
Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the visiting board
to the University of East London**

School of Architecture, Computing and Engineering

1 Details of institution hosting course/s

University of East London
Docklands Campus
University Way
London E16 2RD
United Kingdom

2 Subject leader

Carl Callaghan

3 Courses offered for validation

BSc (Hons) Architecture, Part 1
MArch, Part 2

4 Course leaders

Christian Groothuizen, Part 1
Harald Trapp, Part 2

5 Awarding body

University of East London

6 The visiting board

Dr Ivana Wingham – academic / chair
Professor Norman Wienand – academic / vice chair
David Simister - practitioner
Anthony Petrilli – practitioner
Professor Doug King – co professional
Vincent Thompson – regional representative

Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk, 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.

8 Proposals of the visiting board

On 31 May 2017 the RIBA Education Committee confirmed, by circulation, unconditional revalidation of the following:

BSc (Hons) Architecture, Part 1
MArch, Part 2

The next full visiting board will take place in 2021.

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)

UEL Architecture Design and the Built Environment is now known as Architecture and Design or A+D.

A+D is located within the school of ACE. ACE comprises Architecture Computing and Engineering and is led by Professor Hassan Abdallah. This recent merge with ACE (2012) has brought together different disciplines in close proximity on the Docklands Campus. Architecture is mainly located in the AVA building and Engineering and Computing in the adjoining Knowledge Dock. The AVA Building is shared with the school of ADI, Arts and Digital Industry (the old art school). Architecture shares a gallery, technicians and workshops with ADI in the AVA building. Programmes in ACE and ADI are separate but architecture students and staff have access to a wide range of facilities and workshops including engineering and arts workshops. Students come from diverse UK and international backgrounds and access the programme with 300 UCAS points or through our new foundation programme. This diversity is an important quality and gives a richness and variety to the student group.

Over the last three years the A+D subject area has expanded a rich resource of a wide staff base and now runs the following group of programmes:

*BSc (Hons) Architecture ARB/RIBA part 1
 MArch Architecture ARB/RIBA part 2
 Foundation in Architecture and Design
 BA (Hons) Interior Design
 BSc (Hons) Product Design
 BSc (Hons) Architectural Design Technology
 MA Architecture and Urbanism
 MRes Architecture (Reading the neoliberal City)
 MA Landscape Architecture
 PGDip Landscape Architecture*

In 2015 Architecture staff developed a mission statement for Architecture.

“At A+D we foster a broad and inspiring education to establish a rich foundation for a creative professional life. Our Architecture and

Design programmes challenge assumptions and develop new agendas for Architecture and Design.

We balance the development and support of our students' talents with the understanding that Architecture and Design is contextual, socially constructing and political. We believe that the design conversation in studios between students and staff across models and drawings is central to creative development. Our students are encouraged to undertake study trips internationally in each year of study to deepen an understanding of people and places. Our teaching balances a respect and understanding of the past and the present with an inspirational, poetic and innovative stance towards the future.

Our staff teach at the highest level and maintain an enquiring research approach to physical and intellectual contexts. We embrace real situations with passion and creativity. We believe that a depth of enquiry and poetic experimentation develops from the experience and understanding of making, drawing and materials in well-crafted output. We believe that Architecture and Design is thought, experienced and built.

Our school acts as a forum for ideas and thought across a wide range of disciplines. We host a national and international lecture series which acts as a magnet for theorists and practitioners to contribute to the discussion and debate in the school. We have extensive workshops and facilities for the creation of real and digital artefacts. We work to develop practice and research to enhance life. We support and develop an atmosphere in which freedom of thought, imagination and enquiry can thrive.”

The UEL A+D Offer

There are five aspects to the A+D offer

International and Local Understanding

- *Students undertake a mix of studio and live project work in which personal creative development is situated in local and international contexts*
- *Students are offered an international study visit in every year of education.*
- *An International STO lecture series starts the year with 4 leading international architects*
- *A national lecture series of practitioners based in the UK takes place every Tuesday.*
- *We have an engagement with the British Council and the Venice Biennale/Milan expo etc*

Broad inspiring education to establish a rich foundation for a creative professional life

- *Students undertake a mix of studio and live project work in which personal creative development is situated in local and*

international contexts. Architecture is thought experienced and built.

