Programme Specification: Architecture (MArch), RIBA Part 2

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

Course record information

Name and level of final award	• Master of Architecture - Master of Architecture (RIPart 2) The award is Bologna FQ-EHEA first cycle degree or diploma compatible
Name and level of intermediate awards	
Awarding body/institution	University of Westminster
Teaching institution	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution	Recognised Body
Location of delivery	Primary: Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
QAA subject benchmarking group(s)	Subject Benchmark Statement for Architecture 2026 QAA Subject Benchmark Statement
Professional statutory or regulatory body	Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Architects Registration Board (ARB)
Westminster course title, mode of attendance and standard length	• Master of Architecture (RIBA Part 2) FT, Full-time, September start - 2 years standard length
Valid for cohorts	From 2027/8 for both Level 6, and Level 7

Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum entry requirements for all undergraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information. For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements. More information can be found here: https://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/how-to-apply

Recognition of Prior Learning

Applicants with prior certificated or experiential learning at the same level of the qualification for which they wish to apply are advised to visit the following page for further information:

https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/guides-and-policies/student-matters/recognition-of-prior-learning

Aims of the programme

Consisting of two years full time study (levels 6 & 7), the Master of Architecture fulfils the RIBA Graduate Attributes for Part 2 and the ARB Academic Competency Outcomes for Architects (see section on Professional Body Accreditation later in this document).

The course has a clearly defined structure which broadly speaking distinguishes between two types of learning (cognitive and tacit knowledge) acquired in parallel via aligned studio and non-studio modules (named hereafter as 'Architectural Productions' and 'Architectural Reflections'). Comprehensive understanding achieved through interaction between these two domains of learning is the culminating ambition of the course. This learning ambition fulfils the QA code descriptor for Masters courses and Benchmark Statement for integrated Masters programmes in architecture by addressing the twelve literacies outlined in the 2026 Subject Benchmark Statement for Architecture:

- design literacy
- visual and spatial literacy
- cultural and contextual literacy
- climate and ecological literacy
- technical and building environment literacy
- digital literacy
- research and enquiry-based literacy
- ethical and professional literacy
- practice and business literacy
- financial and economic literacy
- emotional literacy
- communication literacy

The programme is also designed to reflect the varied backgrounds and interests of the entrants as well as the pluralist nature of the subject. Building on their previous studies and experience, students are provided with a framework through which to direct their studies towards interests and themes that will shape their identity as architectural designers and practitioners. Extending through many aspects of the course, this element of choice enables students to position themselves for future employment, in roles that will reflect their individual strengths, interests and values.

The core aims of the Master of Architecture are:

- To support the student's route to qualification as an architect, or into alternative practice, through further study and practical experience.
- To nurture holistic thinking and to meet the intellectual aspirations of architecture as an academic discipline; and to impart a deeper knowledge, understanding and ability to engage in increasingly self-directed and mature study, including aspects of subject specialism and original research.
- To facilitate the acquisition of key skills and 'literacies' informed by the QAA Benchmark Statement for Architecture 2026, including the use of creative technologies and experimentation through making, to integrate these skills with research and problem solving, and to develop effective solutions to architectural design problems.
- To prepare graduates to lead on ethical practice and professionalism and to demonstrate a committed approach to their responsibilities with respect to society and the environment.

Employment and further study opportunities

University of Westminster graduates will be able to demonstrate the following five Graduate Attributes:

- Critical and creative thinkers
- Literate and effective communicator
- Entrepreneurial
- Global in outlook and engaged in communities
- Social, ethically and environmentally aware

University of Westminster courses capitalise on the benefits that London as a global city and as a major creative, intellectual and technology hub has to offer for the learning environment and experience of our students.

