

Report of the RIBA Full Visiting Board to the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL

Date of visiting board: 08-09 July 2021
Confirmed by RIBA Board: 17 November 2021

1 Details of institution hosting course/s

The Bartlett School of Architecture
 UCL Faculty of the Built Environment
 22 Gordon Street
 London
 WC1H 0QB

2 Architecture Lead/Director(s)

Director	Bob Sheil
Deputy Director	Barbara Campbell-Lange

Programme Directors

Part 1 BSc (Hons) Course Leaders

Ana Monrabal-Cook & Luke Pearson

Part 1 (EAD) Course Leader

Luke Olsen

Part 2 MArch Architecture Course Leaders

Julia Backhaus & Marjan Colletti

Part 3 Course Leader

Soo Ware

Parts 1 & 2 MSci Course Leader

Sara Shafiei

3 Course/s offered for validation

Part 1 BSc (Hons) Degree in Architecture
 Part 2 MArch
 Part 3 Examination in Professional Practice in Architecture

Part 1 MEng Engineering and Architectural Design (EAD)

Courses offered for Candidate Course status

Parts 1 & 2 Architecture MSci (a five-year integrated degree) and
 Part 1 BSc (Hons) Degree in Architecture and Practice)

4 Awarding body

University College London

5 The visiting board

David Howarth	chair / practitioner
Virginia Rammou	vice chair / academic
James Lai	practitioner
Lucelia Rodrigues	academic
Sally Stewart	academic
Sophie Bailey	RIBA validation manager

6 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.

7 Recommendation of the Visiting Board

7.1 At its meeting on 17 November 2021 the RIBA Board confirmed continued validation of the following courses:

Part 1 BSc (Hons) Degree in Architecture
 Part 2 MArch
 Part 3 Examination in Professional Practice in Architecture

Part 1 MEng Engineering and Architectural Design (EAD)

7.2 The Board was invited by University College London to consider its Architecture MSci and BSc (Hons) Architecture and Practice (exit award) for candidate course status.

At its meeting on 17 November 2021 the RIBA Board confirmed that candidate course status for Parts 1 & 2 be awarded to the:

Parts 1 & 2 Architecture MSci

Candidate course for Part 1 to the

BSc (Hons) Degree in Architecture and Practice (exit award of the above)

The designation ‘Candidate Course for Validation’ implies that the course has been judged to have the potential to meet RIBA criteria, if implemented as anticipated. It is not, however, equivalent to recognition, which can only be granted once the standard of work produced by graduating students has been assessed and found satisfactory.

The next full RIBA visiting board will take place in 2026. A full board to consider the BSc (Hons) degree in Architecture and Practice will take place when the first graduate cohort emerges.

8 Academic position statement

OUR VISION. BSA operates as a vital and creative agency in a world in which our discipline, as both a method of critical thinking and creative speculation, is valued for its capacity to advance human experience and understanding, improve global environmental conditions, and provide a constructive and adaptive legacy for future generations. We value, equally:

• ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE	• INNOVATIVE & ETHICAL RESEARCH	• STUDENT VOICE AND WELLBEING
• PARTNERSHIP WITH PRACTICE	• SOCIAL & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	• EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY
• DIGNITY AND WELLBEING	• INTERDISCIPLINARY CREATIVITY	• RESILIENCE AND INTEGRITY

OUR CONTEXT. Historically, academically, and strategically, our relationships within the Bartlett Faculty are fundamental, as are those with other UCL faculties, particularly Arts and Humanities and Engineering with whom we are pioneering new partnerships in education and research in specific response to addressing access and diversity, the climate and biodiversity crisis, advances in computation and manufacturing, fire safe

design expertise, and more. Concurrently, the school's expansion of new programmes, including MA/MLA Landscape Architecture (now accredited by The Landscape Institute), MSci Architecture¹, and MEng Engineering and Architectural Design², have regenerated the school's intellectual and social community, enhancing and activating enquiry across disciplines, perspectives and specialisms.

The school's primary role is to continuously challenge assumptions on becoming an architect with a culture that asks what and who is architecture for, and what else could and should it be? Given that our views on the value and power of architecture are overwhelmingly strong, our core objectives are to see the opportunities that architecture as a subject and discipline affords extended to the broadest possible array of current and future participants, whether they be leaders, activists, contributors, commissioners, or beneficiaries, and likewise all forms of environment, from urban to rural, digital to physical, resilient to fragile.

