
Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the visiting board
to the RIBA Advanced Diploma in
Professional Practice in Architecture
(Part 3)**

- 1 Details of institution hosting course/s/examination/s**
RIBA NORTH WEST
21 MANN ISLAND
LIVERPOOL WATERFRONT
LIVERPOOL
L3 1BP
- 2 Director**
Alison Mackinder
- 3 Courses/examinations offered for validation**
RIBA Advanced Diploma in Professional Practice in Architecture
(Part 3)
- 4 Awarding body**
Royal Institute of British Architects.
- 5 The visiting board**
Professor David McClean – Chair
Jonathan Bone
George Lovesmith

Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk, Validation Manager – in attendance.
- 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 Proposals of the visiting board**
On 31 May 2017 the RIBA Education Committee confirmed, by circulation, unconditional revalidation of the following:

RIBA Advanced Diploma in Professional Practice in Architecture
(Part 3)

The next full visiting board will take place in 2021.
- 8 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

9 Academic position statement (written by RIBA North West)

The RIBA Advanced Diploma in Professional Practice in Architecture is celebrating its 25th anniversary. From a regional course for the Schools of Architecture in the northwest it has become a truly international provision with courses in Hong Kong and Dubai as well as the UK. The course is unique in that it is run 'by the profession for the profession' and can call upon the strong links with members and practice to support and enhance the provision. This is also true of the overseas courses where the RIBA Chapters and practices positively support the initiative and have been key to its development.

The format of the course, over two 4 day extended weekends and the office based practice problems has enabled us to provide the same level of delivery and services in all locations. In addition, given its unique position in providing the course overseas, we have been able to call upon the expertise of other respected Part 3 providers in developing and delivering the course.

Being the Institute's own course and examination we are able to draw upon our close links with practice and establish strong relationships which ultimately support the students in their formative years of practice. Office visits are conducted at the request of the students and this provides an opportunity to talk to mentors to ensure that the candidates get the best possible experience within the context of their practice.

The last five years have seen significant changes in the type and scope of work undertaken by practices, particularly in terms of international projects. Whilst the Part 3 criteria still has specific UK content it is clear that there is still a significant proportion that is applicable to the global market, our work overseas has helped to acknowledge and develop this aspect of the course delivery.

The student cohort is diverse in terms of age, nationality, experience, location etc and this leads to dynamic working groups who are able to support one another through sharing their experience and knowledge. Study groups are encouraged with students being allocated a group at the outset of the course based upon their location of employment.

In the UK the course is residential which, given the size of cohort, allows candidates to get to know one another, consolidate study groups and make the best use of the time available with lectures workshops etc. The campus at the University of Chester is relatively small and this setting encourages the collegiate nature of the course.

Overseas it has been impractical to offer a residential course but as the cohorts are much smaller this has not proved problematic. The

dynamics of the cohorts are very different from the 250+ candidates in the UK and inevitably get to know their peers well and form strong study groups.

The lectures are provided by a wide range of speakers who are experts in their own field and cover the RIBA/ARB Part 3 Criteria as indicated on the mapping document. In order to be financially viable a smaller group of speakers deliver the course overseas but nevertheless cover the same subject areas.

All members of the RIBA Part 3 team, whether they be RIBA staff, consultant PSAs/tutors, lecturers or examiners are committed to the objectives of the course and 4 examination and its processes as set out in its regulations and QA Management Manual in order to ensure the maintenance of a high base level of competence for entry to the profession.

Candidates graduate, having met the Part 3 criteria, with a strong basis upon which to develop their professional skills further and make a significant contribution to the profession as indicated by the alumni.

10 Commendations

- 10.1 The Board commends the international expansion of the learning and examination process achieved whilst safeguarding professional rigour.
- 10.2 The Board commends the process by which peer learning is embedded in the candidate experience through the creation of a collegiate community during the residential courses and the Hong Kong and Dubai seminars.

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. 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 course team is encouraged to reflect upon and more clearly articulate the aspects of the Diploma/candidate experience that make it distinctive externally. The board felt that there is a compelling narrative to be told.
- 12.2 The course team is encouraged to make explicit the process through which grades are arrived at, in particular the differentiation between grade bands, and to consider that disseminating this information may be beneficial to the candidate and not just to the marking process.

- 12.3 The Board notes the already extensive feedback given to failing candidates and believes that there is value in sharing summary feedback to all candidates on completion of their Diploma. This would enable a greater understanding of individual development within the cultural context of continuing professional development.
- 12.4 The Board encourages the course team to consider how candidates' experience of the evidently valued residential seminars can be further enriched with online media made available through the RIBA transformation project.
- 12.5 There was strong evidence that the physical experience of the workshops was central to the candidate experience and highly valued by candidates in the UK and overseas. The international agenda, coupled with the availability of online technologies, offers potential to further enrich the experience of all cohorts through extending the comparative benefits found by international candidates.
- 12.6 The Board recommends that candidates continue to be supported at an appropriate level commensurate with cohort numbers and the international expansion of the operation.

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 advises the course team to explore, with the RIBA, how digital library resources may be made available to candidates nationally and internationally.
- 13.2 The Board advises the course team to explore how reflective practice might be better cultivated within candidate submissions.
- 13.3 Where personal experience of candidates in practice does not give direct access to some areas (for example, fees) the Board advises the course team to explore methods of enhancing understanding of the underlying principles.
- 13.4 The Board advises the course team to consider how the key points provided to examination markers within the model answers might subsequently be used as a learning tool.

14. Review of work against the Professional Criteria at part 3

The Board confirmed that all professional criteria for part 3 were met by all graduates of the RIBA Advanced Diploma in Professional Practice in Architecture.

15 Other information

15.1 Candidate numbers

2016: 270 on the course (UK)

2017: 285 on the course (UK)

15.2 Documentation provided

All documentation as required by the RIBA Procedures for Validation was provided.

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

- Meeting with the Course and Examination Committee,
- Meeting with the RIBA Part 3 Director and Programme Manager
- Meeting with Chief Executive Officer, RIBA
- Practitioner/employer meeting
- Discussion with overseas-based office mentor
- External and professional examiners
- Meetings with candidates and graduates
- Comments from a Part 3 graduate based in China
- Meeting with UK-based candidates and graduates