



MA Professional Design Practice

Programme Specification

Primary Purpose

Course management 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. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification; however, changes may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, review and update of units and courses. Where this activity leads to significant changes to units and courses, there will be prior consultation of students and others, wherever possible, and the University will take all reasonable steps to minimize disruption to students. It is also possible that the University may not be able to offer a unit or course for reasons outside of its control, for example; the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the University will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

Copyright

The contents of this document are the copyright of the University of Portsmouth and all rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior consent of the University of Portsmouth.

Contents

Course Details	1
1. Named Awards.....	1
2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable).....	1
3. Awarding Body	1
4. Teaching Institution	1
5. Accrediting Body	1
6. QAA Benchmark Groups	1
7. Document Control Information.....	1
8. Effective Session.....	1
9. Author	1
10. Faculty.....	1
11. Department	1
Curriculum	2
12. Educational Aims.....	2
13. Reference Points.....	2
14. General Learning Outcomes.....	3
15. Learning Outcomes	4
A. Knowledge and Understanding of:.....	4
B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:	4
C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:	5
D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:	5
16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods.....	5
17. Assessment Strategy.....	5
18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements.....	6
19. Employability Statement.....	6
Course Management	6
20. Support for Student Learning.....	6
21. Admissions Criteria.....	6
A. Academic Admissions Criteria	7
B. Disability	7
22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching	7
A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation	7
B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation.....	7
C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback	8
D. Staff Development Priorities.....	8
23. Assessment Regulations	8
24. Role of Externals	8
25. Indicators of Standards and Quality.....	9
A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition.....	9
B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent).....	9
C. Quality Assurance Agency	9
D. Others	9
26. Further Information	9

Course Details

1. Named Awards

MA Professional Design Practice

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C2529F, C2529P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

None

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

Subject benchmark statement for Architecture 2010 now includes Masters level learning outcomes and these have been adapted and used where appropriate.

Subject benchmark statement for Art and Design 2016 are at undergraduate level but learning outcomes have been adapted for use at postgraduate level, where appropriate.

7. Document Control Information

Version 7, August 2018

8. Effective Session

2018/2019

9. Author

Phevos Kallitsis

10. Faculty

Creative and Cultural Industries

11. Department

School of Architecture

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

General Aims:

The MA Professional Design Practice Programme aims to:

- Foster an enquiring spirit, intellectual curiosity, and a level of critical reflection and appropriate professional judgement 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.

Particular Aims:

The MA Professional Design Practice Programme aims to:

- Provide assistance to students with the development of their personal career path, self-learning and continuing professional development.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop a practice or sector specialism, informed by research and analysis.
- Foster in the students a critical approach to the ethical issues associated with professional design practice and help them to develop and defend their own ethical position.
- Provide a coherent and integrated series of lectures and seminars in the area of leadership, business and professional practice in relation to current interior and architectural design practice in the UK, thereby enabling students to enter and contribute to professional design practice.
- Provide knowledge of the extensive subject area of interior and architectural leadership, professional practice and the law relating to these subjects.
- Provide self-determined theoretical and practice-based research opportunities for students. These, whilst monitored and challenged by staff, aim to empower students with a confidence in their own theoretical position and professional abilities that will sustain them in their professional future and which may lead to enhanced opportunities in terms of employment, research and higher degrees.
- Develop the transferable skills necessary to demonstrate self-direction and originality in problem solving, and to be able to act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level.
- Develop the student's ability to reflect on their own and others' functioning in order to improve professional design practice.
- Develop the confidence of the students to enable them to operate in complex and unpredictable situations whilst having an overview of good practice, with due regard to the ethical, social, managerial and leadership demands of current practice.
- Provide a professional course equipping students to pursue a career in interior design, architectural design or architecture.
- Ensure that the programme complements and dovetails, where appropriate, with our Final Examination in Professional Practice (Part 3) programme, which is accredited 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 and subject benchmark statement for Art and Design 2016

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

KEY:

(PC)=Professional Criteria: Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement 2010.

(SOA) = School of Architecture derived learning Outcomes.