OUR MISSION, ETHOS and IDENTITY. To build a better future by setting new agendas for what architecture is and what it could be through rigorous and skilled scientific and humanities-based research and education via informed design-led experimentation and critical thinking. In doing so, position ourselves as a key protagonist on matters that are central to advancing the profession's agenda and profile, including design quality, the climate crisis, building safety, racial and gender equality, and spatial justice. In this regard, we are committed to fully developing our new MEng and MSci programmes as novel and alternative routes to registration, and across all accredited programmes, to develop a greater emphasis in our curriculum for environmental, economic, social, technical and cultural agendas that pertain to the evolving role of architectural practice and competencies.

Going forward, one of the key challenges we identify as core to accredited architectural education is to address collective and collaborative competency, particularly in light of need for specialist knowledge in areas such as sustainability, fire safe design, building performance, and post occupancy management of buildings. In this regard, through the MEng our relationships with other departments within the faculty and with UCL offer vital pathways for an interdisciplinary research-based approach that encompasses the broader context of the construction industry and more than one profession. In 2021, the faculty has appointed a Climate Crisis Lead to coordinate and harness the collaborative potential of our closest departments in this domain. In addition, a cross departmental representation of the faculty, with involvement of BSA staff and students, are involved in events at and around COP26.

OUR PROFILE. We are an international school with a global outlook, with over 50 nationalities represented amongst staff and students. Our growth over the past decade has two purposes: to achieve critical mass and to diversify. In the first instance, critical mass most importantly relates to the impact we are having on the world outside the school through the careers of our graduates and our research. It also relates to the new talent that arrives to the school, and its transformation through progression, and thus we are

¹ Launched in 2020, MSci Architecture is seeking candidate status for Part 1 & 2 on this RIBA visit

² Launched in 2017, MEng EAD is seeking P1 validation on this RIBA visit, and concurrent accreditation from ARB, JBM & CIBSE

increasingly active in outreach, and monitoring trends in cohort progression, such as gender parity on awards. 48% of our current 1626 UG + PGT students are on RIBA/ARB P1 or P2 accredited programmes, rising to +50% in 2021-22 and potentially +60% before our next RIBA visit in 2026/7. We estimate for the years 2000-2015, with a rising headcount per cohort, that c20% of our P1 students became UK registered architects, c60% of our P2, and c80-90% of P3.

Concurrently, many of our students on our non-accredited programmes are internationally qualified architects already, choosing to study here to add experience or specialisms. They are a vital influence on the school's academic and professional community and many later apply to register in the UK. Academic diversification has transformed and repositioned our profile materially and reputationally. It has also opened new pathways for social and cultural diversity and is a key means to address racial diversity and equity, a subject that is central to the 2021 visit.

OUR KEY CONNECTIONS. Through regular formal and informal staff consultation, the school is in continual development, where a great deal of activity is generated through 'bottom-up' ideas, demonstrators, and innovations, also through formal committees, the Architecture Management Group, all-staff Fora, and away-days. Students are central to this community, with personal tutors (new arrangements), module tutors and coordinators, and programme directors, acting as the key interface of the school. Since 2016 we have introduced the new roles of Deputy Director of School, School Manager, and Deputy School Manager, and formalised the previous role of Coordinator of Pedagogic Affairs to Director of Education where the current postholder is part-based in UCL's education development department (ARENA), thus building strong links with UCL's core strategy on education. We continue to strengthen our connections through closer ties with UCL's Office for Advancement, and our ***Student Society***. We are also increasingly connected with alumni, e.g. ***student/alum*** interviews, and our 2021 AJ 40 Under 40 celebration in March this year attracted 380 registrations.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION: Over the past decade collective conscience has been increasingly focussed on inequality in society and in our sector, on matters including sustainability, accessibility, representation, privilege, and fairness. Woven into these concerns is an awareness on how experience and representation within the school and inseparable from academic focus is, and that we must do more to address inequalities wherever and however they occur. In this regard, the school has been engaged in eliminating awarding gaps between male and female students and addressing female representation amongst staff. In 2015 three of our 12 Profs were female³. Now 14 of our 36 Profs and 5/11 of our Honorary Visiting Profs are female. An increased number of women also occupy many key BSA leadership roles from stream directors to programme directorships and committee chairs, and Bmade's 22 Gordon Street workshop manager is also the first female postholder. In June 2021 the award was elevated to Silver, still the only UCL Faculty to hold a collective Athena Swan award for all its sections, which includes BSA.

