
Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the RIBA visiting board
to the University of Salford**
School of the Built Environment

Date of visiting board: 6/7 July 2017

Confirmed by RIBA Education Committee: 9 February 2018

1 Details of institution hosting course/s

University of Salford
Salford, Manchester
M5 4WT

2 Dean of School, Chair in Architecture

Professor Hisham Elkadi

3 Courses offered for validation

BSc (Hons) Architecture, Part 1

4 Acting Programme Director

Professor Oren Lieberman

5 Awarding body

University of Salford

6 The visiting board

Matt Gaskin – Chair
Guillermo Garma Montiel – Vice-Chair
Carlos Sanchez
Matt Hill
Dr Sharon Wright – co-professional member
Ian Beaumont - regional representative

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.

8 Proposals of the visiting board

On 9 February 2018 the RIBA Education Committee confirmed, by circulation, that the following course and qualification be unconditionally validated

BSc (Hons) Architecture, Part 1

The next full visiting board to the BSc (Hons) Architecture programme will take place in 2022.

9 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

10 Academic position statement (written by the School)

From Energy House to Bauhaus. Architecture at Salford is academically located within the School of the Built Environment, and physically located in the New Adelphi, a £65m state-of-the-art building opened in 2016 as the home for the creative disciplines at Salford. We see this as offering the best of both worlds for architecture students: access to world leading built environment research facilities, including Energy House, a unique testing centre for buildings; and a place to study and work in a highly creative multi-disciplinary environment alongside dance, art, design and music studios, sharing new workshops with these subjects. Studio culture and peer learning are central to architecture at Salford and every student has a bespoke individual studio space for the full duration of their studies.

From then to now. The University of Salford has its roots firmly in the 19th Century Industrial Revolution: demand for new industrial skills led to the formation of the Salford Royal Technical Institute. This became University College Salford in 1992, and 50 years ago, became the University of Salford. One of the founding departments of the original institution was the Department of Building, and from this early start, Built Environment at Salford has gone on to achieve a world class reputation for both research and teaching. In the 2017 QS World University Rankings we were placed 36th (of 5000) in the world and 5th in the UK in the Architecture and Built Environment subject area. Two benefits emerge from this – the placing of architecture in a world class construction department alongside creative arts subjects; and the commitment to education as serving the needs of industry and society. The School aims, through its breadth of courses and its world renowned research, to transform the quality of life for society and ensure the wellbeing of future generations through the provision of better and more sustainable urban futures.

From theory to practice. Alongside world class research is a commitment to engaging with industry and society more broadly. The Salford University strategy is built around four Industrial Collaboration Zones (ICZs). All courses at Salford, including architecture, are required to be 'ICZ ready' - to incorporate a significant engagement with practice within the curriculum. To inform and support this practice focus, we have set up an Architecture Industry Advisory Group made up of regional and national practitioners; and have appointed Stephen Hodder as Visiting Professor to help develop practice based integration of the architecture courses. All undergraduate programmes in SOBE are professionally focused and accredited, and as part of this commitment we applied for and received prescription at Part One level from the ARB (June 2017).

From history to geography. Salford and Manchester - largely products of the UK 19th century industrialisation - are cities with unique urban, social and ecological issues. In the 20th century the two places became typical examples of the post-industrial decline of British cities. Now, at

the start of the 21st century, in the midst of the most significant scale of development Greater Manchester – the heart of the Northern Powerhouse - has seen since its heyday as the cradle of the industrial revolution, we are establishing our architecture course against a backdrop of cranes on the horizon in every direction. This creates the opportunity for the architecture programme at Salford to engage with sites on the cusp of development, and our students are encouraged to develop briefs that meaningfully contribute to the emerging shape of the post-industrial city. Situated in the intertwined ecologies of the environment, culture, the economy, the political, and the aesthetic, our students encounter the issues and the dreams of cities through live projects in which they engage in both the design of speculative visions and in material making. With one of the world's most significant post-industrial landscapes on our doorstep as a 'laboratory', architecture at Salford engages with those complex contexts of regeneration, post-industrialisation, community engagement, environmental changes, and marginalised communities. Our students are given the opportunities to contribute to making material differences in the world, playing their roles as designers and makers in affording and fostering democratic, caring relationships of co-existence with each other, things, and the planet.

From far and near. The University of Salford recruits students both regionally and internationally and we pursue an agenda of addressing global issues in a regional 'laboratory'. Our diverse student body brings a global agenda, and we look forward to our architecture graduates' ability to learn from the education we give them and to engage in those real world situations: the issues, problems and dreams, in which materials and spatial constructions are always a part. We believe that having completed our course, our graduates will be able to encounter the vicissitudes of a continuously evolving profession, one in which practices change to both reflect and anticipate such things as global warming, political upheavals, technological advancements, economic unpredictability, and ever changing modes of communication and representation. Our staff body is also international –we are a community of internationally recognised researchers, practitioners and educators with a wealth of experience that includes three former heads of RIBA Validated UK Schools on the staff.

