PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION (Undergraduate)	

1	**Awarding Institution**	Newcastle University
2	**Teaching Institution**	Newcastle University
3	**Final Award**	Master of Architecture (MArch)
4	**Programme Title**	Master of Architecture (MArch)
5	**UCAS/Programme Code**	5843F 5872F
6	**Programme Accreditation**	The Architects Registration Board (ARB) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
7	**QAA Subject Benchmark(s)**	Architecture (2010)
8	**FHEQ Level**	7
9	**Last updated**	May 2020

10 Programme Aims

The programme aims to:

1. Develop the ability to generate complex design proposals showing understanding of current architectural issues, originality in the application of subject knowledge and, where appropriate, to test new hypotheses and speculations;

2. Develop the ability to evaluate and apply a comprehensive range of visual, oral and written media to test, analyse, critically appraise and explain design proposals;

3. Develop an ability to evaluate materials, processes and techniques that apply to complex architectural designs and building construction, and to integrate these into practicable design proposals;

4. Develop a critical understanding of how knowledge is advanced through research to produce clear, logically argued and original written work relating to architectural culture, theory and design;

5. Promote an understanding of the context of the architect and the construction industry, including the architect's role in the processes of procurement and building production, and under legislation;

6. Develop problem solving skills, professional judgment, and ability to take the initiative and make appropriate decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances; and

7. Develop an ability to identify individual learning needs and understand the personal responsibility required to prepare for qualification as an architect;

Provide a programme which complies with University policies and procedures, satisfies the requirements of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications for a Level 7 award, satisfies the requirements of the QAA Benchmark statement for Architecture and meets the requirements of the Architects Registration Board and the Royal Institute of British

Architects for professional accreditation for Part 2, as well as the European Commission's Architects Directive.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the Architects Registration Board prescription of qualifications (2011), Article 46 of the EC Professional Qualifications Directive [2005/36/EC] and the QAA benchmark statements for Architecture (2010).

Knowledge and Understanding

In general, upon completing the programme students will have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and new insights which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the academic discipline or professional practice of Architecture.
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to research or advanced scholarship in Architecture
- an ability to be original in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create, interpret and apply knowledge within the discipline of Architecture

In particular, students will have demonstrated:

A1) Knowledge of urban design, planning and the skills involved in the planning process (ARB / RIBA General Criteria GC4).

Including knowledge of:

a) theories of urban design and the planning of communities;
b) the influence of the design and development of cities, past and present on the contemporary built environment;
c) current planning policy and development control legislation, including social, environmental and economic aspects, and the relevance of these to design development.

A2) Understanding of the relationship between people and buildings, and between buildings and their environment, and the need to relate buildings and the spaces between them to human needs and scale (GC5).

Including an understanding of:

a) the needs and aspirations of building users;
b) the impact of buildings on the environment, and the precepts of sustainable design;
c) the way in which buildings fit into their local context.

A3) Understanding of the profession of architecture and the role of the architect in society, in particular in preparing briefs that take account of social factors (GC6).

Including an understanding of:

a) the nature of professionalism and the duties and responsibilities of architects to clients, building users, constructors, co-professionals and the wider society;
b) the role of the architect within the design team and construction industry, recognising the importance of current methods and trends in the construction of the built environment;

c) the potential impact of building projects on existing and proposed communities.

A4) Knowledge of physical problems and technologies and the function of buildings so as to provide them with internal conditions of comfort and protection against the climate (GC9).

Including knowledge of:

a) principles associated with designing optimum visual, thermal and acoustic environments;
b) systems for environmental comfort realized within relevant precepts of sustainable design;
c) strategies for building services, and ability to integrate these in a design project.

A5) Knowledge of the industries, organisations, regulations and procedures involved in translating design concepts into buildings and integrating plans into overall planning (GC11)**.**

Including knowledge of:

a) the fundamental legal, professional and statutory responsibilities of the architect, and the organisations, regulations and procedures involved in the negotiation and approval of architectural designs, including land law, development control, building regulations and health and safety legislation;
b) the professional inter-relationships of individuals and organisations involved in procuring and delivering architectural projects, and how these are defined through contractual and organisational structures;
c) the basic management theories and business principles related to running both an architect's practice and architectural projects, recognising current and emerging trends in the construction industry.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Acquisition of knowledge and understanding is achieved through a combination of lectures, seminars, study visits, case studies, debates, reviews and studio based tutorials. Students are expected to augment the formal teaching sessions and readings with independent observation, analysis and reading.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment methods and their relation to learning outcomes are specified in each individual module outline. Knowledge and understanding is assessed through a combination of unseen examinations and by various forms of coursework – essays, case studies, dissertations, student presentations and design project work.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:
B1) Knowledge of the histories and theories of architecture and the related arts, technologies and human sciences (GC2)**.**

Including a knowledge of, and ability to evaluate and / or apply:

a) the cultural, social and intellectual histories, theories and technologies that influence the design of buildings;
b) the influence of history and theory on the spatial, social, and technological aspects of architecture;

c) appropriate theoretical concepts to studio design projects, demonstrating a reflective and critical approach.

