

Programme Specification: BA (Hons) Landscape Architecture

Date of Publication: September 2014

NOTE: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detail on the specific learning outcomes, indicative content and the teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found (1) at [<http://www.bcu.ac.uk/courses/landscape-architecture-ba-hons>], (2) in the Module Specifications and (3) in the Student Handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked within independent review processes undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency.

Awarding Institution / Body:	Birmingham City University
Teaching Institution:	Birmingham City University
Interim Awards and Final Award:	Cert HE; Dip HE; BA; BA (Hons)
Programme Title:	BA (Hons) Landscape Architecture
Main fields of Study:	Landscape Architectural Design, Design Theory, Communication, Materiality, Sustainability
Modes of Study:	Full Time (3 Years)
Language of Study:	English
UCAS Code:	K310
JACS Code:	K310

Professional Status of the programme:

1. Landscape Institute accredited course

The course is subject to an LI Visiting Board to ensure that professional body requirements and standards are being met.

The LI accredits university courses across the UK, reflecting all aspects of the profession. All accredited courses are required to provide students with a foundation for future work in the profession and a range of transferable skills.

2. The course leads to the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Landscape Architecture [Ba (Hons)]

Relevant subject benchmark statements and other external reference points used to inform programme outcomes:

QAA Benchmarks for Landscape Architecture (Design)

3.8 Landscape design is a creative process which involves research, analysis, the exploration of concepts and synthesis in the form of spatial proposals. It employs a wide range of knowledge and understanding and a set of skills both subject-specific and professional. Programmes focusing on landscape design will deliver learning outcomes that will provide students with:

QQA.KU: A knowledge and understanding of:

1. *design theory and methods and their application*
2. *dynamic natural and cultural processes and their engagement with design proposals*
3. *precedents in design and their relationship to contemporary practice*
4. *properties of construction and planting materials and their use in design*
5. *the specific professional, legal, institutional and administrative context in which landscape design is practised*

QQA.S: Subject-specific and generic skills that provide an ability to:

1. *analyse, reflect on and synthesise information in order to generate creative and robust design solutions*
2. *use both convergent and divergent thinking in exploring and formulating design solutions*
3. *envise proposals as they develop over time*
4. *generate three dimensional form through a variety of manual and digital techniques as a tool for the exploration and presentation of proposals*
5. *apply critical judgement to both their own and other people's designs and articulate reasoned evaluations, leading to improved design solutions*
6. *develop and communicate design proposals in a variety of media, to the spectrum of stakeholders involved in professional life.*

Landscape Institute accreditation criteria

Schools must demonstrate that they have the staffing, expertise, resources and quality assurance mechanisms to deliver and maintain a high quality programme of learning

Programmes must:

- A. *focus on a clear and defined area of professional landscape skills and expertise*
- B. *deliver appropriate underpinning skills, knowledge and understanding to provide a foundation for entering the profession*
- C. *Programmes must deliver the key generic skills which underpin professional life and lifelong learning*
- D. *Programmes must provide a foundation for progression to the workplace and professional practice*
- E. *Schools must demonstrate a commitment to working in partnership with the Landscape Institute and the profession*

In relation to course content:

LI.C: Criterion C - LI Generic Skills

1. *Problem solving skills - the ability to define and analyse problems and issues, think independently, exercise judgement and develop creative and innovative solutions*
2. *Critical thinking and reflection – the ability to understand and employ, criticise and evaluate new ideas, and consider and articulate valid methods and alternative approaches*
3. *Team and independent working – ability to work effectively both independently and collaboratively with others to achieve outcomes*
4. *Communication – the ability to communicate ideas clearly and effectively in a variety of professional contexts and to a range of different audiences, using appropriate media and techniques*
5. *Research and analysis – the ability to locate, review, assimilate, synthesise and apply information appropriately and from a variety of Sources.*
6. *Self/career management skills – the ability to plan, reflect and review own learning and achievements identify opportunities for development; set personal and professional goals; ability to prioritise and manage own time.*
7. *Information technology – awareness of and ability to use IT packages and tools commonly encountered in the professional workplaces relevant to the focus of the programme*
8. *The impact of policy*
9. *Industry awareness – an appreciation of the evolving contexts and requirements of professional practice.*
10. *How projects are brought together through visioning and strategy building, project management and finance, planning and assessment, leadership, community engagement and partnership working*

