Programme Specification

Architectural Design {Foundation} [GCET]

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Section 1: Key Programme Details

Part A: Programme Information

Programme title: Architectural Design {Foundation} [GCET]

Highest award: BSc (Hons) Architectural Design

Interim award: BSc Architectural Design

Interim award: DipHE Architectural Design

Interim award: CertHE Architectural Design

Awarding institution: UWE Bristol

Affiliated institutions: GCET

Teaching institutions: GCET

Study abroad: No

Year abroad: No

Sandwich year: Yes

Credit recognition: No

School responsible for the programme: CATE School of Architecture and Environment, College of Arts, Technology and Environment

Professional, statutory or regulatory bodies: Not applicable

Modes of delivery: Full-time, Sandwich

Entry requirements: For the current entry requirements see the UWE public website.

For implementation from: 01 October 2026

Programme code: K13F13

Section 2: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Part A: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Overview: The BSc (Hons) Architectural Design at the GCET is a professionally oriented programme that prepares students for careers in the design and delivery of high-performance buildings. Rooted in the science and practice of architectural technology, the course equips graduates with the technical, environmental, regulatory, and digital skills essential to contemporary construction and design practice.

Combining creative problem-solving with a deep understanding of materials, structures, and sustainability, the programme emphasises the integration of design, production, and procurement processes. Students develop the ability to analyse and address technical design challenges, delivering functional, buildable, and environmentally responsive solutions within regulatory frameworks and global construction industries.

The course fosters independent, critical thinking alongside collaborative practice. Students work through studio-based projects, technical workshops, and real-world simulations that reflect the complex, interdisciplinary nature of professional environments. Core skills include digital design and modelling, construction detailing, specification writing, contract administration, fire and life safety, and sustainable design integration.

Opportunities for industry engagement are embedded in the programme. Students may apply for an 12-month Placement after Year 3, gaining new professional perspectives by studying architectural technology abroad.

Students who complete the first two years of the programme at GCET have the opportunity to complete the final two years in the UK, using the 2+2 pathway.

Graduates of the programme are well-prepared for technical design roles in architectural practice, consultancy, construction firms, and product development.

Features of the programme: Professional progression: The course meets the educational standards expected for the profession of architectural technologist. The curriculum is designed to support graduates in gaining the professional competencies required for technical design and project delivery roles across the built environment sector.

Design and Technical Integration: The programme places architectural technology at the core of the design process. Students work through studio-based projects that develop their ability to take designs from concept to detailed technical resolution, gaining skills in material specification, environmental performance, and construction detailing.

Teaching Resources: Students benefit from dedicated studio spaces, digital fabrication facilities, and practical demonstration facilities based in GCET, Muscat campus. These learning environments support hands-on exploration of materials, technologies, and sustainable construction practices.

Digital Literacy: Students are equipped with industry-relevant digital skills including 2D/3D CAD, BIM, visualisation, and performance simulation. The integration of digital tools throughout the design process supports advanced technical analysis and communication across multidisciplinary teams.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: As part of the wider built environment industry, students learn alongside peers from architecture, planning, engineering, surveying, and construction management. The programme encourages collaboration through shared modules, live projects, and cross-disciplinary design activities.

Global and Local Perspectives: Students are encouraged to tackle design challenges rooted in both local communities and global contexts.

Industry Engagement: The course maintains strong connections with industry through guest lectures, live briefs, and site visits. These partnerships provide insight into current practice and offer pathways to internships, mentorship, and graduate employment.

Educational Aims: Aim 1 – To develop graduates who possess the knowledge, skills, and behaviours required to practise as professional architectural technologists, capable of delivering robust, buildable, and sustainable design solutions from concept to construction.

Aim 2 – To develop graduates who are collaborative and inclusive in their approach, able to work effectively within multidisciplinary teams, and aware of their responsibilities in promoting ethical, diverse, and equitable working environments.

Aim 3 – To develop graduates who are reflective in their thinking and communication, committed to lifelong learning and the continuous development of their professional skills and judgement.

