

---

**Royal Institute of British Architects**

CONFIDENTIAL  
Report of the RIBA Initial Visiting Board

to

University of Central Lancashire

Master of Architecture

## Introduction

The Board wishes to thank the University for their invitation to consider the Master of Architecture for RIBA initial validation. The Board is also grateful to the staff and students of the institution for their work in preparing for the Board's visit.

### 1 **Course offered for full validation** Master of Architecture

**Name of awarding body**  
University of Central Lancashire

#### **Leadership Roles**

Maria Murray	Head of Institute
Desmond Fagan	Academic Lead
Jenni Barrett	MArch Course Leader

### 2. **Members of the Initial Visiting Board**

Sally Stewart	Chair
Lindesay Dawe	Vice chair
Carol Norton	
Nick Hayhurst	
Ewan Pullan	
Matt Hill	Regional representative
Sophie Bailey	RIBA Validation Manager
Blair Macintyre	Withdrawn

### 3 **Procedures and criteria for the visit**

The Initial Visiting Board was carried out under the *RIBA procedures for validation and validation criteria*, effective from September 2011. For more information see [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com).

### 4 **Recommendation of the Initial Visiting Board**

The Board was invited by the University of Central Lancashire to consider its Master of Architecture for initial validation at RIBA Part 2. The visiting board proposed that the following course and qualification be **validated with conditions**:

#### **University of Central Lancashire Master of Architecture programme**

This proposal was submitted and confirmed by the RIBA Education Committee on 25 March 2016.

### 5 **Conditions**

The following conditions of recognition apply:

- 5.1 The board was not satisfied that the school had developed a mapping tool which adequately documented individual student attainment across all modules against the Graduate Attributes and General Criteria. The school is required to devise a mapping tool that can be used by all staff

members, external examiners and students, as a developmental tool as well as a mechanism to check compliance.

- 5.2 The board was not satisfied that the course currently demonstrates sufficient, coherent and in-depth evidence of the achievement of General Criteria 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 and Graduate Attribute 2.3. The school should consider how the existing modules and project work can provide evidence to demonstrate this throughout all portfolios.
- 5.3 The board was concerned that the mapping of GA2.6 and GA2.7 - as currently solely mapped against module A04003 Professional Studies 2 alone - neither accurately reflects the integrated nature of architectural design and practice, nor provides sufficient range or depth of evidence of student engagement with these attributes. The school should consider how these attributes are mapped more appropriately against the wider range of modules across both years.
- 5.4 The board was not satisfied that the course currently demonstrates sufficient coherent and in-depth evidence of the achievement of GA2.1 across all portfolios. The school should consider how the ambition set out in GA2.1 can be more systematically and consistently be embedded within the course and particularly within module A04007 Design 2.

*The RIBA expects the university to report on how it will address these conditions. In accordance with the RIBA Procedures for Validation a revisiting sub-group will visit the Department in 2017 following the graduation of the next award level cohort in mid-2016.*

## **6 Commendations**

The Visiting Board commends the Institution for the following:

- 6.1 The board commends the excellence of the studio and workshop provision available to students and in particular the wide range of specialist technical workshop facilities and high quality technical staff.
- 6.2 Students confirmed to the visiting Board that they were supported in their academic studies by a dedicated core staff team, working to a generous SSR.
- 6.3 The development of professional studies input and support bridging between the part 1 and part 2 courses and including mentoring for students undertaking practical experience.

## **7 Action points**

The following action points are intended as constructive suggestions to the institution:

- 7.1 The school should rewrite the academic position statement to better articulate the ethos of the school and the emerging intellectual and pedagogic ambitions of the MArch course.
- 7.2 The course team is strongly advised to undertake a review of assessment in order to make more explicit how General Criteria and

Graduate Attributes are achieved and what evidence is used to document this.

- 7.3 The board strongly advises that the school seek external mentoring or consultancy to assist it in meeting its objective of developing a thesis-based MArch course and to help make the necessary revisions and enhancements to the course in order to gain validation without condition.
- 7.4 The board strongly advises that the school develop a range of masters-level grade descriptors appropriate to each module, allowing staff, students and external examiners to understand progressive levels of achievement and attainment.

**8 Advice**

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

- 8.1 The school should consider how to better articulate its ambitions in relation to its stance as a regional school of architecture and define the particular opportunities this provides for students, staff and the wider community.
- 8.2 The school should consider how best to support the development of a hypothesis or architectural position within module A04007 Design 2 if its ambition is for this module to generate an individual, self-directed thesis project.

**9 Delivery of academic position**

The following key points were noted:  
Please see action point 7.1

**10 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**

Please see: condition 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4; action point 7.2

**11 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 2**

Please see: condition 5.1 and 5.2; action point 7.2

**12 Other information**

**12.1 Student numbers**

At the time of the 2015 RIBA visiting board:

4 students in year 1

16 students in year 2

**12.2 Documentation provided**

The Department 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**