

# MA Urban Design

## Programme Specification

### Primary Purpose:

Course management, monitoring and quality assurance.

### Secondary Purpose:

Detailed information for students, staff and employers. Current students should refer to the related Course Handbook for further detail.

### Disclaimer:

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information given in this Programme Specification and believes it to be correct. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification but reserve the right to change the content, timetabling and administration of the course whilst maintaining equivalent academic standards and quality.

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# **Programme Specification**

## **1. Named Awards**

MA Urban Design

## **2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)**

C2191F, C2191P

## **3. Awarding Body**

University of Portsmouth

## **4. Teaching Institution**

University of Portsmouth

## **5. Accrediting Body**

None

## **6. QAA Benchmark Groups**

Architecture 2010

Adapted for Postgraduate from:

Art and Design 2008

History of Art, Architecture and Design 2008

## **7. Document Control Information**

Version 5, July 2016

## **8. Effective Session**

2016/2017

## **9. Author**

Fabiano Lemes

## **10. Faculty**

Creative and Cultural Industries

## **11. Department**

School of Architecture

## **12. Educational Aims**

General Aims:

The MA Urban Design Programme aims to:

- Foster an enquiring spirit, intellectual curiosity, and a diversity of creativity in students; these coupled with the development of their own learning skills will enable students to reflect on and affect the direction of their future creative lives and their own development needs.

- Maintain a distinctive post graduate level of education that enables every student to attain as high a level of personal development as he/she can achieve.
- Provide a challenging and stimulating study environment.
- Equip graduates with transferable skills such as problem solving, decision making, communication, and teamwork, necessary for lifelong learning and flexibility in the context of changing labour markets.
- Provide students with the skills and knowledge required to maximise career and postgraduate study opportunities.
- Contribute to the personal development of participants, and assist them to make responsible and useful contributions to their professions, and society as a whole.

#### Particular Aims:

The MA Urban Design Programme aims to:

- Enhance the scholarship and research skills of those working in urban design and allied professions concerned with the design, construction and management of the built environment, by equipping them with a range of relevant conceptual and analytical skills.
- Provide opportunities, at postgraduate level, for studies of specialist areas of the curriculum that are of current interest to students, staff, and the profession; and which may lead to later opportunities in terms of research and higher degrees.
- Provide self-determined study opportunities for students. These, whilst monitored and challenged by staff, aim to empower students with a confidence in their own theoretical position and creative abilities that will sustain them in their professional future.
- Provide a conversion course for students or professionals seeking competence in the area of urban design.
- Enable participants to improve their employment prospects through the development of useful and relevant skills and knowledge, contact with professionals actively applying the principles taught in the course, and through the attainment of an internationally recognised qualification.
- Foster in students a concern for the conservation of the Earth's resources through the development of appropriate formal and technical responses to global issues such as climate change, and the developing debate and knowledge on how to respond.
- Both contribute to our position within the Faculty of Creative & Cultural Industries, by developing programmes that will offer other students in the Faculty a better understanding of the discipline of urban design and possibilities for exchanges of ideas; and benefit from our proximity to other disciplines related to the built environment by seeking collaboration with staff and students that will foster the development of skills and research in the work of our students that lie beyond the minimum levels of competence.
- Provide an opportunity to engage in work-based learning through a coherent programme of study.
- Ensure that the programme complements and dovetails, where necessary, with our Master of Architecture programme, which is accreditation by ARB/RIBA.

### 13. Reference Points

The Outcomes have been developed taking account of the following:

- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- The UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- National Qualifications Framework
- Policy for placement learning
- Vocational and professional experience, the scholarship and the research expertise of academic members of staff
- Subject Benchmark Statement. Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education: subject benchmark statement for Architecture 2010, now includes masters level learning outcomes and these have partly been used.