- *The studio based education in units is the core delivery of the content of the programmes. Studies can be either very factual or highly idiosyncratic and specific to a particular creative insight. Typically UEL students spend longer on site investigations than in many schools. Understanding how architecture works in relation to people and places has been a core direction of the school for many years. Studio culture has been particularly successful in the school and has led to very high performances in NSS and most students feel the staff are outstanding.*
- *Students can access a wide range of workshops from engineering to arts based practice.*
- *Unit agendas are usually a mix of social / historical / economic / geographic / sustainability / cultural concerns sometimes local sometimes international.*

Relationship to Practice

- *A+D has a strong relationship to the RIBA and acts as a hub for the East London Society of Architects. ELSA practitioners attend the school in June to select prize winners for the summer exhibition.*
- *A strong characteristic of the unit staff is the mix of full time and part time staff. Part time staff are usually practitioner academics and this give a contemporary practice input and relevance to the unit work. Studio based education in units is the core delivery of the content of the programmes.*

Learning through making

- *Studio/Workshop culture and learning through making models and constructions are important aspects of the learning experience in A+D. The workshop facilities are extensive and now provide a wide range of analogue and digital facilities based around art, architecture and engineering facilities*
- *A+D is one of four schools in the UK offering robotic fabrication.*
- *Students are involved in live projects known as construction week in which students design and build a structure in small groups for a real client.*

Research and teaching

- *At the last ref the A+D research rating was 2.43. 6.5 FTE contributed to ref. Since then we have added 3.5 FTE research active staff. Research areas typically include, Manufacture and Digital manufacture, Sustainability, Cities and Theory, Environmental research.*
- *Researchers input into the student education in studios, crits, tutorials, supporting studies and lectures. All staff contribute to theory development.*
- *A+D staff are actively participate and organise conferences. Since 2012 we have organised 4 conferences*

The differences between the aims and outcomes of part1 and part2

- *Part 1 and Part 2 programmes are substantially different. Part 1 programmes introduce project work usually small in scale and complexity both of site and brief. Studies in part 2 often have a longer duration, research in-depth, increasing site scale and complexity and with greater understanding of synthesis and interpretation expected in the final outputs of part 2 students.*

The means by which part1 and part2 provide skills relevant to professional practice

- *Most unit research focuses on a building project which is used to test out ideas and agendas.*
- *From 2016 we will have an engagement with the RIBA mentoring scheme to give practice experience to year 3 students. This is a new initiative.*
- *Studio staff are often part time and active in practices*

How validation criteria have been creatively interpreted in terms of course content and delivery

- *Learning outcomes are creatively interpreted in the unit briefs by the unit tutors.*
- *Assignments in supporting studies such as professional studies and technical studies are modelled according to the validation criteria with a focus on live projects and physical production of models and environments at 1:1.*
- *In MArch we have five history and theory options including computing, urbanism, conservation, critical writing and landscape.*

11 Commendations

11.1 The Board commends the School:

For its commitment to enabling diverse routes into Architecture.

11.2 For staff commitment to supporting the students in academic studies while nurturing pastoral care

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 strongly recommends that the influence of:

- a) Environment and Technology
- b) History and Theory and

c) Professional Studies

is more clearly demonstrated as a distinct part of the design process.

13.2 The School must ensure that it provides complete Academic Portfolios in accordance with the requirements of the Validation Procedures.

13.3 The School must provide clear signposting to students in terms of available University Student Support in times of need.

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 strongly advise the School to develop a strategy for fractional staff delivering Environment and Technology, History and Theory and Professional Studies in order to enhance higher levels of interaction within the design studio.

14.2 The Board advises that the institution maintains its focus on growth at sustainable rate.

14.3 The Board advises that the School engages with the University's corporate strategy for civic engagement in the development of a clear academic position.

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 The Board confirmed that all Part 1 graduate attributes were met by graduates of the BSc (Hons) Architecture Part 1 programme.

15.2 The Board confirmed that all Part 2 graduate attributes were met by graduates of the MArch Part 2 programme.

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.

The Board had no comments to make regarding specific criteria but refers the School to action points 13.1 and 13.2 stressing the

importance of demonstrating criteria as part of the design process and providing complete academic portfolios.

17 Other information

17.1 Student numbers 2016- 2017

Year	Students
Year 1	65
Year 2	60
Year 3	55
Year 4	73
Year 5	48

17.2 Documentation provided

The School provided all documentation as required by the RIBA Procedures for Validation. However, please refer to Action Points 13.1 and 13.2 regarding demonstration of criteria within design work and completeness of 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.**

- Meeting with budget holder and course leaders
- Meeting with students
- Meeting with the Vice Chancellor
- Meeting with external examiners
- Meeting with staff