Module Specification

Practice Studio

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Contents

Part 1: Information

Module title: Practice Studio

Module code: UBLL4L-30-M

Level: Level 7

For implementation from: 2026-27

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

College: College of Arts, Technology and Environment

School: CATE School of Architecture and Environment

Partner institutions: None

Field: Architecture and the Built Environment

Module type:

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: The Practice Studio module combines applied architectural design with critical professional reflection, allowing students to gain hands-on experience within a real or simulated practice setting. This studio emphasises the development of design skills through a work-based project alongside a critical examination of professional, ethical, and environmental responsibilities.

Students undertake an architectural project, either as part of a practice placement or

through a simulated design brief, that spans the lifecycle of design stages, client engagement, and social sustainability. In addition, students are required to produce an independent Design Study that complements the main project, encouraging a personal, reflective approach to design. Throughout the module, students develop a Project Case Study to document their experiences, insights, and professional growth, aligning their work with industry standards and ethical frameworks.

This module prepares students to operate responsibly within the industry, addressing RIBA's focus on business management, resource planning, and client relationships (E3 and E6). Students learn the principles of safe, sustainable project management and client-centred architectural practice, ensuring alignment with RIBA's ethical and professional standards.

Features: Applied Work-Based Learning: Students develop design solutions within a practice-based or simulated project environment, offering exposure to real-world professional contexts.

Independent Design Study: Alongside the primary project, students undertake an independent design task, building on knowledge gained from the main project and demonstrating a critical and creative approach to architectural design.

Reflective Professional Development: Students produce a Project Case Study, contextualising their work within broader professional, regulatory, and ethical frameworks while reflecting on their personal growth and professional insights.

Educational aims: The Practice Studio module aims to develop students' design and professional skills, preparing them for ethical, responsible practice in architecture. By the end of the module, students will:

Develop comprehensive design solutions that address social, environmental, and technical challenges, aligned with ethical and sustainable practice principles.

Engage proactively with clients, users, and other stakeholders to set project agendas, refine design briefs, and produce outcomes that reflect a high standard of inclusivity and social value.

Produce an independent Design Study that demonstrates flexibility in addressing design problems and creative integration of insights gained from the main project.

Reflect critically on their professional experiences, examining the impact of design decisions across the lifecycle of a project in relation to social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Outline syllabus: The Practice Studio syllabus combines applied project work with independent design exploration, supported by seminars and tutorials on professional practice and critical reflection.

1. Professional Project Development and Brief Analysis

Students begin by analysing and developing a design brief within a real or simulated practice context, taking account of client and user requirements, site constraints, and contextual factors. Emphasis is placed on understanding the architect's role in addressing project requirements while upholding professional ethics and social responsibility.

2. Iterative Design Development and Stakeholder Engagement

Students progress through iterative stages of design, integrating client and stakeholder feedback. This process involves critical analysis and creativity, refining solutions in response to social, environmental, and technical demands. Topics include techniques for stakeholder engagement, brief refinement, and strategies for navigating professional challenges in real-world design projects.

3. Independent Design Study

Parallel to the main project, students complete an independent Design Study that builds on themes explored in the primary project. This study allows students to explore alternative approaches and broaden their design thinking beyond immediate client or practice constraints. The Design Study encourages experimentation and

reflective practice, helping students develop a unique, personal approach to design while deepening their understanding of project-based learning.

4. Reflective Project Case Study

Throughout the module, students document their experiences in a Project Case Study, providing an account of their design process, critical decisions, and stakeholder interactions. This reflection contextualises the design project within broader professional frameworks, discussing topics such as building procurement, regulatory compliance, ethical responsibilities, and the role of sustainability in practice.

5. Professional Skills and Ethical Standards

Seminars cover core aspects of professional practice, from the architect's duty of care to sustainable and inclusive design. Topics include business management, contracts, risk management, and the ethical obligations of architects. Discussions also address social sustainability, social value, and the importance of inclusive design, preparing students to work constructively within a team and uphold professional responsibilities.

Alignment to ARB Competency Outcomes

In this module the following ARB Academic Competency Outcomes are met and assessed to passing standard:

D2: Prepare, appraise, refine and engage with building briefs of diverse scales and types, accounting for client, user, site, environmental and contextual requirements.

D3: Demonstrate a critical and creative approach to architectural design.

D6: Produce the designs that consider the relationship between people and built environment, between buildings and their context, and the need to relate buildings

and the spaces between them to human needs, inclusivity, user experience and scale.

PE3: Work constructively with and within a broader team, exercising leadership, effective communication and personal responsibility.

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: The module uses a combination of seminars, tutorials, and project-based learning to support students' development of design and professional skills:

Seminars and Case Studies: Core seminars provide insights into professional practice, ethical responsibilities, and sustainability principles, supported by real-world case studies.

Design Tutorials: Regular tutorials guide students through iterative design stages, offering feedback on both the main project and independent Design Study, and supporting reflective practice.

Project-Based Learning: Students engage in a work-based project, applying professional skills to develop a design brief, communicate with stakeholders, and document their learning journey.

Reflective Sessions: Reflective activities support students in contextualising their work within the ethical, regulatory, and social dimensions of architectural practice.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Develop advanced architectural solutions integrating social, environmental, and technical considerations to address complex architectural challenges.

MO2 Produce spatial design solutions that prioritise human needs and inclusivity, showcasing the integration of diverse cultural and contextual insights.

MO3 Reflect critically on the design process within the chosen pathway, evaluating the impact of design decisions and developing an approach that aligns with professional and ethical standards.

MO4 Apply research-driven insights to inform architectural decision-making, demonstrating an ability to integrate theoretical perspectives and evidence-based approaches into the specialised design focus.

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

Face-to-face learning = 72 hours

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at readinglists.uwe.ac.uk via the following link https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/B51A70CB-E1C2-6420-CC72-101D2F2FB892.html

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: Integrated Design Portfolio, Independent Design Study, and Reflective Project Case Study (100%)

Integrated Design Portfolio: Students develop a portfolio documenting the design process of the primary project, including sketches, drawings, models, and other representations that demonstrate the evolution of the design within a practice context.

Independent Design Study: This standalone project, included within the portfolio, explores alternative design solutions that build on insights gained from the primary project, showcasing personal creativity and independent problem-solving skills.

Reflective Project Case Study: A written case study reflecting on the student's professional experiences, examining ethical, social, and lifecycle considerations within the design project. This study contextualises the work within broader

professional and regulatory frameworks.

Objectives: This assessment evaluates students' ability to apply practice-based learning, produce creative design solutions, and reflect on the social, ethical, and environmental implications of their work.

Formative Feedback: Feedback during seminars, tutorials, and project reviews provides students with opportunities to refine their design work and reflect on their professional growth.

Resit Assessment: If required, the resit assessment will follow the same brief and submission format as the main assessment, allowing students to develop and submit a revised portfolio that meets the original assessment objectives.

Assessment tasks:

Portfolio (First Sit)
Description: Integrated design portfolio, including an independent design study and a reflective project case study
Weighting: 100 %
Final assessment: Yes
Group work: No
Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Portfolio (Resit)
Description: Integrated design portfolio, including an independent design study and a reflective project case study
Weighting: 100 %
Final assessment: Yes
Group work: No
Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Architecture [Frenchay] MArch 2025-26

Architecture {Apprenticeship-UWE}[Frenchay] MArch 2025-26