- Subject Benchmark Statement. Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education: subject benchmark statement for Art and Design 2008 and the History of Art, Architecture and Design 2008, these are at undergraduate level, but learning outcomes have partly been used.
- RTPI Policy Statement on Initial Planning Section 7.0 Areas of Specialism and specifically ref.7.7 Indicative Learning Outcomes.

N.B. Programme Learning Outcomes are cross referenced to the above points as is shown in the following key:

KEY:

*(GC1.1) = General Criteria: Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement 2010.*

*(GTA2.1)=Graduate Attributes: Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement 2010.*

*(RPPI 1.1) = RTPI Policy Statement on Initial Planning.*

*(A&D 1.6) = Art and Design Benchmark Statement 2008.*

*(ICOMOS g) = International Council of Monuments and Sites Guidelines.*

*(SOA) = School of Architecture derived learning Outcomes.*

## 14. Learning Outcomes

### A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

*General:*

- A1 the social, political, economic and professional context, in relation to the specialism. (SOA) (RTPI 7.7.2)
- A2 the needs and aspirations of citizens: the relationships between buildings and the environment, and the precepts of sustainable urban design. (GC5.1, GC5.2, GC5.3)
- A3 the need to critically review precedents relevant to the function, organisation and technological strategy of proposals; the need to appraise and prepare briefs of diverse scales and types, to define client and user requirements and their appropriateness to site and context; the contributions of designers and co-professionals to the formulation of the brief, and the methods of investigation used in its preparation. (GC7.1, GC7.2, GC7.3)
- A4 the appropriate research methods for the specialism. (SOA)
- A5 the professional, ethical, and legal responsibilities of a designer in respect of their duty of care; including health and safety. (SOA)

*Specialist:*

- A6 theories of urban design and the planning of communities (GC4.1), and an appropriate philosophical approach which reveals an understanding of theory in a cultural context. (SOA)
- A7 the influence of the design and development of cities, past and present, on the contemporary built environment. (GC4.2)
- A8 climatic urban design and the relationship between climate, built form, construction, lifestyle, energy consumption and human well-being. (GC9) (SOA)

### Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Information about the subject areas is presented through a combination of lectures, seminars and reading lists (A1-A8). Students are also expected to engage in online activities such as blogs and online debates. Students engage in individual and/or group projects in order to pursue their own interests within the broader framework of the programme (A5 and A6).

### Assessment

Coursework in the form of written documents, seminar presentations and/or design work is used to assess outcomes A1-A8. Assessments may include evidence of e-participation.

### B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:

- B1 evaluate information, opinion and evidence critically and draw conclusions that display methodological and theoretical rigour (SOA) and formulate independent judgements, and articulate reasoned arguments through reflection review and evaluation. (Critical Engagement) (A&D 4.6)
- B2 apply strategies of selection for dealing with information. (SOA)
- B3 plan, implement and report on a programme of original research. (SOA)

- B4 engage in theoretical and practical debate at the forefront of the area of specialism. (SOA) (RTPI7.7.1)

#### Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Seminar presentations with peer group feedback, e-participation and formative assessment of written drafts, group work and tutorials support the achievement of outcomes B1 –B4.

#### Assessment

Coursework is used to assess B1-B4, and the Thesis coursework is also used to assess B1-B4.

Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:

##### *General:*

- C1 plan and execute complex studies or a design process analysis. (SOA)
- C2 use visual, verbal and written communication methods and appropriate media (including sketching, modelling, digital and electronic techniques) to represent the testing, analysis and critical appraisal of complex proposals and their resolution to a range of professional and lay audiences. (SOA)
- C3 produce documentation and reports, which are clear, analytical and logical covering a range of issues of culture, theory and design, executed to a professional standard. (SOA)
- C4 apply appropriate theoretical concepts to projects, demonstrating a reflective and critical approach. (GC2.3)
- C5 identify and manage individual learning needs so as to prepare for and maintain professional standards commensurate with qualification. (SOA)
- C6 demonstrate problem solving skills, professional judgement, and ability to take the initiative and make appropriate decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances, including an understanding of when other specialist advice must be sought. (GA2.6) (ICOMOS j)
- C7 balance and present alternative points of view held within the subject, to use unfamiliar arguments and artefacts constructively, and to engage critically with familiar or established ideas. (HAAD 6.6).