The Graduate Attributes fall into five general categories that frame academic and professional learning. Details of the Graduate Attribures can be found here: Graduate attributes at the University of Westminster | University of Westminster, London

Most students who complete the Master of Architecture with RIBA Part 2 Exemption progress on to working in architectural offices and become registered architects. Some students progress to take PhD degrees and then go into research and/or teaching. Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. employability skills. The MArch course is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring students benefit from the following:

- Career development skills which are embedded in all courses.
- The course team includes many practising architects and researchers involved in practice-led research and development.
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision.

What will you be expected to achieve?

Learning outcomes are statements of what successful students have achieved as a result of learning. These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

- The overall knowledge and understanding you will gain from your course (KU)
- Graduate attributes are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA)
- Professional and personal practice learning outcomes are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course (PPP)
- Key transferable skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)
- Cognitive Skills, are learning outcomes that help build a conceptual understanding that is necessary to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems and comment on research.

Level 6 course learning outcomes: upon completion of Level 6 you will be able to:

- L6.01 Problem Solving: Precisely articulate a question, problem or hypothesis, derived from a broad and logical investigation. (PPP)
- L6.02 Agenda Building: Identify individual learning needs and specific entry points into creative practice and research inquiry. (KU GA)
- L6.03 Material Technique: Utilise digital fabrication to achieve interaction between ideas, research and new techniques of making. (KU PPP)
- L6.04 Multi-Media Approach: Combine verbal and visual media to articulate the link between design thinking and traditional scholarship. (GA)
- L6.05 Cultural Context: Understand the relevance of cultural inquiry, and to translate this into a disciplinary-specific language that is comprehensible to different audiences. (KU)
- L6.06 Critical Practices: Critique and appraise received professional conventions and practices. (GA PPP)

- L6.07 Digital Design: Successfully apply digital media as part of a design process; and in a critical and informed manner. (KU PPP)
- L6.08 Technical and Environmental Strategies: Apply technical knowledge and resources to creatively engage with environmentally sustainability, and structural and material performance in architecture. (KU)

Level 7 course learning outcomes: upon completion of Level 7 you will be able to:

- L7.01 Synthetic Judgement: Translate cognitive, abstract knowledge into tacit understanding, situated know-how, and real-world problem-solving. (PPP)
- L7.02 Leadership and Research: Undertake self-directed study, and engage with group activities, providing communication, direction and organisational input as and when required. (GA PPP)
- L7.03 Real-World Engagement: Engage through research and design with relevant contemporary issues and real-world contexts including a broad community of producers, stakeholders, public funding streams and entrepreneurial initiatives. (GA PPP)
- L7.04 Agenda Building: Analyse current trends and deficiencies in a cultural or technological context, and to identify potential opportunities for intervention and active experimentation. (PPP)
- L7.05 Design Research: Translate research-based inquiry into research-led design processes; and to articulate a clearly identified design thesis that can be tested against the emerging cultural, technological and environmental needs of society and professional practice. (KU PPP KTS)
- L7.06 Informed Design: Integrate knowledge of conventional and emerging principles of architectural design, together with a broad range of technological, professional and historical subjects associated with architecture culture. (KU PPP KTS)
- L7.07 Responding to Criticism: Constructively absorb feedback from tutors, peers and experts and use this to inform and develop coherent arguments and proposals. (KTS CS)
- L7.08 Critical Practices: Explore and challenge the boundaries of existing disciplinary practices; and to evaluate and interpret their relevance and currency within a professional and disciplinary context. (GA PPP)
- L7.09 Professionalism and Employability: Compare and judge individual academic output against professional standards, and to identify gaps and opportunities within existing disciplinary practices. (PPP KTS)
- L7.10 Critical Discourse: Construct sophisticated and complex arguments, expressed verbally and through illustrated text. (GA PPP KTS)
- L7.11 Ethical Practice: Understand the ethical impact of design and research practices in relation culture, society and environmental sustainability. (GA PPP)

How will you learn?

Learning methods

Reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of architectural education, the MArch course offers a wide variety of learning opportunities structured around both practical and more conventionally academic research activities.