B2) Knowledge of the fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural design (GC3)**.**

Including a knowledge of, and ability to evaluate:

a) how the theories, practices and technologies of the arts influence architectural design;
b) the creative application of the fine arts and their relevance and architecture;
c) the creative application of such work to studio design projects, in terms of their conceptualisation and representation.

B3) Understanding of the methods of investigation and preparation of the brief for a design project (GC7)**.**

Including the knowledge and skills to:

a) critically review precedents relevant to the function, organisation and technological strategy of design proposals;
b) appraise and prepare building briefs of diverse scales and types, to define client and user requirements and their appropriateness to site and context;
c) recognize the contributions of architects and co-professionals to the formulation of the brief, and the methods of investigation used in its preparation.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The development of intellectual skills is achieved through a combination of lectures, seminars, study visits, case studies, debates, reviews and studio based tutorials. Studio design projects and personal research projects such as the dissertation and the design thesis provide opportunities for students to develop their intellectual skills through the awareness, evaluation and application of architectural knowledge. Students are expected to augment the formal teaching sessions and readings with independent observation, analysis and reading and through informal discussion and debate with their peers.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment methods and their relation to learning outcomes are specified in each individual module outline. Intellectual skills are generally assessed in an integrative way through various forms of design project work and through written work including essays and dissertations.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

C1) Ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements (GC1)**.**

Including the ability to:

a) prepare and present building design projects of diverse scale, complexity, and type in a variety of contexts, using a range of media, and in response to a brief;
b) understand the constructional and structural systems, the environmental strategies and the regulatory requirements that apply to the design and construction of a comprehensive design project;

c) develop a conceptual and critical approach to architectural design that integrates and satisfies the aesthetic aspects of a building and the technical requirements of its construction and the needs of the user.

C2) Understanding of the structural design, constructional and engineering problems associated with building design (GC8).

Including the ability to:

a) investigate, critically appraise and select alternative structural, constructional and material systems relevant to architectural design;
b) appraise strategies for building construction, and the ability to integrate knowledge of structural principles and construction techniques;
c) appraise the physical properties and characteristics of building materials, components and systems, and the environmental impact of specification choices.

C3) The necessary design skills to meet building users' requirements within the constraints imposed by cost factors and building regulations. (GC10)

Including the skills to:

a) critically examine the financial factors implied in varying building types, constructional systems, and specification choices, and the impact of these on architectural design;
b) understand the cost control mechanisms which operate during the development of a project;
c) prepare designs that will meet building users' requirements and comply with UK legislation, appropriate performance standards and health and safety requirements.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The development of Practical skills is achieved mainly through the integrative environment of the design studio projects and through student reviews and presentations. Lectures in professional practice help students to contextualise practical skills within the context of architectural practice. Students are expected to augment the formal teaching sessions and readings with independent observation, analysis and reading.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment methods and their relation to learning outcomes are specified in each individual module outline. Practical skills are mainly assessed in an integrative way through various forms of design project work and through written essays / submissions.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:
D1) Communicate effectively through the use of visual, verbal and written methods and through appropriate media including sketching, modelling, digital and electronic techniques

D2) Work effectively as part of a team

D3) Identify and manage individual learning needs so as to prepare for and maintain professional standards commensurate with qualification

D4) Demonstrate self-direction, originality and creativity in tackling and solving problems

D5) Exercise initiative and personal responsibility

Teaching and Learning Methods

Verbal communication skills are developed through student participation in design reviews, student presentations and seminars. Graphic communication skills are developed through iterative application in design project work. Computer based skills including CAD modelling are developed through the project work. Writing skills are developed though the production of reports and essays. Team working skills are developed through participation in design projects and self-direction and initiative are encouraged through an emphasis on student-centred learning where appropriate.

Assessment Strategy

Key and transferable skills, particularly those requiring verbal and graphic communication, are usually assessed holistically as part of the design project work. Writing skills are assessed through essays, dissertations and unseen examinations. The skills of personal time management, self-direction and independent learning are an essential component of studio design culture.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

The programme extends over two years full-time and is structured on a modular basis.

The core content of the programme covers the ARB's Criteria for Part 2 (2011) and the RIBA outline syllabus (2011), the QAA benchmark statement for Architecture (2010) and the European Commission Architects Directive. The programme is split between core modules and optional modules that allow students to develop a specialism in areas such as Urban Design, Urban Planning or Experimental Architecture.