Aim 4 – To develop graduates who are technically innovative and sustainability-focused, able to integrate the latest materials, methods, and digital technologies to address climate and performance challenges in the built environment.

Aim 5 – To develop graduates with strong transferable skills including critical thinking, digital literacy, problem-solving, and communication—skills that enable them to thrive across a wide range of roles within the construction and design industries.

Aim 6 – To develop graduates who are curious, research-aware, and intellectually engaged, capable of applying evidence-based thinking to support technical innovation and design excellence in architectural technology.

Programme Learning Outcomes:
On successful completion of this programme graduates will achieve the following learning outcomes.

Programme Learning Outcomes

PO1. Demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and behaviours of contemporary architectural technology practice, applying independent problem-solving in national and international contexts, including complex projects with incomplete client information. [keyword: Professional Practice]

PO2. Work effectively in teams, communicating across stakeholder perspectives, contributing to collaborative project programmes, and critically reflecting on personal approaches to teamwork and professional development. [keyword: Collaborative Practice]

PO3. Apply ethical frameworks in building development, recognising issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion, identifying unethical behaviours, and critically evaluating mechanisms for conflict resolution. [keyword: Ethics]

PO4. Demonstrate knowledge of management and procurement in building development, applying economic skills in tendering and contract administration, and critically evaluating project risks through value engineering. [keyword: Economic]

PO5. Apply technical design knowledge of materials, structures, and environments to case study projects, and critically assess opportunities and challenges of emerging building technologies. [keyword: Technical]

PO6. Demonstrate knowledge of health, safety, and legal frameworks affecting building design, applying fire and life safety design techniques, and critically analysing developments in construction law and risk management. [keyword: Legal]

PO7. Demonstrate detailed awareness of the environmental, political, social, and technological contexts of architectural technology, evaluating designs against sustainability indicators, and formulation potential solutions to addressing the performance gap. [keyword: Sustainability]

PO8. Apply digital measurement and modelling techniques to represent buildings, use industry-standard CAD and analysis tools, and critically reflect on the evolving role of digital technologies in design, construction, and handover. [keyword: Digital]

Assessment strategy: This programme employs a rigorous and industry-informed assessment strategy that reflects the interdisciplinary and practice-oriented nature of architectural technology. Emphasising real-world relevance, technical precision, and design integration, the assessment approach ensures students develop the knowledge, behaviours, and transferable skills needed to thrive in contemporary practice.

Integrated Assessment Components

1. Design Portfolios and Digital Submissions- Portfolios document students' progression in technical design, construction detailing, and environmental performance across all levels of study.
Assessments require the use of industry-standard digital tools (e.g., CAD, BIM, environmental analysis software) to produce comprehensive and professional documentation.

2. Technical and Design Integration Projects - Students complete projects that simulate real-world design and construction processes, combining specification writing, procurement strategies, and technical design.
Submissions include detailed technical drawings, environmental strategies, and critical appraisals of buildability and performance.

3. Laboratory and Workshop-Based Reports - Practical investigations assess students' understanding of material properties, construction methods, and building performance systems.
Reports focus on the ability to analyse data, test hypotheses, and communicate findings relevant to construction science and sustainability.

4. Oral Presentations, Vivas, and Technical Reviews - Design reviews and technical vivas are used throughout the programme to assess students' ability to communicate ideas clearly and justify design decisions.
These sessions develop confidence, clarity, and professional presentation skills while testing individual critical reasoning.

5. Computer-Based Assessments - digital tests assess foundational knowledge in construction technology, fire safety, legal frameworks, and environmental systems.
These are used particularly at earlier levels to establish core technical and regulatory competencies.

6. Live Projects and Real-World Case Studies - Students engage with real or simulated briefs involving external stakeholders or community needs.
Deliverables include feasibility studies, stakeholder reports, and technical design

proposals grounded in regulatory and economic contexts.

7. Collaborative and Group-Based Assessments - Group work is embedded within inter-professional and design studio modules to simulate the collaborative nature of industry.
Assessments focus on both individual contributions and collective outcomes, promoting teamwork, communication, and shared responsibility.