From design to construction. Built around 20 credit modules where design occurs in many places, we structure the learning and teaching – and articulate the Criteria – to embody an integrative approach which reflects the reality of architecture's inherent complexity, in which many elements and participants come together to make designs and buildings. Design is developed in various modules, not limited to those in the studio, and is integrated into what can often appear as separate, stand-alone subject areas. At pivotal points in the program, students work concurrently on two interrelated design projects in different modules, learning how to transfer, and integrate, knowledge across different architectural themes, and how to manage their time and attention; skills which will stand them in good stead in professional practice. We set out to facilitate such transdisciplinary learning by designing our module briefs to relate to one another in order that a student understands the integrated relationships of knowledge, rather

than the discreteness of separate modules. In Second Year we engage our students in a multidisciplinary cross-school project to integrate the knowledge of many of architecture's professional partners within a single module. Architecture students join with those from Surveying, Construction, Engineering and Property to work on a brief, preparing them for practice through development of knowledge, as well as through the practice of transferable skills, such as the ability to work in teams, to communicate effectively, to carry out research, and to critically reflect on architecture's role in a wider field of disciplines and professions.

From where we are to where we want to be. Based on the firm foundation of our long established built environment courses, the direction of travel is into more design based architecture related programmes. We have developed a ground breaking MArch course to begin in September 2017 which delves deeper into matters of concern relevant to a socially engaged profession. Our masters' students will have the unique opportunity to integrate their course with a series of three intense periods in practice, working on live projects as a consultant/researcher. We are also launching a BSc in Architectural Engineering, and in 2018 will start a degree in Interior Architecture. We are presently developing a non-credit bearing short course to support graduates in practice and to provide a PEDR review and signing service. All our programmes are developing in a way that can respond to the RIBA Education Review.

From where you are to where you want to be. The University of Salford has since its foundation been committed to widening access to university education as a route to social mobility and personal fulfilment, for our diverse student body. We believe strongly that architectural education should be open to all, and that it should go beyond simple training for practice, to providing an education for creative, competent and reflective practitioners, prepared for a life time of changing architectural practice.

11 Commendations

- 11.1 The Board commends the staff enthusiasm and commitment to student engagement.
- 11.2 The Board commends the learning demonstrated in the Multidisciplinary Project aligned to the Industrial Collaboration Zone (ICZ) initiative in the University.
- 11.3 The Board commends the integration of the studio facilities within the New Adelphi Building. This recognises the significance of architecture within the University portfolio.

12 Conditions

There are no conditions.

13 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.

- 13.1 The Board recommends that explicit evidence of GC11 requirements are made available for external examiners and future visiting boards.
- 13.2 The School should set a higher priority for process work within portfolios to better demonstrate the creative and conceptual basis in all design work, with particular reference to GC1.3. Evidence of process work is also expected as a component of the complete academic portfolio required by RIBA validation procedures (section 4.7).
- 13.3 The School must evidence theoretical concepts in studio design projects (GC2.3).
- 13.4 The School must enhance student articulation between the local context linked to the design proposal (GC5.3). This is potentially a strength of the School.

14. 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.

- 14.1 The Board advises greater integration across modules within and between years, with particular reference to the second year content and structure which is disparate when compared with the first and third year.
- 14.2 The Board advises the School to think further ahead to when part one and part two are better established and consider how this might reshape both provisions.
- 14.3 The Board advises the School to explore ways in which proximity to other artistic disciplines may enrich the programme in years to come, whilst not overstretching the course focus.
- 14.4 The Board advises that the University recognizes in its workload planning the complexity of shared modules and that workload is managed with research commitments in mind.
- 14.5 The Board notes that facilities are constantly under review to ensure they meet course needs and enhancements are ongoing. The School should continuously review facilities to ensure they remain commensurate with student numbers as the BSc (Hons) Architecture programme expands and the MArch is established.

15 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.

15.1 BSc (Hons) Architecture, Part 1

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

16 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.

16.1 The action points above make reference to specific criteria as follows:

- 13.1: GC11
- 13.2: GC1.3
- 13.3: GC2.3
- 13.4: GC5.3

17 Other information

17.1 Student numbers

BSc (Hons) Architecture
 Level 4 31 students
 Level 5 28 students
 Level 6 20 students

17.2 Documentation provided

The School provided all documentation as required by the Procedures for Validation. Please see action point 13.2 regarding process work and complete academic portfolios.

18. 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.**

- 18.1 Meeting with the Dean of School and Acting Programme Director
- 18.2 Meeting with students
- 18.3 Pro-Vice Chancellor for the Student Experience
- 18.4 Meeting with external examiners
- 18.5 Meeting with staff