In the context of design and making students learn by actively engaging in practical tasks and by applying the knowledge gained in taught sessions. Through a series of deliverables, and studio activities students progressively translate their research material into coherent design proposals. Studio groups and other thematically defined seminar and study groups also, provide a unique mix of methodologies and approaches, and allow students to make selections that reflect their individual learning preferences, and which recognise their unique identity as learners. These groups also provide the context for students to learn through group working and discussion. Interactive peer-to-peer learning is also facilitated through the regular presentation of work in progress.

Whether based on first-hand observation or traditional archive and text-based research, self-directed study (as the foundation for both design and written work in the course) encourages students to develop as autonomous learners, and acquire the learning skills required for future professional development.

Teaching methods

The ‘studio’ environment is central to the teaching of architecture, and all design projects are carried out within its context. Replicating the conditions under which projects are carried out in practice is not fully achievable in an academic environment. Design Studio projects do not therefore aim to mimic proposals in the commercial world but to take advantage of their setting within the academic world to offer a learning vehicle, which, while informed by the world outside,

allows for exploration of values, and experimentation with processes. A broad range of design projects are offered – and a broad range of responses encouraged. The level and nature of outcomes for the Design Studio Year 1 module are intentionally different to those in Design Studio Year 2, even though students from both years work alongside each other. The patterns of teaching/learning on the MArch, and through which the Professional Criteria are met, are classifiable into generic types.

Design Studio, know as 'Architectural Productions I & II': Typically this consists of reviews, seminars, 1:1 and group discussions, tutorials, and portfolio instruction.

Alongside design sits is a series of seven non-studio, subject-led, areas of study (four in year one, three in year two) clustered together as 'Architectural Reflections I & II' respectively -

Digital Design: Technical instruction/lectures, supervised practical work.

Critical Practices: Lectures, group discussion, workshops.

Applied Technical Studies 1 and 2: Lectures, seminars, tutorials / reviews.

History and Theory / Dissertation: Seminars, lectures, group and individual tutorials.

Strategic Report: Lectures, seminars, group and individual tutorials.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Responding to the diverse city in which we are based, we are committed to the inclusivity and accessibility of our course. We are proud of our diverse student cohorts and see this diversity as one of our attributes. We encourage applications from students from the broadest possible range of backgrounds, as well as adopting best practice to ensure that our study resources, assessments and approach to learning and teaching are as inclusive as possible:

The course utilises a wide variety of learning and teaching methods, including group work, seminar discussions, site/museum visits and practical design/making workshops. Central to this is the design studio system, which brings together students from both levels of the course. Along with other thematically led seminar groups, the design studios provide a unique mix of methodologies and approaches, as well as an opportunity for more culturally inclusive and diverse content. Extending through many aspects of the course this element of choice enables students to make selections that reflect their individual strengths, and which recognise their unique identity as learners. Seminar and studio groups also provide an environment in which students can work together on group assignments and actively discuss and debate contemporary issues. In this context, they can also draw on and discuss their own experiences or cultural heritage, thereby challenging stereotypes and fostering greater understanding. Guest speakers and other contributors are selected wherever possible to reflect a broad range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, disabilities, ages, and genders.

The MArch course also seeks to engage with disability and neurodivergence through its content and to achieve broader engagement with diversity. Study materials are varied in both media and content and are shared via appropriate online platforms, including Blackboard and Panopto, to provide the greatest possible level of accessibility. We are actively decolonising reading lists and the wider curriculum. Lectures and other content are chosen to reflect a wide range of local and global issues as well as diverse forms of practice, and to explicitly address postcolonial perspectives. Lectures are also recorded, and key documents are offered in modifiable formats. Where possible, these documents are provided in advance and remain available for future reference.

Assessment methods

Assessment is based entirely on coursework produced in a diverse range of formats with no timed assessments. These largely take the form of project portfolios containing drawings, models, moving images, etc., as well as more conventional
forms of written assessment. Students are encouraged to develop individual projects that build on their specific strengths, interests, and cultural perspectives. Regular formative assessments and feedback through crits and tutorials within the context of studio and seminar groups also provide an environment in which the individual needs of each student can be supported, and a Personal Development Plan also allows them to reflect on their ambitions for the course and beyond.