(GC) = General Criteria: Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement 2010.

(GTA)=Graduate Attributes: Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement 2010.

14. General Learning Outcomes

Level 7

Master's degrees/Postgraduate Certificates/Postgraduate Diplomas are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

15. Learning Outcomes

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

Professional Studies

A.1 Professionalism (PC1)

A successful candidate will demonstrate overall competence and the ability to behave with integrity, in the ethical and professional manner appropriate to the role of professional designer. The candidate will have the skills necessary to undertake effective communication and presentation, organisation, self-management and autonomous working. The candidate will have a clear understanding of their obligation to society and the profession, and a sufficient awareness of the limits of their competence and professional experience to ensure they are unlikely to bring their profession into disrepute.

A.2 Clients, users and delivery of services (PC2)

A successful candidate will be able to demonstrate understanding of the range of services offered by interior designers and architects and delivering those services in a manner prioritising the interests of the client and other stakeholders. The candidate will have the skills necessary to provide a competent service, both singly and as part of a team, including understanding of client needs, appropriate communication, programming, coordination and competent delivery. This will be supported by knowledge of the briefing process, forms and terms of appointment, the means of professional remuneration, relevant legislation, and the execution of appropriate programmed and coordinated project tasks.

A.3 Legal Framework and processes (PC3)

A successful candidate will be able to demonstrate understanding of the legal context within which an interior designer or architect must operate, and the processes undertaken to ensure compliance with legal requirements or standards. The candidate will have the skills necessary to positively interact with statutory and private bodies or individuals, and competently deliver projects within diverse legislative frameworks. This will be supported by knowledge of the relevant law, legislation, guidance and controls relevant to interior/architectural design and construction.

A.4 Practice and Management (PC4)

A successful candidate will be able to demonstrate understanding of the business priorities, required management processes and risks of running an architectural or design practice, and the relationship between the practice of interior/architectural design and the UK construction industry. The candidate will have the skills necessary to engage in business administration and ability to resource, plan, implement and record project tasks to achieve stated goals, either individually or within a team. This will be supported by knowledge of the nature of legal business entities, office systems, administration procedures, leadership and management and the relevant legislation.

A.5 Building Procurement (PC5)

A successful candidate will be able to demonstrate understanding of UK construction and contract law, construction procurement processes and the roles of built environment professionals. The candidate will have the skills necessary to plan project-related tasks, coordinate and engage in design team interaction, execute effective contract communication and resolve construction-related challenges and disputes. This will be supported by an understanding of contractual relationships, the obligations upon an architect or designer acting as contract administrator, job-related administrative systems and the management of projects in the context of the candidate's professional experience.

A.6 A successful candidate will be able to demonstrate appropriate research methods for their specialism (SOA)

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

B.1 Evaluate information, opinion and evidence critically and draw conclusions that display methodological and theoretical rigour. (SOA)

B.2 Apply strategies of selection for dealing with information. (SOA)

B.3 Plan, implement and report on a programme of original research. (SOA)

C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:

Communication

- C.1 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)
- C.2 Apply appropriate theoretical concepts to projects, demonstrating a reflective and critical approach. (GC2.3)
- C.3 Demonstrate proficiency in observation, investigation, enquiry and/or visualisation.

Professional Studies

- C.4 Identify and manage individual learning needs so as to prepare for and maintain professional standards commensurate with qualification. (SOA)
- C.5 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. (GTA2.6)

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

- D.1 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)
- D.2 Work as part of a team (SOA).
- D.3 Manage independent study (SOA).
- D.4 Demonstrate mature understanding of the relationship within a multidisciplinary context of this specialism to other specialist areas of expertise.(SOA)

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

The learning and Teaching strategies aim to broaden the knowledge and understanding of Professional Design Practice students gain through individual professional experience of architectural and interior design practice. Delivery is through lectures, external expert input, seminars and involves both group and individual work. Workshops are designed to allow students first-hand experience of aspects of practice and contract, and facilitate the exchange of knowledge, and the building of professional judgement.