³ One who has since retired, Prof Christine Hawley, was also the first female Prof of Architecture at UCL, the School's first and still its only female Director (1993-98), and the faculty's first and still its only female Dean (1998-2008).

We have been engaged in questions of race, space, and ‘spatial justice’ since publishing ***‘Race and Space’*** in Jan 2020. The resource critically frames the racialisation of the built environment as well as possible critical decolonial approaches and is designed to be used as a full curriculum or to extract selective items to curate their own teaching content, as well as for self-study. We are acutely aware that we have much further to go as a school on balancing the representation of ethnic minorities amongst staff and students at all levels and in all areas. The ‘Bartlett Promise’ scholarships scheme is aimed at students from disadvantaged backgrounds and spans from undergraduate up to PhD levels. Our faculty wide BAME Awarding Gap Group has just been awarded a 3-year mentoring and workshops. Our ***Student Society*** have begun publishing student/alum interviews ***here***, and BSA Asian students have launched the new pamphlet ‘B’Asian’ ***here***. The school has some teaching staff with expertise on postcolonialism/ decolonisation, race and architectural histories and design practices of ‘non-western’ contexts and the global south and is currently recruiting additional posts in these specific areas, connected to the faculty’s ‘Race and Spatial Justice’ campaign. We have reviewed our programmes with UCL’s Inclusive Curriculum Health Check, with actions to evolve our curricula.

OUTLOOK. The substantial academic, operational, and environmental changes we have put in place since 2016 have been designed with an eye on decades ahead. We recognise UKGov and ARB ongoing consultations on reform, particularly around the Building Safety Act, and SCHOSAs campaign for architecture to be re-banded to Class B (which is of vital importance for the future of architectural education). We also broadly welcome the developing RIBA Educational and Development Framework, including its integrated approach to university-based education, continuing professional development and lifelong learning, although we have concerns with overloading an already overloaded curriculum. We look forward to contributing to further consultation on RIBA Themes and Values as part of this emerging strategic framework.

With an expanded set of accredited and multi-accredited programmes (MEng and MSci) our aim is to foster intellectual and social porosity between all available routes in the school, dissolving boundaries and silos, whilst concurrently maintaining a focus on design as the fundamental expertise of architectural practice in building a better and more equitable built environment.

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
- 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 Commendations

The visiting board made the following commendations:

- 10.1 The board commends the institution for its sustained and wide-ranging support provided in response to the COVID pandemic, and the commitment to supporting students made by school staff.
- 10.2 The board commends the development of the MSci as a new programme offering a distinctive route to qualification, which rethinks the structure of study and provides embedded links to practice.
- 10.3 The board commends the new interdisciplinary MEng and the high levels of technical and architectural integration evident within the portfolios which was highlighted by the external examiners.

11 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.

- 11.1 The board recognises the progress the school has made towards establishing personal tutors and the wider provision of pastoral care. The school is encouraged to continue to challenge existing working practices and cultures in order to enable all students to reach their potential.

12. Advice

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

- 12.1 The school should review the academic position statement to better align the school's ambition, ethos, and identity more accurately in relationship to the validated courses.
- 12.2 The board encourages the school to recognise the experience and expertise gained through developing the new programmes, and to deploy this when approaching the continued enhancement of the well-established programmes in relation to working practices, student workload and means of production.

13 Delivery of academic position

Please see advice point 12.1

14 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 Parts 1 & 2

The Board confirmed that all of the Parts 1 and 2 graduate attributes were met by graduates of the BSc (Hons) Degree in Architecture, the MEng Engineering and Architectural Design (EAD) and the Architecture MArch.

15 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 Parts 1 & 2 and Professional Criteria at Part 3

The Board confirmed that all the Parts 1 and 2 graduate criteria were met by graduates of the BSc (Hons) Degree in Architecture, the MEng Engineering and Architectural Design (EAD) and the Architecture MArch. The Board confirmed that all the Professional Criteria at Part 3 were met by graduates of the Examination in Professional Practice in Architecture.

16 Other information

16.1 Student numbers

Approx. 780

16.2 Documentation provided

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

17 Notes of meetings

On request, the RIBA will issue a copy of the minutes taken from the following meetings. These notes will not form part of the published report but will be made available on request.

- Budget holder and course leaders
- Students
- Senior Management Team
- External examiners
- Staff