LI.D: Criterion D – LI Student Employability

1. *Strategies are in place to develop students' employability*
2. *Programmes incorporate specific modules or integrated learning focusing on professional practice issues and topics*
3. *Programmes incorporate a significant element of assessed learning in work based or real life contexts*
4. *Programmes include opportunities for students to present their work in a professional environment and receive feedback from practitioners*
5. *Students have the opportunity to engage in multidisciplinary or cross disciplinary studies and projects*
6. *Students are aware of professional opportunities, career paths, and next steps to qualification (including the Pathway to Chartership) and are provided with advice about their career choices and professional development*

associated LI documents:

1. Landscape Architecture: elements and areas of practice
2. Procedures and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes

Progression

On successful completion of the Ba (Hons), students may apply for the following higher degrees (Full or Part time):

- *Post-graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture (PgDip)*
- *Master of Arts in Landscape Architecture (MA)*
- *Master of Arts in Urban Design ((MA - subject to validation))*

Following post-graduate studies:

- *MPhil and PhD degrees by research*

UK Landscape Architecture Chartership

Successful completion of the post-graduate Landscape Architecture programmes (PgDip or MA) will fulfil the academic requirements for starting on the Landscape Institute's 'Pathway to Chartership' program (P2C) - to gain 'Chartered Membership of the Landscape Institute' (CMLI)

'Chartered Membership of the Landscape Institute' (CMLI) requires a minimum of two years in employment with a Landscape Institute registered practice and further professional oral examinations:

<http://www.landscapeinstitute.org.uk/education/pathway.php>

Programme philosophy

Narrative

The School of Architecture, at the faculty of Arts, Design and Media presents Landscape Architecture as an exploration in the design of vibrant, living environments; of making places for people and of creating elemental outdoor experiences.

All aspects of life on our planet, through nature and our built environment of cities and towns within, are acts on the stage of Landscape. Through guided design exploration and research of artistry, utility and natural systems, students will explore and unwrap many layers, to reveal an unlimited storyboard.

The course follows a clear development path over its duration. The first step will lay the foundation for deeper understanding. Covering a broad spread of study areas, we move seamlessly, connecting abstract design theory and consideration of global scale contexts, to micro-scale understanding of materials and technology. Through this process, the student will gain an understanding of the scope, scale and connectivity of Landscape Architecture, its transformative abilities and power to help ensure a Human future.

Reaching a base in understanding, students move with an enhanced sense of realism and purpose towards achievable design and construction. The culminating phase of which, develops connections between key design theories and real-world practice, through the exploration of two different multifaceted design projects.

Now firmly established, the student enters the final segment of the undergraduate journey. Through a guided but self-directed investigation, the student will find their own academic pathway. Built on research and led via creative but pragmatic exploration in design, they will successfully communicate connections between: theory, contextual analysis, project brief, conceptual proposals, design development and design detail, to produce a complex, broad-scale, multi-layered design project.

Design Culture

The primary educational environment for the course is formed around a design studio culture, which mimics real-world creative practice. This approach is facilitated greatly by the strong design culture and atmosphere that runs across all Schools.

Widespread connections to the local and wider built-environment industry, ensure that this culture of design promotes in students, realistic, integrated thought processes, multidisciplinary understanding and professional approach.

Locale

The central urban context of the Parkside Campus presents a broad stage for testing out new models of human settlement and lifestyle, with a numerous opportunities for contemporary and globally relevant explorations in landscape design, that connect to current: social, economic and political contexts.