Individual and group research supported by seminar discussion and debate, with the provision of formative feedback at relevant points. Critical intellectual engagement is developed through in depth analysis of a topical research project and a more sustained theoretical or practice-based research project.

Practical skills are developed through a combination of lectures, seminars and workshops and project seminar based learning.

Transferable skills are embedded within the curriculum. Project work, research, seminars, group tutorials and personal tutorials are used to support achievement of the outcomes.

17. Assessment Strategy

Assessment is through coursework. Coursework includes individual essay and report writing, together with group presentations and reflective analysis of workshop activities.

The course work is designed to engage students in research and explore in-depth, particular subject areas relevant to their study and to demonstrate their understanding of professional practice and procedures. Formative feedback is available through engagement with workshops, both in class and on-line, and through tutor support for the thesis. Feedback will be provided on draft documents prior to the summative assessment of the assessment artefacts.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

See [Unit Web Search](#)¹ for full details on the course structure and units

- The MA Professional Design Practice is offered as a full-time 1-year or a part-time 2-year postgraduate programme. 180 credits are required for the MA Professional Design Practice.
- 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 a 60-credit thesis unit. One credit is equivalent to 10 hours of learning.
- The School has a Professional Liaison Group and provides links with Employers through part-time staff the evening lecture series and the Project Office.

19. Employability Statement

The course will help you to further position yourself for the competitive employment market by developing a practice or sector specialism whether within a sector or a particular aspect of design.

The MA will develop your professional knowledge and skills; your understanding of entrepreneurship and business; your practice management and project leadership skills, and will prepare you towards setting up and running your own design practice. It will also deepen your understanding of ethical professional design practice and procedures.

Careers guidance forms a central embedded part of the MA Professional Design Practice programme and you will discuss employment with your personal tutor.

Course Management

20. 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. In addition and separate to the MA Professional Design Practice, the School of Architecture has a Professional Studies Advisor who will co-ordinate professional experience and professional training aspects of interior and architectural education
- University support services include careers, financial advice, housing and counselling
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK)
- CCI Creative Skills Centre and CCI Academic Skills 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.
- 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, and teaching notes.
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards has been developed for Moodle, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

- A good honours degree in Interior Design, Interior Architecture and Design, Architecture or a related subject or equivalent professional experience and/or qualifications. A portfolio of professional work is required.
- 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.

N.B. Applicants should note that **this award does NOT give Part 3 Exemption** from ARB/RIBA Parts 1, 2 and 3.

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 interior design and architecture. A central component of the course is group work where students are required to develop their skills through formal presentation of their own research and understanding to staff and fellow students for critical review through debate and discussion. This type of group 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.

22. 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
- Head of Department's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review
- 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
- 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 Department

- 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
- Unit and Course Level student feedback questionnaires
- University participates in external student surveys, e.g. National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 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) programme 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

23. Assessment Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth academic regulations will apply to this programme (see [Assessment and Regulations²](#)).

24. Role of Externals

Subject External Examiners who will:

- Oversee unit assessment and usually attend Unit Assessment Boards
- Review unit assessment strategy
- Sample assessment artefacts
- Present 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

² http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-107.pdf?_ga=2.35873504.1363879306.1532935696-1470967879.1491987462

25. Indicators of Standards and Quality

A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition

None.

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

The MA Professional Design Practice (previously MA Professional Practice Architecture) course participated in a successful Periodic Programme Review on 26th April 2013. A review for 2017-2018 was deferred due to the ongoing work on the Curriculum Framework 2019 changes and the impending work on the review cycle.

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](#)*³).

D. Others

None.

26. Further Information

Further information may be found in:

- Student Handbook
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- University of Portsmouth Prospectus
- [University of Portsmouth](#)⁴ and [Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries](#)⁵ websites

³ http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/reports/university-of-portsmouth-her-15.pdf?sfvrsn=5071f581_4

⁴ www.port.ac.uk/

⁵ http://www2.port.ac.uk/faculty-of-creative-and-cultural-industries/?_ga=2.258035018.1363879306.1532935696-1470967879.1491987462