Assessment for each piece of coursework is coordinated by the relevant Module Leader. In accordance with University Regulations, the pass mark for Level 6 modules is 40%, and 50% for Level 7.

There is an extensive process of cross-reviewing (leading to formative feedback), interstudio marking, moderation, and synoptic assessment, combinations of which lead to summative feedback. The course thus offers a combination of assessment types that aims to support student progress.

All assessment mediates between learning outcomes and professional standards. As such, assessment vehicles measure knowledge acquisition and understanding of pedagogical principles related to the primary goal of the MArch programme – reflective practice.

Graduate Attribute	**Evident in Course Outcomes**
Critical and creative thinker	L6.01, L6.02, L6.03, L6.04, L6.06, L6.07, L7.04, L7.05, L7.06, L7.07, L7.08, L7.09, L7.10
Literate and effective communicator	L6.03, L6.04, L6.05, L6.06, L6.07, L7.02, L7.07, L7.10
Entrepreneurial	L6.03, L7.01, L7.02, L7.03, L7.04
Global in outlook and engaged in communities	L6.05, L7.01, L7.03, L7.05, L7.06, L7.08, L7.11
Socially, ethically and environmentally aware	L6.05, L6.06, L6.08, L7.01, L7.03, L7.05, L7.08, L7.09, L7.11

Course Structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Undergraduate students study 120 credits per year. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Modules are described as:

- **Core** modules are compulsory and must be undertaken by all students on the course.
- **Option** modules give you a choice of modules and are normally related to your subject area.
- **Electives**: are modules from across the either the whole University or your College. Such modules allow you to broaden your academic experience. For example, where electives are indicated, you may choose to commence the study of a foreign language alongside your course modules (and take this through to the final year), thereby adding further value to your degree.
- Additional information may also be included above each level, for example, where you must choose one of two specific modules.

Modules

Level 4

Module Code	Module Title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
no modules for this level				

Level 5

Module Code	Module Title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
no modules for this level				

Level 6

6ARCH001W Architectural Productions I
Incorporating 2 equally-weighted components

Design Conception
Design Resolution

6ARCH002W Architectural Reflections I
Incorporating 4 equally-weighted components

Digital Design
Critical Practices
Applied Technical Studies 1
History and Theory

Module Code	Module Title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
6ARCH001W	Architectural Productions I	Core	60	30
6ARCH002W	Architectural Reflections I	Core	60	30

Level 7

7ARCH022W Architectural Productions II
Incorporating 2 equally weighted components

Design Hypothesis
Design Thesis

7ARCH023W Architectural Reflections II
Incorporating 3 components weighted 50% / 25% / 25%

Dissertation
Applied Technical Studies 2
Strategic Report

Module Code	Module Title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
7ARCH022W	Architectural Productions II	Core	60	30
7ARCH023W	Architectural Reflections II	Core	60	30

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. In addition, timetabling and limited spaces may mean you cannot register for your first choice of option modules.

Professional body accreditation or other external references

The course is validated by the RIBA and accredited by the ARB.

The Master of Architecture (RIBA Part 2) meets all the threshold Academic Outcomes detailed in the ARB Competency Outcomes for Architects.