The immediate proximity of the newly built Eastside park to the Parkside campus, provides a very useful local addition to wider precedent studies in Landscape Architecture, introducing a strong example of contemporary civic space and park design that, with such local familiarity over the course of the degree, will enable a graduated evaluation of spatial and technical design options and of their resultant long term success. An understanding that could not be gained from a single visit.

The Programme aims to:

- A. Align with the School philosophy in providing a broad, intellectually challenging education, that explores relationships between art, utility and nature
- B. Lead by design artistry; founded on sound technical understanding, nurturing a confident, personalised approach to design process and to promote student creativity through independent exploration and critical reflection
- C. Promote critical appraisal of professional, social and artistic contexts which influence contemporary Landscape Architecture, connecting theory, research and design practice
- D. Enable key communication skills, with creative utilisation of analogue and digital production in visualisation, confidence and clarity in verbal presentation, and to meet academic standards of written communication
- E. Further student employability and long-term career opportunity: through enhancing personal management, individual and multidisciplinary team working skills, following a clear development path and instilling an understanding of life-long professional progression

Intended learning outcomes and the means by which they are achieved and demonstrated:

Learning Outcomes

1. To demonstrate an ability to synthesise and analyse landscape architectural proposals, through creative design exploration and critical appreciation of design process, supported by research and precedent
2. To demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and critical understanding of the physical, economic, social contexts which influence contemporary built environment practice; including the professional, legal and institutional framework of Landscape Architecture in the UK
3. To demonstrate ability in the specification of materials, technology, structures and systems, within a global industrialised context, considering ethics, sustainability and cultural appreciation
4. To demonstrate technical and creative ability in a range of key skills and professional approaches required for success in built environment practice: encompassing verbal, visual and written communication of space and experience, and incorporating professional, ethical judgement and personal development

Learning, teaching, and assessment methods used

Learning and Teaching:

- one to one and/ or group tutorials
- seminar groups
- student presentations
- interactive workshop sessions
- class exercises
- study tours
- resource based learning (readers, etc)
- formative design review
- summative design review
- formal lectures

Assessment Methods:

- formative design reviews
- summative design crits
- submission of drawing packages / portfolio
- presentations / seminars
- written dissertation
- design reports
- technical reports
- essays

The induction process introduces the various methods of course delivery and the expectations of students in order to achieve the associated academic standards. Modules are delivered through a combination of modes of learning, which are utilised as appropriate for achieving the learning outcomes of each module.

An overall summary is provided below:

Tutorials

Tutorials may take place in groups or individually and may vary in size depending on the mode and context of study. Tutorials encourage independence and self-confidence, by providing a forum for discussion and critique of work with staff and peer group, helping in the development of student's ideas, presentation and interpersonal communication skills. Tutorials are key teaching and learning experiences that enable students to receive feedback, guidance and criticism of their work at every stage of a module.

Design studio

As an approach, studio teaching, or 'Design Studio', mimics the real world working culture of design professions, with an open atmosphere for promotion of free, quick exchanges of ideas, knowledge and skills. Studio sessions provide the foundation for the development of a healthy, individualised understanding of design process; promoting a fearless attitude to exploration and experimentation with materials, physical form and for developing conceptual ideas that are rooted to strong theoretical understanding.

Each design studio module is driven by one or more design projects, which are tailored to promote the development of an integrated approach to creation and communication of design ideas, including verbal, graphic, physical methods, such as perspectives, 2D plan and section, parallel projection, physical and digital 3D models, constructed objects, video, installation, exhibition and written components.

Design studio develops within the student, an open minded and self-aware approach, expanding ability and confidence in providing and receiving objective critique of design. This is achieved via an iterative, cyclical process of regular formative review of student's developing design proposals (often known as 'pin-ups' or 'crits'), which focus and refine ideas toward well rounded, finalised proposals.