##### *Specialist:*

- C8 devise sound technical strategies for complex urban designs. (SOA)
- C9 evaluate the distinctive contribution potentially rendered by urban design to the making of place and the mediation of place. (RTPI 7.7.3)
- C10 offer potential employers the type and quality of initial skills that might reasonably be expected of a graduate from this specialism undertaking the practice experience period of the assessment of professional competencies. (RTPI 7.7.5)

#### Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Practical skills are developed through a combination of lectures, seminars and workshops (C5-C10) and project seminar based learning (C1, C2, C3, C6).

#### Assessment

Coursework is used to assess outcome C1- C10. The final Thesis is particularly used to assess achievement of outcome C5, C6 and C10. The optional work based learning unit will also assess C10.

#### **D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:**

- D1 work autonomously in a self-directed manner, managing and appraising their own working practices thereby developing as a reflective practitioner and an independent learner. (SOA)
- D2 Work as part of a team. (SOA)
- D3 Manage independent study. (SOA)
- D4 Demonstrate mature understanding of the relationship within a multidisciplinary context of this specialism to other specialist areas of expertise. (SOA) (RTPI 7.7.4)

#### Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Project work and group tutorials are used to support achievement of outcomes D1 and D4. The Research Methods unit and Thesis is focussed specifically on supporting the planning required to achieve D1 and D3.

#### Assessment

The Integration Project is used to assess D2 and D4. The Thesis Unit is the main vehicle for the assessment of D1 and D3.

### **15. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements**

- This programme is at postgraduate level. 180 credits are required for the MA Urban Design.
- Standard University rules apply and the regulations must be consulted for a full description of exit awards.
- Units are offered as 30 credits units with thesis unit larger. One credit is equivalent to 10 hours of learning.
- The MA Urban Design is offered as a full-time 1 year or part-time 2 year programme.
- The School has an Industrial Liaison Board and provides links with Employers through part-time staff the evening lecture series and opportunities for mentoring by regional practices.

### **16. Employability Statement**

Opportunities for career planning are embedded in the practice units.

### **17. Support for Student Learning**

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader.
- Extensive induction programme introduces the student to the University and their course.
- Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance.
- University support services include careers, financial advice, housing, counselling etc.
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK).
- CCI Creative Skills Centre and CCI Academic Skills Centre.
- CCI Creative Careers Centre.
- The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC).
- Excellent library facilities.
- Student Handbooks produced by the School include "Introduction to School of Architecture" and "A Concise Guide to Units" for each course which are provided for each student. They provide information about the course structure and University regulations etc.
- The Introduction to the School includes our Code of Practice on Marking and how Feedback is provided for all assessments.
- The School of Architecture pages on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) provides a central source for all information, programmes, & teaching notes.
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards is being developed for the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
- The School Workshop in Portland, and the CCI Workshops in Eldon are well staffed, and well equipped for model making, mock ups, and CNC milling and laser cutting.

### **18. Admissions Criteria**

#### **A. Academic Admissions Criteria**

- A minimum of a second-class honours degree in Interior Design, Architecture or a related subject, or equivalent professional experience and/or qualifications. An online portfolio submission may be required as part of the selection process.



- Applicants whose first language is not English must provide evidence of English language ability with a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 (normally with not less than 6.0 in any one component) or equivalent.
- Prior (formal and/or experiential) learning may be assessed and accredited.

## **B. Disability**

The University makes no distinction in its admissions policy with regard to disability and will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments in order to make it possible for students to study at Portsmouth on a course of their choice.

