

Royal Institute of British Architects

**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: 23 & 24 November 2017

Confirmed by RIBA Education Committee: 9 February 2018

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 Head of School of Art, Design and Fashion, UCLAN

Ms Maria Janet Murray

Grenfell-Baines Institute of Architecture Academic Lead, UCLAN

Mr Desmond Fagan

Course Leader, UCLAN

Mr Simon Kay-Jones

Vocational Training Council (VTC)

School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE) Principal

Ms Gladys Yam

Academic Director, Engineering Discipline

Ir Shiu Chi Yung

Head of Collaborative Degree Programme

Ir Edmond Wong

Programme Co-ordinator

Mr Dennis Chu

3 Courses offered for validation

BSc (Hons) Architectural Studies: Part 1 candidate course

4 Awarding body
The University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN)

5 The visiting board
Professor Lorraine Farrelly, Chair
Virginia Rammou
Andy Usher
Alex Fung, regional representative

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

The Board would like to thank Ms Queenie Lam who acted as facilitator during the visit.

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 9 February 2018 the RIBA Education Committee confirmed, by circulation, that the following programme be unconditionally validated:

BSc (Hons) Architectural Studies, RIBA Part 1

The next visiting board should take place in 2022.

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).
We see our collaborative and co-creative studios as a unique offering of our BSc (Hons) Architectural Studies degree in Hong Kong, allowing us to provide a dynamic teaching and learning environment that propels the design process forward for each student. We see the course as way to train students' thinking and creative skill from the unique perspective of UK architectural education, through contextualised projects with emphasis on the integration of the fine arts, architectural history, and cultural studies. We aim to demystify the design process

and unpack the stages involved by developing students' creative thinking and by building upon the scientific and technological expertise of the VTC Higher Diploma.

The course offers a unique route for students from Hong Kong - students are able to work and study, achieved by structuring the course to facilitate intensive workshops alongside continuing practical experience, helping them to develop important professional, business acumen, and teamwork skills. Students are engaged with real commercial projects, giving them a breadth of experience which is exceptional over their study period with us.

Students are given opportunities to interact with UK course delivery through joint briefs and workshops that introduce the importance of collaborative global working methods in practice and education. UK staff frequently travel to teach in HK, and UCLan bursaries provide travel for students to work collaboratively with BSc (Hons) Architectural Studies students in HK.

Design studio briefs consider themes of regional and metropolitan identities. At level 5, students begin learn how regional issues can be understood in villages and urban settlements on the outskirts of the city. At level 6, complexity and scale increases in appreciation of the metropolitan city, where students learn how to shape dialogues in architecture that are contemporary and visionary. Themes of city identity and scale align with UK course delivery, giving opportunity for staff and student research on established areas of interest between the UK and HK.

To drive these themes, HK staff have excellent knowledge of local conservation, sustainable design, technical design, and law - specialisms that complement and supplement UK staff's own interests, and inform course content and localisation of briefs. Staff are encouraged to contextualise module briefs attuned to their own interests. Concurrent technology, history and theory, and professional studies modules inform and complement design experimentation.

Although staff emphasise the importance of criteria attainment across all modules, we also wish to develop reflective and self-motivated students who are able to identify their own strengths and specialisms. We encourage students to appraise their existing knowledge in juxtaposition with new skills gained from the course, in the context of current local professional practice. We aspire for our students to meet the demand for architects that can excel in creative thinking that is equally balanced with technological expertise. Fundamental to achieving the aspiration is the ethos of maintaining a collaborative community of students, staff and architects involved collectively in the exploration of the practice of architecture.

Alongside this aspiration, both UK and HK staff share the same strong pedagogic commitment to excellence within the cohort, as well as an appreciation for widening access to the profession through the delivery of a course for students who work and wish to study. Staff aim to

celebrate the experience of the student by asking them to bring their working knowledge to the studio, and to inform their practice by return.

This vocational support, equipping students with the means to practice in context with the knowledge and skills gained on the course is essential to the aspiration of the course as the facilitator of a collaborative and co-creative community of students, staff and architects across the UK and HK.

10 Commendations

The visiting board made the following commendations:

- 10.1 Providing an academic pathway into the profession for students who otherwise may be limited in their opportunities to fulfil their aspirations and potential within the field of architecture, for students to work in architectural practice and associated professional careers while studying.

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 An understanding of the Hong Kong context for professional practice and technological studies needs to be embedded in the taught curriculum and clearly evidenced in the design work.
- 12.2 Routes to professional qualification and career options that this course can provide in HK and internationally need to be clearly communicated and advised to students.
- 12.3 More support with academic writing and development of relevant content for essays and presentation work and academic referencing is required throughout the course, to improve the overall quality of written work.
- 12.4 The students on this course are working while studying, which provides both challenges and opportunities for the student group and the academic staff. The programme needs to be continually revisited to ensure the pace of the course is relevant to the student cohort's requirements.
- 12.5 There are opportunities for the students and staff to explore both professional practice and taught design studio issues given that students are working while practising. This could be further developed in both design and taught curriculum.

- 12.6 The academic position statement should be revisited to more fully reflect the developing ethos of the course, particularly the collaborative approach of the curriculum development between UCLAN and VTC around pedagogical approaches to architecture education and shared thematic areas of study.
- 12.7 The design work needs to more clearly evidence the application of technology including resolution of environmental, construction and structural strategies.
- 12.8 There needs to be clearer demonstration of the understanding of architectural drawing conventions, spatial planning, scale and proportion in the design studio work, evidenced through design analysis process and final presentation work.

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 There should be opportunities to raise the profile of the student group through professional engagement regionally by organizing network events, lectures and exhibitions. This will enhance professional linkage with practice in Hong Kong and beyond.
- 13.2 The Board encourages UCLAN and VTC to continue to develop the reciprocal relationships between academic staff to support the course development.
- 13.3 The Board encourages the course to develop approaches to academic study that are complementary to the students' experiential learning gained through employment.

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.

The Board confirmed that all Part 1 graduate attributes were met.

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 regarding criteria.

16 Other information

16.1 Documentation provided

The School provided all documentation required before and during the visit.

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 next full visiting board.

17.1 Meeting with senior staff and programme leaders

17.2 Meeting with students

17.3 Meeting with Deputy Principal of SHAPE the Head of the School of Art, Design and Fashion (UCLAN)

17.4 Meeting with external examiner

17.5 Meeting with staff