The information (below) gives a brief outline of the curriculum at each stage. More detailed information is contained in the MArch Programme Regulations and in the school handbook.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

The School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape has established an International reputation for its research into Architectural History and Theory and Architectural Humanities. The MArch structure and curriculum aims to build on this strength through research-informed teaching and through an emphasis on intellectual development and exploration and the fostering of an independent, research-led attitude towards design. The School is also uniquely positioned to deliver cross- / inter-disciplinary teaching in related areas such as Urban Design and Planning and there are opportunities for students to pursue specialist studies in these areas together with the option for accelerated routes to related Masters qualifications. Overall, the programme aims to develop graduates who are able to make a positive contribution to architectural practice underpinned by a theoretically informed and reflective approach to design.

The development of integrated design skills is central to the programme and accounts for a total of 160 credits delivered across the two years. In Stage 1 there are core *Design* modules, which are organised into projects taken over the course of the two semesters. Although the theme and content of the design projects change regularly, Semester 1 aims to build upon the foundations of Part 1 by developing a critical awareness of a range of contemporary architectural issues and by encouraging students to research, develop, test, and articulate their own particular architectural standpoint. There is an emphasis on developing an awareness of the social, political and cultural context of design and on brief-making that responds appropriately to client needs through rigorous research and analysis. Design projects also seek to develop graphic skills and encourage an imaginative

approach to design and its representation. Design projects will involve both group and individual work and will engage students in a creative dialogue with staff and their peers.

During Semester 2, design projects explore a material and practical imagination. Students are encouraged to engage with materiality and making, and through the design of architectural fragments and details demonstrate how these inform wider architectural ideas, whether formal, tectonic or theoretical. The design project integrates an awareness of issues related to technology and the environment. It engages students with some of the key design skills and knowledge that are necessary for the successful design of a major building project. These skills extend to the detailed declaration of the tectonic (including technical and legislative issues) and material aspects of proposed designs.

In Stage 2 students develop their design skills through a module on Architectural Design (split into two modules from 2021/2022)**.** The module is organised around the development and declaration of an individual design thesis. The thesis is developed in semester 1 in consultation with staff and through a primer project of design or material exploration.

Throughout the two years of the programme the design studio is underpinned and informed by related modules that aim to support the design process and to widen and deepen students understanding of the broader context of architecture.

Stage 1 aims to give a broad survey of contemporary theoretical and cultural issues in architecture and situates design practice within contemporary social, economic, political and historical debates. Students have the opportunity to develop these themes through the production of a Dissertation. The Dissertation spans both stages of the programme and is organised into two modules (each equivalent to 20 credits). The written Design Dissertation aims to provide a foundation for the subsequent Design Thesis. Stage 1 students also undertake a dissertation module, through which they undertake broad research into their chosen themes / subject and this supports the production of a topic proposal by the end of the semester. In semester 1 of Stage 2 students undertake another dissertation module where they develop and write-up the dissertation for submission at the end of Semester 1. Students who do not wish to pursue a dissertation can elect to take a Linked Research option (subject to availability). Students who elect to go on exchange in Semester 2 of Stage 1 can take other optional modules, allowing them to write-up a body of research related to their subsequent design thesis.

Stage 2 modules aim to build practical knowledge and communication skills, as well as give an insight into construction methods, buildability, specifications, costs and procurement methods. This knowledge is directly related to the development of the design thesis, and encourages students to reflect on their own personal development and learning outcomes achieved through the two-year programme. The academic portfolio maps these outcomes onto the ARB / RIBA syllabus whilst also providing a succinct summary of the students' achievements to both external examiners and potential employers.

Related and Specialist Studies
In addition to the core Architecture curriculum there is also a related studies or Special Topics programme. Students can elect to take specialist modules in Stage 1 and 2. The options are in Experimental Architecture, Sustainable Buildings & Environments, Urban Design, and Urban Planning. All are related to other Masters level programmes in the School. The option in Urban Planning is part of an RIBA/RTPI accredited route that can lead to the award of MSc Urban Planning degree. Options also include one or two semester exchange schemes with schools of architecture in Aachen, Barcelona, Brussels, Paris, Stockholm, Sydney and Singapore, which give students an opportunity both to experience education in a different culture and to develop their language skills.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

5843 Programme Regulations 2023/24

For students who started the programmes in 2019/20:
https://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2020%20-%202021%20Phase%201/SAPL/UG/5843%20Programme%20Regulations%20for%20existing%20cohort%20FINAL%20v2.pdf

For students who started the programmes in 2020/21:
https://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2020%20-%202021%20Phase%201/SAPL/UG/5843%20Programme%20Regulations%20for%20new%20cohort%20FINAL.pdf

13 Support for Student Learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available here.

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available here.

Accreditation reports
N/A

Additional mechanisms
N/A

15 Regulation of assessment

Generic information regarding University provision is available here.

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/#subject

Degree Programme and University Regulations: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.