8. Final Design Studio Project - In the final year, students undertake a capstone design project that synthesises learning across the programme.
Outputs include a detailed technical portfolio, digital models, construction specifications, and a final review presentation assessed by staff and industry professionals.

Transferable Skills and Professional Attributes
The assessment strategy fosters key graduate attributes including:

Communication – through written reports, technical drawings, and oral presentations.

Collaboration – via group projects and peer critique activities.

Critical Thinking – through reflective components in design portfolios and case-based assignments.

Digital Literacy – by embedding CAD, BIM, and analytical software throughout assessment tasks.

Time Management – supported by carefully scheduled deadlines that avoid assessment clustering and promote steady progression.

Inclusivity and Feedback Literacy
1. Formative Feedback Opportunities - Formative feedback is embedded in studio

tutorials, interim reviews, and draft submissions, supporting iterative improvement and confidence building.

2. Diverse Assessment Formats - A balanced mix of design submissions, technical reports, oral presentations, and examinations ensures accessibility and inclusivity for diverse learning styles.

3. Feedback Integration Support - Students receive guidance on how to interpret and act on feedback, with clear links between formative and summative assessments to support ongoing development.

Student support: The programme at GCET is committed to supporting students throughout their academic journey, ensuring they are equipped to succeed both personally and professionally. A comprehensive range of support structures underpins the learning experience, fostering student wellbeing, academic development, and professional readiness.

Wellbeing and Inclusive Learning
The programme fosters an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Students have access to a broad range of services including counselling, wellbeing support, tutor support. Inclusive teaching strategies are embedded across modules, ensuring that learning materials, teaching methods, and assessments are accessible to students from diverse backgrounds and with varying abilities.

Content is designed to accommodate different learning styles and prior educational experiences, with explicit guidance provided for tasks such as group work, design reviews, and public presentations. The programme champions cultural representation, scaffolds skill development, and addresses issues such as microaggressions and unconscious bias through a respectful and responsive learning culture. This ensures that every student feels welcomed, heard, and supported in achieving their potential.

Skills Development and Digital Competence

To prepare students for the demands of professional practice, regular workshops and drop-in sessions are offered to develop core competencies in digital design, technical drawing, and software platforms such as AutoCAD, Revit, and BIM authoring tools. Students gain confidence in navigating digital workflows, producing professional-grade outputs, and integrating these tools into their design process.

Feedback and Reflective Learning

The programme places strong emphasis on feedback literacy. Feedback is offered through studio tutorials, interim reviews, and summative assessments, helping students identify strengths and areas for improvement. Students are encouraged to reflect on their progress through self-evaluation and portfolio development, cultivating habits of reflective practice essential for lifelong learning.

Technology-Enhanced Learning

Digital platforms such as VLEs, MS Teams, and cloud-based design tools are used to support flexible and inclusive learning. These systems provide access to learning materials, recorded lectures, submission portals, and collaborative workspaces.

Part B: Programme Structure

Year 1

The student must take 120 credits from the modules in Year 1.

Year 1 Compulsory Modules

The student must take 120 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLML7-30-0	Foundation Design Studio 2027-28	30
UBLMYM-30-0	Foundation Design Communication 2027-28	30
UBLMLR-30-0	Context of Design and Development 2027-28	30

UBLMY6-15-0	Building Design Futures 2027-28	15
UBLMWM-15-0	Foundation Engineering 2027-28	15

Year 2
The student must take 120 credits from the modules in Year 2.

Year 2 Compulsory Modules
The student must take 120 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLL4S-30-1	Studio 1.1 - Form and Context 2028-29	30
UBLL4Y-30-1	Studio 1.2 - People and Environment 2028-29	30
UBLLDD-30-1	Construction Technology and Building Services 1 2028-29	30
UBLL6V-30-1	Materials and Environmental Physics 2028-29	30

Year 3
The student must take 120 credits from the modules in Year 3.