Design briefs within studio cover a diverse range of situations, often connecting with research areas within the school, opening up potential opportunities to connect with real-world Landscape Architectural practice and/or to the advancement of academic understanding and theory in the subject.

Lectures and Seminars

Individual, project-related and guest lectures (including the BIAD 'Lecture series'), provide a broad spectrum of knowledge base of theories, principles, concepts and issues relating to the subject area and the learning outcomes for the course, motivating students towards independent study. Students will also be encouraged to attend certain lectures for aligned disciplines.

Seminars in addition, provide an opportunity to gain student self-confidence through discussion and development of ideas and theories, from lectures, reading, research and design projects. They promote intellectual understanding and further analysis, through exploration of reasoning and critical judgement, via guided debates within group discussion and presentation. They also provide an invaluable opportunity to discuss ideas and receive comment on specific subjects of interest, particularly moving into the later elements of the course.

Research & Independent Study

Take a diverse number of potential forms, effective research underpins practice in all its forms. Research and independent study enables students to develop personal interpretations of knowledge, critical skills and specialist interests, as well as being an integral part of all studies and a preparation for professional life. It is an essential process for the development of academic curiosity, self-motivation and a well-organised, personalised library of design references.

Options

These enable students to choose areas of study which encourage the development of individual interests and knowledge to a considerable depth and to develop independence, self-confidence and independence in their studies. Where appropriate, the elective may take the form of a shared project between cohorts of students from different disciplines, ensuring multi-disciplinary understanding in theory and practice.

Workshops

Workshops provide hands-on experience and opportunity for development of skills across a large range of potential areas of interest. They focus on specific applications to develop approaches, attitudes and methods, to facilitate theory and skills can be more easily incorporated into the student's developing design process.

Study Visits

Study visits allow access to the physical experience of design, connecting theory to built form, illustrating ideas presented in lectures and seminars, illustrating and reinforcing theoretical understanding of cultural context and material technology.

All module types may involve focused site visits that may vary in length, from short local trips, to longer visits, some of which may be overseas. Students unable to attend will be offered an equivalent learning opportunity by negotiation.

