.
- The social and the ecological principles underpinning good design. Students are introduced to the principles and practice of landscape ecology and ecological design, including material on the structure and functioning of key 'Biotopes' and to social and community aspects of design development.
- Introductions to the knowledge, understanding and skills relating to the material qualities of including: landscape technology, notably plant material and planting design, and landscape construction.
- Methods and techniques related to the ecological surveying of different habitats and the identification of the distinctive flora and fauna and composition of different plant communities.
- Extended fieldtrip with an opportunity for students to carry out a personal research exercise focusing on analysis of a contemporary or historic landscape.

At **Level 3** the emphasis is on developing more advanced knowledge, understanding and skills across the full range of subject matter and on achieving integration of knowledge, understanding and skills, particularly through the medium of integrated design projects. Landscape Ecology modules look in greater detail at green infrastructure and ecological master planning, habitat creation, restoration and management. The final integrated project, which focuses on an area of urban regeneration provides an opportunity for students to apply and develop the range of knowledge and skills they have acquired throughout their studies to a single project site.

Modules will cover:

- Further development of knowledge and skills in the area of detailed design and materials, covering advanced planting design, and advanced aspects of landscape construction.
- Site planning for housing design.

- Development of further knowledge, understanding and skills in specialist areas of particular relevance to Landscape Architecture and Ecology, including, green infrastructure and ecological master planning and habitat creation and restoration.
- Integration of knowledge, understanding and skills in all the aspects of landscape design which have been studied throughout the programme in a major integrated design project which aims to allow students to demonstrate their readiness to enter the profession in a work placement.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Landscape Architecture programmes are suitable for applicants from a wide range of backgrounds. A mixture of science and arts based subjects, including subjects such as biology, geography and art, can be particularly useful but is not essential. The design content of the programme means that we ask applicants to demonstrate some evidence of their potential in this area, but academic ability is of equal importance.

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available at http://www.shef.ac.uk/prospective/

23. Additional information

During the programme there is a fieldtrip that lasts for approximately one week, which is a compulsory component of the course. The Department will cover transport costs from Sheffield and accommodation.

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 http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.