

**University of Central Lancashire UCLAN/ School
for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE),
Hong Kong Vocational Training Council**

BSc (Hons) Architectural Studies

**Date of visiting board: 22-24 February 2023
Confirmed by the RIBA: 19 June 2023**

1. Details of institution hosting course

University of Central Lancashire UCLAN/Hong Kong Vocational Training Council

University of Central Lancashire School of Art, Design and Fashion
Grenfell-Baines Institute of Architecture Harris Building
Corporation Street Preston
Lancashire PR1 2HE UK

School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE), Vocational Training Council (VTC)

職業訓練局才晉高等教育學院

Teaching Venue:

Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) (Tsing Yi) 20 Tsing Yi Road, Tsing Yi Island, New Territories

Partner Registered Address

VTC Tower, 27 Wood Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

2. **University of Central Lancashire School of Engineering Head of School**

Professor Mike Fernando

Grenfell-Baines Institute of Architecture Academic Lead

Mr Lee Ivett

Course leader - BSc (Hons) Architectural Studies

Mr Simon Kay-Jones

Vocational Training Council / School for Higher and Professional Education

Principal:

Professor Simpson Poon

Academic Director, Engineering Discipline

Dr Daniel Yan

Head of Collaborative Degree Programme

Ir Edmond Wong

Programme Coordinator

Mr Fred Chan

3. Courses offered for validation
BSc (Hons) Architectural Studies (RIBA Part 1)

4. Awarding body
University of Central Lancashire

5. The visiting board
Daniel Goodricke - Chair
Lindesay Dawe – Vice Chair
Kathy Gal
Mandy Man-tik So – regional representative

Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk – RIBA validation manager was in attendance.

6. Procedures and criteria for the visit
The visiting board was conducted online.

The visiting board was carried out under the RIBA 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. Although the RIBA implemented the new Procedures and Themes and Values officially from 1 September 2022, the next couple of years will be seen as a transition period towards total implementation of Themes and Values.

7. Proposals of the visiting board
On 19 June 2023 the RIBA confirmed unconditional revalidation for Part 1 of the following:

BSc (Hons) Architectural Studies

The next visiting board should take place in 2028.

8. Standard requirements for continued recognition
Continued RIBA recognition of all courses and qualifications is dependent upon:

- i. external examiners (or an acceptable alternative) 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

9. Academic position statement (written by the School)

Ethos

The Grenfell-Baines Institute of Architecture provides an innovative, imaginative and critical architectural education in Hong Kong through our collaborative and co-creative studio. We study the spatial relationships between global and local issues in order to construct a socially responsible architecture that is sympathetic to individuals and the environment. We aim to study the impact of global and local situations on individuals to identify fundamental, sustainable, socially oriented architecture. We want to link our educational and practice with the particular local issues, in order to establish the terms for an appropriate and sustainable, socially oriented architecture. In the rapid development in Hong Kong and Southern China, a range of urban issues are at the forefront, including the relationship between countryside and town, digital media, and emerging technologies. Through a contextual analysis of topography, typology, and territory, we investigate these contested spaces and ideas. We desire to challenge the status quo through architecture as a tool for empowering the individual and collective, hence we seek to employ it in such spaces and ideas.

We are positioned at the middle of far east region, allowing us to explore these issues through our connections with other urban centres and inspiring contexts around the world. We study the way architectural styles emerge from the nuances of a specific place and time, drawing comparisons with our hometown of Preston and the region. We disseminate, share, and combine our localised research with related academic institutions, municipalities, and agencies. Whether in person or online, our students can connect with other cities and areas through study visits, and gain confidence and skills for local, national, and international work.

We believe that architecture is an important tool in creating a more equitable, accessible and just world. This approach is not just evident in our research and education, but also in the identification, recruitment and support of our students. We encourage a wide variety of people from various design disciplines to join the architectural profession, and we offer our course as an alternative route into architectural education. We seek individuals who are curious and inspired by architecture, and we want to inspire the best architecture by encouraging a diverse profession. Because of this, we feel that a diverse profession will produce a variety of perspectives, experiences, and cultures that can subsequently inspire more relevant and progressive built environments. Our course challenges the standard notion that architecture is not just about living, working, and playing; it is also about creating joy in the ordinary and elevating people's experience of the ordinary in extraordinary ways. We seek to produce future architects, thinkers, and activists whose design, thinking, and activism will result in a more beautiful, more accessible, more egalitarian, healthier, safer, and more sustainable world.

Context, Culture and Distinctiveness

Throughout the study, the course provides clear progression narratives and thematic pedagogies year by year. Design through critical enquiry and creative action is the course's main activity. We aim to provoke discussion, encourage diversity, and relentlessly innovate in architecture. To realise this objective, we must retain a collaborative community of students, faculty, and architects who collaborate in exploring architecture. Our cohorts make it

possible for students to create course content and delivery. In addition to providing students with space to create their own education, we encourage approaches to self-directed study and produce agility, resilience, and rigour.