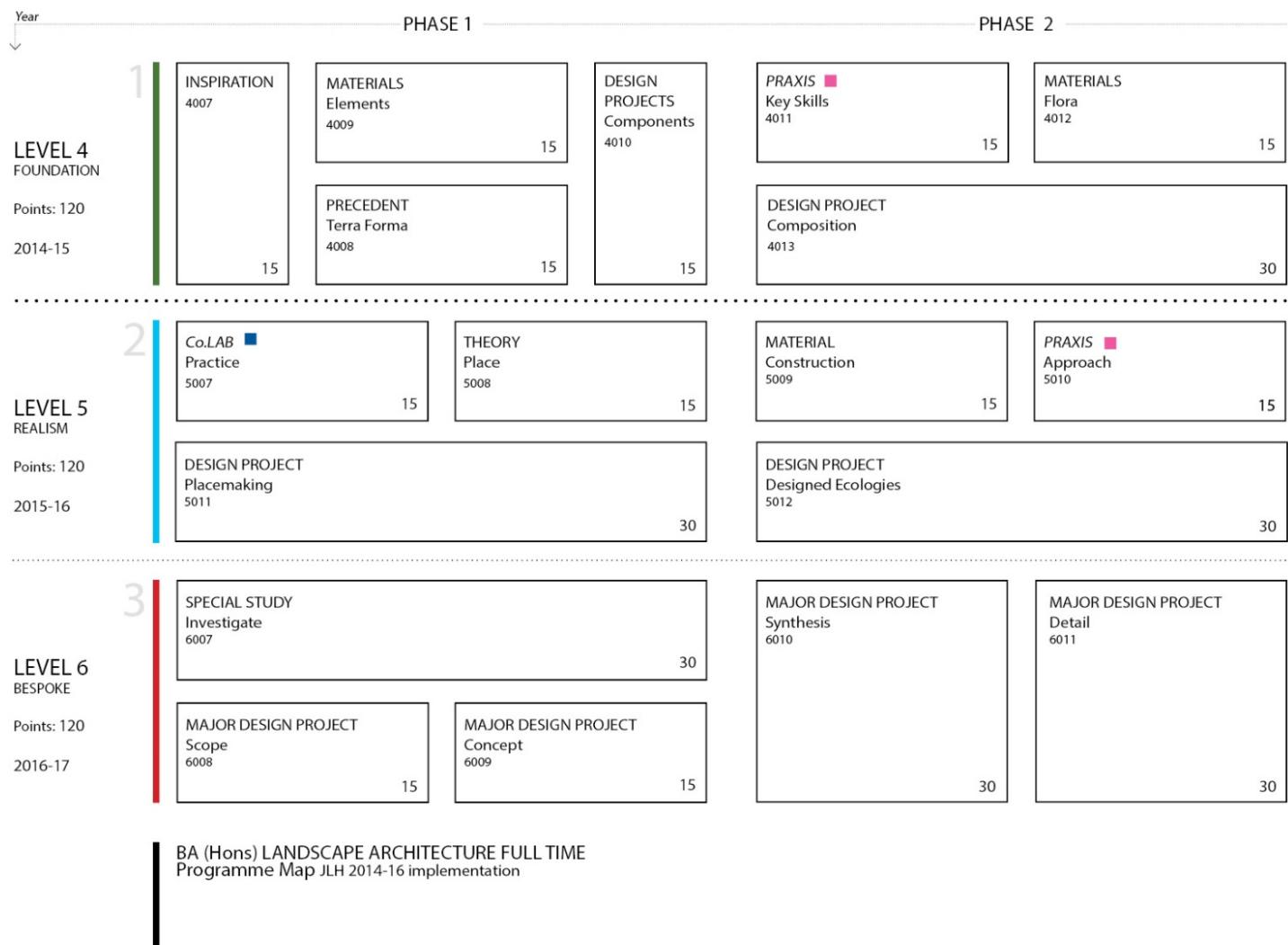
Some of modules may include online learning support. If this is applicable, more information will be provided by course tutors and in the relevant module descriptions.

Attendance

Taught sessions are the point at which students receive vital oral, written or other feedback on their work progression. Students are required to attend all timetabled sessions for each module in order to maximise their learning experience and this should be supplemented by further reading and exploratory practice.

Programme structure and requirements, levels, modules, credits and awards

The structure of the course, the modules, levels and credit values, [including ECTS credit values](#), and the awards which can be gained are shown in the diagram below.



Aims

- To bring a clearer focus to learning,
- Use personal motivation to achieve goals,
- Develop skills in self- management,
- Greater personal independence and confidence as a learner,
- More awareness of how to apply learning to new problems and contexts,
- Reflective, strategic, analytical and creative thinking skills that strengthen academic performance.

Objectives

Although it is important to spend time thinking about academic subjects and career progression, sometimes bigger issues get left out. For example:

- Lifetime goals
- Work location
- Personal values
- Work/life balance
- What is success?
- Personal sacrifice

Support for Learning including Personal Development Planning (PDP)

Students are encouraged to identify and with guidance, to reflect on their own learning needs. They are offered the following support as appropriate to meet these needs:

Training to become a Landscape Architect is a long process and without establishing targets along the way it can be a daunting prospect. PDP is a structured and supported process undertaken over a number of years to enable critical reflection upon learning, performance, achievement and facilitated planning for personal, educational and professional development. It complements structured and self-directed activities as part of the course, building upon the learning objectives of module briefs to give an overview of studies.

The PDP review is an opportunity to discuss issues, personal or academic, outside formal learning activities in a confidential environment.