However, applicants should be aware that certain disabilities, e.g. significant visual impairment, may make it very difficult for students to achieve the programme learning outcomes of a visually orientated discipline such as architecture. A central component of the course is studio work where students are required to develop their design skills through formal presentation of their own design concepts and ideas to staff and fellow students for critical review through debate and discussion. This type of studio work is integral to the learning, assessment and subsequent architectural practice experience and students who are unable to participate fully in such activities may find their prospects for success in the course and eventual career significantly compromised. If in doubt, please contact the School to discuss the possibilities for study.

## **19. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching**

### **A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation**

- Course Leader's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review. (CL ASQER)
- Head of Department's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review. (HoD ASQER)
- Unit and Course Level student feedback considered at Board of Studies.
- Unit Assessment Board consideration of student performance for each programme.
- Annual Standards and Quality Reports to Board of Studies, including consideration of Subject and Award External Examiner Reports.
- Periodic Programme Review.
- Student Representatives and Student/Staff Consultative Committees.
- National Student Survey (where applicable).
- National Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey.
- Staff Performance and Development Review.
- Peer Review and Development Framework.
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee.

### **B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Unit Co-ordinators for unit content and delivery.
- Course Leader for day-to-day running of course.
- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course.
- Head of School.
- Associate Dean (Academic).
- Associate Dean (Students).
- Quality Assurance Committee.
- Unit, Award and Progression Board of Examiners.

### **C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback**

- Student Representation on Board of Studies.
- Student Staff Consultative Committees.



- Design Studio Discussion.
- Unit and Course level student feedback questionnaires.
- University participates in external student surveys, e.g. National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and International Student Barometer (ISB).

#### **D. Staff Development Priorities**

- Academic staff undertake activities related to research, scholarship, teaching and learning and student support and guidance.
- Annual staff performance and development reviews match development to needs.
- Managers undertake a variety of management development programmes.
- New academic staff required to undertake appropriate University of Portsmouth learning and teaching programmes.
- All academic staff encouraged to seek Higher Education Academy membership.
- Academic staff undertake initial and continuing professional development within the Academic Professional Excellence Framework (APEX) which is aligned with the Higher Education Academy (HEA)'s UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).
- Support Staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and specific IT packages.
- Academic staff volunteer to lead study trips abroad, which also provide staff development.

### **20. Assessment Strategy**

The principles of post-graduate study and specialist knowledge are given formative assessment half way through the year. These and their research development is summatively assessed during teaching Block 2 and the final thesis assesses a masters level achievement at the end of the academic year.

### **21. Assessment Regulations**

Standard university rules apply (see [Assessment and Regulations](#)).

### **22. Role of Externals**

Subject External Examiners who will:

- oversee unit assessment and usually attend Unit Assessment Boards;
- review unit assessment strategy;
- sample assessment artefacts;
- report to Unit Assessment Boards.

Award External Examiners (usually also a Subject External Examiner) who will:

- oversee and attend Award/Progression Boards;
- scrutinise and endorse the outcomes of assessment;
- ensure that the standard of the award is maintained at a level comparable with that of similar awards elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

### **23. Indicators of Standards and Quality**

#### **A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition**

None

## **B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)**

The MA Urban Design course participated in a successful Periodic Programme Review on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

## **C. Quality Assurance Agency**

QAA Higher Education Review, March 2015, judgements about standards and quality meet UK expectations (*for full report see [Higher Education Review of the University of Portsmouth, March 2015](#)<sup>1</sup>*).

## **D. Others**

None

## **24. Other Sources of Information**

Other sources of information may be found in

- Course Approval Document.
- Student Handbook.
- University of Portsmouth Curricula Framework.
- University of Portsmouth Postgraduate Prospectus.
- Assessment Regulations.
- University of Portsmouth (<http://www.port.ac.uk/>) and School of Architecture (<http://www.port.ac.uk/portsmouth-school-of-architecture>)

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<sup>1</sup>[www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf)