

# **Report of the RIBA Initial Board to the Manchester School of Architecture**

Postgraduate Certificate in Architecture and Contemporary Practice

**Date of visiting board:** 01 August 2023  
**Confirmed by RIBA:** 07 September 2023

**1 Details of institution hosting courses**

Manchester School of Architecture  
Manchester Technology Centre  
Oxford Rd  
Manchester  
M1 7ED

**2 Head of School**

Professor Kevin Singh

**3 Courses offered for candidate course status**

Postgraduate Certificate in Architecture and Contemporary Practice

**4 Programme Director**

Rachel Newton

**5 Awarding body**

Manchester Metropolitan University

**6 The initial visiting board**

Albena Atanassova	Chair/Practitioner
Professor Sally Stewart	Academic
Anthony Petrilli	Practitioner
Sophie Bailey	RIBA Head of Validation

**7 Procedures and Themes and Values for Architectural Education**

The visiting board was carried out under the RIBA Procedures for Validation and Themes and Values for UK and international courses in architecture (published September 2021, and effective from September 2022); this document is available at [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com).

The timetable was adapted and agreed between RIBA and the MSA ahead of the initial visit.

**8 Recommendations of the visiting board**

The Board was invited by The Manchester School of Architecture to consider its Postgraduate Certificate in Architecture and Contemporary Practice for full validation for Part 3.

The RIBA confirmed that conditional validation status be granted to:

Postgraduate Certificate in Architecture and Contemporary Practice (Part 3)

A revisiting board will take place at a date to be agreed between the University and the RIBA.

**9 Standard requirements for validation**

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 Conditions

Conditional validation has been recommended for the following reason:

As per the RIBA Procedures for Validation, for new courses approaching initial validation only, or (exceptionally) where student numbers in a school are smaller than usual, the RIBA regards a portfolio sample of 10 students to be the minimum number required to make a visiting board viable and therefore to award full validation.

A revisiting board will take place at a date to be agreed between the University and the RIBA.

## 11 Commendations

The Board made the following commendations:

- 11.1 The Board would like to commend the school on developing a Part 3 programme designed and structured to support students across the diverse nature of contemporary practice.
- 11.2 The Board would like to commend the Programme Leader in the comprehensive way they have responded to the previous advice and actions points from the exploratory board as well as the progress made and its future trajectory.

## 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 embed professional examiner induction and training to ensure parity across assessment processes for both units of the course and both assessment teams.
- 12.2 The School should develop a marking criteria matrix to support the assessment for the Professional Perspectives module.
- 12.3 The School should consider developing a clear formative and summative feedback mechanism for all 3 aspects of the Professional Perspectives module (PPE, Project study and Oral examination) to support the student in understanding their performance and attainment.

**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 School should consider providing the development of a moderation process to operate across both Contemporary Practice and Professional Perspectives modules to ensure parity of grading.
- 13.2 The School should consider developing a series of scenarios to allow applicants to better understand and quantify how their practical experience to date contributes to their readiness in joining the Part 3 course.
- 13.3 The School should consider providing a dedicated professional mentor induction in addition to the professional mentor handbook to allow the course team to clarify course content and expected support in practice.

**14 Delivery of professional criteria**

**14.1 Part 3**

The Board confirmed that graduates met the Part 3 Themes and Values for Architectural Education but refers the School to the condition and the action points.

**15 Other information**

**15.1 Student numbers (from the School)**

2022-23 cohort: 8 students

**15.2 Documentation provided**

The Department provided all documentation as required by the Procedures for Validation.

**16 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
- Candidates
- Professional and external examiners