Extra- curricular activities

The academic course provides an environment within which to gain knowledge and expertise in a subject. However, it needs to be balanced by wider skills applicable in the workplace and beyond. Students are encouraged to develop a wide range of skills and experience that support employability and further study and are encouraged to develop beyond the course by demonstrating they can:

- Take on responsible roles.
- Lead projects.
- Have had work experience.
- Speak languages apart from English.
- Have taken on challenges and can describe how they learnt from them.
- Have problem-solving skills to cope with new roles and contexts.
- Get on well with other people.
- Be confident in communicating with a wide range of people.
- Be creative thinkers.
- Be good at finding solutions rather than focusing on the problem

ERASMUS

Students are encouraged to study abroad. This is an invaluable opportunity for students to enjoy a different educational experience. Landscape Architecture students have a number of exchange opportunities available.

What?

The PDP consists of a paper based progress files including the following:

- The Learning Diary: Personal records of learning and achievement
- CV and personal statement towards career planning
- University transcript of academic performance

Students take ownership of this file. It forms the basis of discussions with the course team/tutor during the PDP session. Action points and key issues will be used to prompt further research, training and development opportunities. Achievements will be monitored from session to session.

Why? - *Individual, Course, Career, When and Structure*

Individual

Personal records contain details of personal goals, plans, reviews and achievements. They are a source of material to draw upon to monitor progress.

Course

The School and the University require students to follow and manage the process of personal development. It allows the course team to offer focused support and references.

Career

The PDP file forms the basis of personal information that will be useful throughout professional and academic life. The PDP is a valuable aid in producing an effective CV as it records personal achievements. As such it aids employability.

When?

PDP reviews take place twice during the academic year to allow goals to be assessed, monitor performance and issues arising during studies. Students are required to come prepared for the reviews, ensuring records are up to date, and have pre - prepared questions or comments.

Structure

The PDP is formatted as an A4 file with sections as follows:

1. 1. Introduction

- Title Page with Student Name, Course and Year
- Contents Sheet

2. Learning Diary

- Year Timetable
- Student planning timetable, showing deadlines and work- plan.
- Module briefs/guides
- Attendance Sheets
- Tutorial/studio Sheets (in date order) with commentary for further action
- Project Self- Review Sheet (on completion of module)
- Reflections on lectures, visits, background reading etc.

3. Self- Assessment sheets

- Priorities for personal development
- Action Plan
- Extra- curricular activities
- Current goals and achievements

4. CV and Personal Statement

5. University Transcript

Extra areas can be added if deemed personally desirable. The contents build up over time and need to be organised to ensure it is kept in order and up to date. PDP review dates will feature within the timetables for the year. Year leaders will prepare more detailed schedules for these sessions nearer to the time.

References

www.palgrave.com/skills4study
moodle.bcu.ac.uk – click on ‘Central PDP’

The University has a widely respected Student Support Service and this is a widely used facility where are often the first point of call to refer students to.

Students who may demonstrate learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, are encouraged to use these facilities to ensure that they are not disadvantaged.

The university has a range of learning support for students which include English Language classes.

Criteria for admission

Candidates must satisfy the general admissions requirements of the programme, which are as follows:

The current admission requirements can be found under the ‘Entry Requirements’ tab of the web page for this course.

Methods for evaluation and enhancement of quality and standards including listening and responding to views of students

The main objective is to ensure fitness for purpose and considerable emphasis on student feedback is taken by the course team in responding to issues.

Annual programme monitoring, after the exam boards a statistical review of all modules is undertaken and analysis of all modules will reveal any issues that require addressing by the course team.

1. Programme team meetings
2. Boards of Studies
3. Course Director’s Forum
4. Examination Board
5. Faculty Board
6. Sub committees
7. Review and validation events
8. Accreditation / Validation by professional bodies (LI Annual Review Group)
9. Annual Monitoring Report
10. National Student Satisfaction Survey
11. Student module feedback forms
12. External Examiners Reports
13. Academic planning