
Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the RIBA visiting board to
Metropolitan College**

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- 1** **Details of institution hosting course/s** **(report part A)**
Faculty of Engineering & Architecture
Metropolitan College
74, Sorou str, 15125
Maroussi, Athens
Greece
- 2** **Head of Architecture Group**
Mr Yiannis Kerabos
- 3** **Course/s offered for validation**
MArch Architecture & Urbanism
- 4** **Course leader/s**
Dr Elena Douvlou
- 5** **Awarding body**
University of Portsmouth, UK
- 6** **The visiting board**
Don Gray academic / chair
Jane McAllister academic / vice chair
Daniel Goodricke academic
Luke Murray academic
George Savaides regional representative / practitioner
Sophie Bailey validation manager
- 7** **Procedures and criteria for the visit**
The visiting board was carried out under the *RIBA procedures for validation and validation criteria for UK and international courses and examinations in architecture* (published July 2011, and effective from September 2011); this document is available at www.architecture.com.
- 8** **Recommendation of the Visiting Board**
On the 01 June 2018 the RIBA Education Committee confirmed that the following course and qualification is unconditionally validated:
- MArch Architecture & Urbanism**
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- The next RIBA visiting board will take place in: 2023
- 9** **Standard requirements for continued recognition**
Continued RIBA recognition of all courses and qualifications is dependent upon:
- i external examiners being appointed for the course
 - ii any significant changes to the courses and qualifications being submitted to the RIBA
 - iii any change of award title, and the effective date of the change, being notified to the RIBA so that its recognition may formally be transferred to the new title
 - iv submission to the RIBA of the names of students passing the courses and qualifications listed

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- v In the UK, standard requirements of validation include the completion by the institution of the annual statistical return issued by the RIBA Education Department

10 Academic position statement

The MArch Architecture and Urbanism was introduced at Metropolitan College (Marousi campus) in 2015. The course's philosophy is grounded in the belief that graduates in architecture should be answering the challenges posed by contemporary society for a globalised world and a sustainable future. The course aims to prepare graduates for a wide range of professional activities in the field of architecture and urbanism, with a solid intellectual base of knowledge in design, theory, culture, structural and environmental design, the social environment and professional practice. All academic staff are registered architects with an educational background from various national and international institutions, offering a diverse approach to architectural design.

The MArch Architecture and Urbanism course structure is based on the passage from the urban scale to the individual building, the critical engagement with the theory of architecture and urbanism and the pragmatic application of technology, environmental strategies and planning policies in the first year, to a critically engaged individual thesis project and the role and ethos of the architectural professional practice in the second year. A key emphasis of the course is the encouragement of the development of a range of transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, independent learning, as well as team-work that will be of value to students in employment, in society and in their individual lives. As this is a franchised course, in its collaborative basis, it adopts the Portsmouth School of Architecture framework and specifications. The integration of Urbanism within the MArch programme distinguishes it from the other architecture programmes in Greece.

Through an intensive series of design studio, structural, environmental and theory-related briefs, students are required to follow a curriculum in which the aim is to stimulate their critical thinking and creative powers through a sequence of problem-solving exercises. The change of design project scale between the undergraduate and post-graduate course serves also as a transition from graduate school to professional practice as part of the process of developing independent thinking and resolving design issues in an urban scale. The latter distinguishes the Part 2 course from the Part 1 course delivered at Metropolitan College. The first year studio theme, which drives the two design units – Strategy and Synthesis- uses the city (primarily the metropolitan area of Athens, but not exclusively) as a *contextual lab* and relates urban design to architecture, through various scales of design processes,

from the Urban Strategy and Masterplan as a group work, to the individual building design project. Furthered and supported by staff specialism and research, as well as external collaborators, it offers opportunities to engage with contemporary and challenging projects informed by current social issues such as the Greek financial crisis and the influx of immigrants. The ARCHE unit engages students in a critical, ideas-driven approach to architecture, starting from a chosen research topic that can relate to the Design Studio thematic framework or particular site, developed as a theoretical position in the form of a Manifesto. The TECHNE unit is underpinned by the need to develop a strong sense of technical, environmental and professional sense of reality within the discipline, through group work and individual projects and essay.

The second year Thesis Dissertation, Thesis Preparation, Professional Practice and Thesis Design units, engage students in a critical design process, developing projects iteratively towards a level of completion that encapsulate their individual design philosophy. The ever-changing social dynamics within the local and global context, the topography, nature and landscape, the historical past and the current challenges of the architectural profession are researched, analysed and debated. Consequently, students are requested to create their own original and rigorous architecture, integrating their knowledge and skills acquired in other units into their design unit portfolio. This distinguishes it from other architectural schools in Greece where each unit has an independent role within its programme structure.

The course's ambition, as part of an emerging independent School of Architecture, is to create a cosmopolitan environment, be fluid and current and engaged, in the philosophical debate, as architecture emerges and develops with society.

11 Commendations

The visiting board made the following commendations:

- 11.1 The Board was impressed with the commitment, dedication and professionalism of staff engaged on the MArch Architecture and Urbanism programme.
- 11.2 The Board understands the value of the strong relationship between the programme at Metropolitan College and the supporting Part 2 programme and staff at the University of Portsmouth.
- 11.3 The Board recognised the opportunities provided by the provision of a dedicated studio to house both years of the MArch Architecture and Urbanism programme.

12 Action points

The visiting board proposes the following action points. The RIBA expects the university to report on how it will address these action points. Failure by the university to satisfactorily resolve action points may result in a course being conditioned by a future visiting board.

12.1 The School should rewrite the Academic Position Statement to more accurately reflect the individuality of the Metropolitan College Part 2 programme, identifying those areas of activity and specific outcomes which the School would wish to be considered as exceptional.

12.2 The College should ensure that all students have access to workshop resources appropriate to a Masters level programme in architecture, specifically the provision of a laser cutter and other digital facilities (Advice: visit of 14/15 March 2017).

13. Advice

The visiting board offers the following advice to the school on desirable, but not essential improvements, which, it is felt, would assist course development and raise standards.

13.1 The Board acknowledges improvements since the last Visiting Board in the analysis of precedents in the development of thesis projects (GC7.1). The School is encouraged to continue to further strengthen precedent analysis.

13.2 Staff should be supported by the College in their ambition to undertake research in their field of study.

13.3 The effectiveness of the Student Staff Consultancy Committee can be enhanced by ensuring that progress on action points is properly monitored.

14 Delivery of academic position

See action point 12.1

15 Delivery of graduate attributes

It should be noted that where the Visiting Board considered graduate attributes to have been met, no commentary is offered. Where concerns were noted (or an attribute clearly not met), commentary is supplied. Finally, where academic outcomes suggested a graduate attribute was particularly positively demonstrated, commentary is supplied.

Graduate Attributes for Part 2

The Board confirmed that all Part 2 graduate attributes were met by graduates.

16 Review of work against criteria

It should be noted that where the Visiting Board considered a criterion to have been met, no commentary is offered. Where concerns were noted (or a criterion clearly not met), commentary is supplied. Finally, where academic outcomes suggested a criterion was particularly positively demonstrated, commentary is supplied.

Graduate Criteria for Part 2

See advice point 13.1.

17 Other information

17.1 Student numbers

Graduates (2017) =6

Year 2 (2017-2018) =5

Year 1 (2017-2018) =7

17.2 Documentation provided

The School provided all advance documentation in accordance with the validation procedures.

***Notes of meetings**

On request, the RIBA will issue a copy of the minutes taken from the following meetings:

- **Budget holder and course leaders**
- **Students**
- **Head of institution**
- **External examiners**
- **Staff**