

Report of the RIBA exploratory board to the University of Kent

Date of visiting board: 26 January 2021

Confirmed by RIBA Education Committee: 19 April 2021

1 Details of institution hosting courses

Kent School of Architecture
University of Kent
Canterbury
Kent
CT2 7NZ

2 Head of School

Professor Gerald Adler

3 Courses offered for candidate course status

Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural Practice: proposed candidate course for Part 3

4 Programme Director

Peter Wislocki

5 Awarding body

The University of Kent

6 The exploratory visiting board

Nick Hayhurst
Paula Craft-Pegg

Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk, RIBA validation manager – in attendance

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.

The procedures were adapted to allow the Board to function remotely to comply with government Covid regulations.

All requirements for documentation and work samples were exactly as for a physical exploratory board but viewed remotely.

The timetable and all meetings took place as for a physical exploratory board but remotely.

8 Proposals of the visiting board

At its meeting on 19 April 2019, the RIBA Education Committee confirmed Candidate Course Status for Part 3 for the following programme:

Postgraduate Diploma in Architectural Practice

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.

A full visiting board to consider the programme for full validation 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 Commendations

The Board made the following commendations:

- 10.1 The students representing the Course were articulate and positive about their experience. The recent graduates felt that they had been well supported throughout the Course.
- 10.2 The School has developed the Course in collaboration with experienced and supportive staff, external examiners, professional examiners and academic advisors.

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 School must develop a full set of validation information for the RIBA Validation Board's next visit. This must include an Academic Position Statement specific to the Part 3 course, comprehensive and clear mapping of the Professional Criteria against each module/output, a Programme Specification that is fully-aligned with the Module Descriptors as well as briefs for each of the modules.
- 11.2 The School must prepare an Examiner's Guide for the course. This should be a concise document that clearly sets out the academic and professional objectives of each of the modules and the roles and responsibilities of the internal assessors and professional examiners in the assessment and moderation processes. This document could also be an opportunity to set

out best practice with respect to examination techniques as well as make clear issues such as grade descriptors, confidentiality etc.

- 11.3 The School must prepare a Student's Guide for the course. This should be a concise document that clearly sets out the academic and professional objectives of each of the modules. This should also set out best practice and advice with respect to how to approach and undertake PEDRs, career evaluations, the case study and professional examinations. The School should encourage an emphasis on critical reflection and the application of professional judgement in the student outputs.
- 11.4 The School must clarify the percentages assigned to each of the components of 60-credit AR896 module (Case Study, Career Evaluation, PEDRs and Professional Interview) and make sure that this is clear to candidates and assessors. This should also be fully described in the course documentation noted in action point 11.1 and in the guides noted in action points 11.2 and 11.3.
- 11.5 Professional Examiners play a significant role in the assessment and moderation processes of a Part 3 Course. The School must clarify their roles and responsibilities and make this clear in the course documentation and Examiners Guide.
- 11.6 The School must raise the level of academic and professional challenge in the examination questions in the 15-credit modules. The questions should be designed to address multiple and complex issues that require students to consider and articulate professional judgement.
- 11.7 The School must ensure that the breadth of issues associated within PC5 (Building Procurement) are fully covered in the case study and examinations.
- 11.8 The School must clarify the significance of the PEDRs as a critical part of the candidate's personal professional development and the assessment of this as part of the course.

12 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.

- 12.1 The Course team should consider whether a timed examination is the most appropriate form of assessment at Part 3 level. This was also raised in the External Examiner's report (2019/20).
- 12.2 The Board notes that the career evaluations were significantly longer than the word-count highlighted in the School's documentation. There is potential for the career evaluation to be a more precise and critically reflective document.

- 12.3 The Course team should update and develop comprehensive reading lists for all modules.

13 Delivery of professional criteria

13.1 Part 3

The Board confirmed that the course had potential to meet the Part 3 professional criteria if developed as anticipated.

14 Other information

14.1 Student numbers (from the School)

7 (2021 cohort)

14.2 Documentation provided

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

15 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 next visiting board.**

- Meeting with budget holder and course leaders
- Meeting with candidates
- Meeting with external examiner