Students of Year 2 learn to analyse regional issues in villages and urban peripheries, before expanding their comprehension of the metropolitan city. A study of contemporary and visionary architecture is learned at Year 3, where students learn how to discuss issues in architecture. The topics of city identity and scale align with the UK course, giving the opportunity for staff and student research on well-established areas of interest between the UK and HK. In near future the investigation of digital construction and Modular Integrated Construction which would be brought into discussion and practice as part of teaching and learning of Advanced and Future Strategies.

Faculty members of The Grenfell-Baines Institute of Architecture conduct research in a variety of fields that inform their teaching. This research includes theoretical and design research, scholarship, and professional practice, as well as processes and practices. In order to inspire student-led design proposals, this expertise combined with research interests and values of UK faculty members, and the architectural interests of HK teaching staff on conservation, sustainable design, building technology, digital construction, and professional practice, are used to inform the content and delivery of our courses.

Practical Experience

We have maintained the local network with architectural and construction professionals to enhance our students' practical experience. Although the students are employed full-time at architectural practices, BIM consultancies, contractor, and sub-contractor companies, they mostly work as junior positions that probably limit their views to only certain aspects in the profession. In order to acquiring a better understanding and understanding of real-world issues, part-time studio tutoring, and guest lectures are employed to enhance students' capacity to apply theory in practice. Many of our students in Hong Kong, therefore, maintain an active connection to working in practice and the professional network. Another key element in improving our student's awareness and capacity towards practice and professional experience is the increasing employment and engagement of more part-time studio tutors and guest lecturers across all modules that work within practice. Bringing our extended network of local and national practitioners operating at the highest level into the institute exposes our students to current trends in contemporary practice and gives them access to potential employers.

Criteria Assessment

We encourage all students to master the standards of all modules in order to grow competent and reflective students who are able to recognise their interpersonal specialties. We ask students to think creatively and build upon their knowledge and skills gained from the course in order to address novel problems. To evaluate the knowledge and skills they currently possess in light of contemporary local and academic professional practice, students must look at their current knowledge in conjunction with the new skills they have gained from the course. Our course helps students to understand the value of critical communication with students as well as with other professionals. By applying what they have learned, students can contribute to an environment of

excellence in which professionals feel secure in their abilities to provide and accept criticism, guide the development of their work, and themselves.

10. Commendations

- 10.1 The Board commends staff across the Partnership for their dedication to maintaining educational and academic standards during the protracted COVID-19 period.
- 10.2 The Board commends the Partnership for supporting the widening participation agenda of their respective institutions by providing an alternative route into the profession to the benefit of local industry and student mobility.

11. Conditions

There are no conditions.

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 at the mid-term review. The university is referred to the RIBA's criteria and procedures for validation for details of mid-term monitoring processes. Failure by the university to satisfactorily resolve action points may result in a course being conditioned by a future visiting board.

- 12.1 The Partnership should encourage strategic-level approaches to sustainability, such as ecology, energy (embodied and operational) and technology, and ensure all students evidence this within their integrated studio projects. The Partnership are reminded that any one of these could serve as generators for design. This may be informed and supported by the expertise and specialisms of cognate disciplines within the partnering institutions.
- 12.2 The Board should review the breadth of issues taught within professional studies and ensure that these are similarly integrated within design thesis projects.
- 12.3 The Partnership should ensure that students and staff are aware of and can readily access the full range of expert, professional services to enable academic and student success. This includes student life and wellbeing, as well as academic support. Guidance on how to access such services should be included within Programme and Module Handbooks.
- 12.4 The Partnership should ensure a relevant continued professional development provision, both subject-specific and pedagogical, and encourage all staff to participate.
- 12.5 The Partnership should strengthen the resilience of programme management and delivery frameworks.

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 supports the course aspirations towards regionally critical and community-led design thesis projects and encourages the further realisation of this. The Partnership should provide more evidence of this within student academic portfolios to the next RIBA visiting board.
- 13.2 The Partnership should consider the opportunities and benefits of formally recognising the work-based learning and professional environment of the students as part of academic assessments.
- 13.3 The Partnership should develop a mechanism for students' self-mapping of their university- and employer-led learning against either the existing Graduate Attributes at Part 1 or those attributed to the forthcoming RIBA Themes and Values for Architecture Education.
- 13.4 The Board encourages the Partnership to capitalise on the full teaching, research and staff development opportunities afforded by the resumption of the 'flying faculty'.
- 13.5 The Board supports the structural realignment of academic calendars to streamline progression from RIBA Part 1 to the MArch RIBA Part 2 offering within Grenfell Baines Institute of Architecture.
- 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.
- 14.1 Part 1**
The Board confirmed that all Part 1 graduate attributes were met by graduates of the BSc (Hons) Architectural Studies, RIBA Part 1
- 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.

The Board made no further comments.
- 16. Other information**
- 16.1 Student numbers**
BSc (Hons) Architectural Studies: 20-30 students (maximum 40 students per year)
- 16.2 Documentation provided**
The Department provided all documentation as required by the Procedures for Validation.

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. The full set of notes will be issued to the mid-term panel and the next full visiting board.**

- Meeting with budget holder and course leaders
- Meeting with students
- Meeting with the head of institution
- Meeting with external examiners
- Meeting with staff