Year 3 Compulsory Modules
The student must take 120 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLL8R-30-2	ATD Studio 2 2029-30	30
UBLL8H-30-2	Digital Applications for Architectural Technologists 2029-30	30
UBLLDF-30-2	Construction Technology and Building Services 2 2029-30	30
UBLMRT-30-2	Procurement and Contract Practice 2029-30	30

Year 4
Full time students must take 120 credits from the modules in Year 4.
Sandwich students must take 15 credits from the modules in Year 4.

Year 4 Compulsory Modules (Full time)
Full time student must take 120 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (Full time).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLL8S-45-3	ATD Studio 3 2030-31	45
UBLL8J-30-3	Digital Innovations for Architectural Technologists 2030-31	30
UFCF95-15-3	Entrepreneurial Skills 2030-31	15
UBLL7U-15-3	Energy Performance and Retrofit 2030-31	15
UBLMXB-15-3	Conserving Buildings and Places 2030-31	15

Year 4 Compulsory Modules (Sandwich)
Sandwich student must take 15 credits form the modules in Compulsory modules (Sandwich).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBGLVX-15-3	Placement 2030-31	15

Year 5
Sandwich students must take 105 credits from the modules in Year 5.

Year 5 Compulsory Modules (Sandwich)
Sandwich students must take 90 credits form the modules in Compulsory modules (Sandwich)

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLL8S-45-3	ATD Studio 3 2031-32	45
UBLL8J-30-3	Digital Innovations for Architectural Technologists 2031-32	30

UFCF95-15-3	Entrepreneurial Skills 2031-32	15

Year 5 Optional modules (Sandwich)
Sandwich students must take 15 credits form the modules in Optional modules (Sandwich).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLL7U-15-3	Energy Performance and Retrofit 2031-32	15
UBLMXB-15-3	Conserving Buildings and Places 2031-32	15

Part C: Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) Synopsis

This undergraduate programme prepares students to approach the built environment's design and development ethically and responsibly, addressing societal, client, user, and environmental needs.
Inspired by the inter-professional ethos of UWE's School of Architecture and Environment, the course emphasises people, design, and sustainability. Its design-led curriculum integrates construction technology, design and digital skills.

Part D: External Reference Points and Benchmarks

The Home programme is aligned with the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT) Educational Standards, which define the core competencies required for professional practice as an Architectural Technologist. These include design process management, construction technology, technical design integration, procurement knowledge, and regulatory compliance.
Although CIAT accreditation is little recognised in Oman, the programme in GCET will still align to the same framework.

The curriculum reflects the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Architectural Technology (2022), which defines the academic expectations for honours degree programmes in this discipline. This includes an emphasis on sustainability, technical problem-solving, the integration of digital tools, and understanding the whole-life performance of buildings. The benchmark recognises architectural technology as an

applied design discipline situated at the interface between architecture, engineering, and construction.

In line with the QAA Code of Practice: Section 8 (Career Education, Information, Advice and Guidance), the programme provides students with structured opportunities to reflect on their career goals, engage with employers, and prepare for a variety of career paths in architectural technology, design consultancy, and the construction industry.

The programme supports the aims of the UWE Widening Participation Strategy and the UWE Teaching and Learning Strategy, ensuring inclusive, accessible, and student-centred learning across all levels. Scaffolding, formative feedback, diverse assessment types, and reflective practice are all built into the delivery model to enable all students to thrive.

Sustainability is a central theme across the programme and is guided by the UWE Sustainability Strategy, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), and AdvanceHE's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) competencies. Students are encouraged to adopt ecological thinking in their projects, explore circular design approaches, and critically engage with the environmental impact of their design and technical decisions.

Together, these reference points guide the structure, content, and pedagogical approach of the programme, ensuring alignment with academic standards, professional expectations, and global challenges. The curriculum promotes progression from foundational to advanced knowledge, and embeds sustainability, inclusivity, and ethical practice throughout, preparing students for meaningful careers in architectural technology and the wider built environment.

Part E: Regulations

Approved to University Regulations and Procedures.

It is the Award Board's responsibility to determine whether the student's attainment at level 0 is sufficient to progress to level 1.