The Master of Architecture (RIBA Part 2) also ensures that all students demonstrate the application of all the RIBA Themes & Values for Architectural Education, and:

- understanding how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research, to creatively synthesise complex environmental, social, and spatial issues, showing originality and the use of hypothesis in the application of knowledge.
- undertake study at, or informed by, the forefront of the academic and professional disciplines.
- demonstrate ability to generate design proposals which integrate an understanding of environmental building physics and comply with relevant statutory standards to meet the RIBA Sustainable Outcomes Guide targets (including standards for zero carbon design).
- develop the qualities for employment including sound judgement and personal and collective responsibilities, response to evidence-based feedback, and the use of initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

Course management

The management structure of the course is as follows:

- Studio and component leaders, as well as dissertation supervisors and other tutors play a significant role in the delivery of the course. This includes formulating the detailed content of the teaching and devising project briefs within the framework provided by the course modules.
- Supported by module and component leaders, the course leader is responsible for coordinating the overall management of the course, including the development of the curriculum, assessments and timetabling.
- In addition, the MArch runs a student rep system that allows regular feedback and provides students with a voice in the management and future development of the course.
- The Senior Tutor, or head of personal tutoring, hold responsibility for coordinating the provision of pastoral care.
- The Head of School, supported by Assistant Heads of School, holds overall responsibility for the course offered by the School of Architecture and Cities.
- The Head of College holds overall responsibility for the Schools within the College.

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations.

Course specific regulations apply to some courses.

Academic Support

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities and additional support available. You will be provided with a Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or equivalent. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part-time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University utilises a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard, where students access their course materials and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students. Further information on Blackboard can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/when-you-arrive/blackboard

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. In addition to online resources in Blackboard, students can also attend Study Skills workshops and schedule one-to-one appointments. Further information on the Academic Learning Development Centre can be found at westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development.

Learning support includes our libraries, each of which holds a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that

site. Students can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services.

Support Services

The University of Westminster's Student and Academic Services department provides a range of advice and guidance. Further information on the advice available to students can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/student-advice

The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University. Further information on UWSU can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/students-union

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel. University Panels normally include internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university, a representative from industry and a Student Advisor.

The course is also monitored annually by the College to ensure it is running effectively and that any issues that might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence from various sources, including student surveys, student progression and achievement, and reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course and make necessary changes.

Periodic reviews are also conducted to ensure that the curriculum remains up-to-date and that the skills acquired on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Representative students meet with a panel to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years is also part of the evidence used to assess the course's performance.

How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University, and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is collected in various ways.

- Through student engagement activities at the course and module level, students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Course representatives are elected to expressly represent the views of their peers. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the course representatives.
- There are also School Representatives appointed jointly by the University and the Students' Union who meet with senior School staff to discuss wider issues affecting student experience across the School. Student representatives are also represented on key College and University committees.;
- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire for each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be improved.
- Final-year undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey, which helps inform the national university league tables. Postgraduate students will be asked to complete the Postgraduate Taught Survey (PTES).

This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student may reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. This specification is supplemented by the Course Handbook, Module proforma and Module Handbooks provided to students. Copyright in this document belongs to the University of Westminster. All rights are reserved. This document is for personal use only and may not be reproduced or used for any other purpose, either in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the University of Westminster. All copies of this document must incorporate this Copyright Notice – 2025©

Additional Details

Course-Specific Regulations

Award of a Masters in Architecture (MArch)

To be eligible for the award of a Master's in Architecture, a student must have:

- Passed all modules (obtained a minimum of 120 credits at level 6 and a minimum of 120 credits at level 7).
- Attempted modules worth no more than 360 credits in total (max. 180 credits level 6 and 240 credits level 7). A student may therefore be permitted to retake one 60 credit module at each level; or two at level 7 (provided they have not already retaken a module at level 6).

The University may award a Masters degree with Merit to a student where an average of at least 60% has been achieved in modules at Level 7.

The University may award a Masters degree with Distinction to a student where an average of at least 70% has been achieved in modules at Level 7.

Additionally the following course-specific regulations apply:

- To progress [from level 6 to 7] a minimum of 60 credits are required to be passed (Architectural Productions 1), and at least 6 of the assessment components for Architectural Reflections 1 must also be passed by the end of the July reassessment period.
- A student who has had a referral/retake in their Level 6 modules will still be eligible for a Merit or Distinction according to the marks for their Level 7 modules. However, any student who has a referral/retake in any of their Level 7 modules will be ineligible for either a Merit or Distinction.