Programme Specification

Architecture and Planning [Frenchay]

Version: 2025-26, v2.0, Validated

Contents

Section 1: Key Programme Details

Part A: Programme Information

Programme title: Architecture and Planning [Frenchay]

Highest award: BA (Hons) Architecture and Planning

Interim award: BA (Hons) Built Environment

Interim award: BA Built Environment

Interim award: DipHE Architecture and Planning

Interim award: CertHE Architecture and Planning

Awarding institution: UWE Bristol

Teaching institutions: UWE Bristol

Study abroad: Yes

Year abroad: No

Sandwich year: No

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:

Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)

Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)

Modes of delivery: Full-time

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

For implementation from: 01 September 2025

Programme code: KK1L13

Section 2: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Part A: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Overview: The BA(Hons) Architecture and Planning is a dynamic, interdisciplinary four-year programme that integrates the fields of architecture and planning. This unique course meets the validation requirements of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) for Part 1 qualification, a crucial step toward becoming a registered architect in the UK, and fulfils the academic requirements for membership with the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), equipping graduates to advance in both professions.

The programme aligns with RIBA's six key Themes and Values—Health and Life Safety, Ethics, Sustainability, Design, Contextual Studies, and Communication—and the RTPI's focus on sustainable development, social equity, and effective planning systems. It provides a robust foundation in spatial planning, architectural design, and the legal, cultural, and technological aspects of both disciplines.

Students engage in a studio-based framework that combines theoretical inquiry, practical design work, and industry collaboration. The course emphasises sustainable design, ethical practice, and interdisciplinary approaches, preparing students to address global challenges such as climate change, urban resilience, and social equity. By working with local communities and exploring global contexts, students are encouraged to critically reimagine cities and neighbourhoods.

Graduates are well-prepared for professional accreditation, progressing toward RIBA Part 2 and RTPI Chartered Membership, fostering lifelong learning and impactful careers. Students develop design skills that respond to broader environmental, social, and economic contexts, enabling them to think critically and creatively while seamlessly integrating architecture and planning into a unified course of study.

Features of the programme: This undergraduate degree in Architecture and Planning offers a distinctive course that prepares students for professional careers and meaningful contributions to the built environment.

Sustainability Focus: Emphasising climate resilience and sustainable urbanism, the course embeds sustainability into its curriculum, equipping students to address global environmental challenges and advocate for responsible design practices.

Hands-On Learning: Studio-based teaching is enriched with live projects and community collaborations, allowing students to engage directly with real-world issues. The course uniquely incorporates practical experiences with planning agencies, including private consultancies, local authority and not for profit agencies which further enhances employability by developing critical professional skills.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Situated within the School of Architecture and Environment, the programme fosters teamwork across related disciplines such as environmental design, engineering, and construction practices, mirroring professional architectural practice.

Global and Local Perspectives: Students are encouraged to address architectural and planning challenges at both local and international levels, designing context-sensitive and impactful solutions.

Technical Proficiency: The course emphasises digital literacy, including GIS, CAD, and BIM, alongside a deep understanding of construction technologies and innovative materials, preparing students for the complexities of contemporary practice.

Based in Bristol, a city renowned for urban change and cultural creativity, students explore local and global urban dynamics. They develop cutting-edge skills and strategies to design inclusive, healthy, and sustainable places for future societies.

Educational Aims: The programme reflects the RIBA Themes and Values, including sustainability, ethics, and health and safety, as well as the RTPI Core and Specialist

Learning Outcomes, ensuring a holistic and future-focused educational experience. It is complemented by the QAA Benchmark Statements for Architecture and Town and Country Planning and adheres to the RTPI Policy Statement on Initial Planning Education for combined planning programmes.

The programme aims to develop critically engaged and ethically responsible professionals in architecture and planning, equipped with the competencies and capabilities to address the needs of society, clients, users, and the environment. It promotes an interprofessional ethos and draws on the School of Architecture and Environment's strengths in research and practice across architecture, urban design, contextual studies, architectural technology, and sustainability.

The educational aims of the programme include:
1.Integration of People, Context, and Sustainability:

Foster an understanding of the people-centred and contextual nature of architecture and planning, addressing the interrelationship between social, cultural, ecology and biodiversity factors.

Equip students to deliver innovative and sustainable solutions for contemporary design and planning challenges, with a focus on regenerative practices and climate resilience.

2.Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Professionalism:

Develop a unique awareness of the inter-professional nature of the built environment sector, including the roles of architects, planners, and other construction professionals.
Emphasise collaborative working skills, ethical conduct, and the ability to communicate effectively using advanced digital tools such as CAD, GIS, and BIM.

3.Critical Thinking and Reflection:

Enable students to critically engage with architectural and planning theories, social

and historical contexts, and statutory frameworks, supporting their ability to analyse and address real-world problems.

Instil a reflective understanding of the responsibilities of architects and planners in shaping inclusive and equitable communities.

4.Preparation for Professional Practice:

Prepare students for professional practice by integrating RIBA General Criteria and RTPI Spatial Planning Criteria into the curriculum.

Provide opportunities for students to develop competencies in design thinking, spatial planning, and problem-solving, supported by simulated practice and real-world projects.

Programme Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this programme graduates will achieve the following learning outcomes.

Programme Learning Outcomes

PO1.   Develop innovative, sustainable design propositions that address and integrate social, cultural, and environmental challenges across diverse contexts.

PO2.   Analyse contemporary designs within their social, historical, and theoretical contexts, demonstrating the application of critical thinking.

PO3.   Examine the complexity of interdisciplinary practice by evaluating the arguments, assumptions, and behaviours that underpin productive collaboration.

PO4.   Explore ethical practices and assess the designer's role in advancing justice, social equity, and sustainable approaches in the context of the climate emergency.

PO5.   Analyse statutory frameworks and evolving industry standards for stages of development, planning, procurement, health and safety, and wellbeing, demonstrating application through reflective and simulated practice.

PO6.   Promote effective engagement with communities, ensuring equitable representation, and critically assessing the impact of participatory design processes on decision-making and social cohesion.

PO7.   Develop and propose complex architectural ideas and spatial planning solutions that respond to climate adaptation challenges and integrating regenerative design to enhance environmental and societal resilience.

PO8.   Synthesise knowledge of structural systems, building technologies, and environmental performance to design cohesive, high-quality architectural and spatial solutions that address human needs, including fire and life safety, functionality, and user experience.

PO9.   Communicate complex architectural and planning concepts effectively using verbal, written, and visual methods, employing advanced digital tools such as CAD, GIS and BIM to engage stakeholders and support informed, collaborative decision-making.

PO1 0.   Critically reflect on the statutory responsibilities of planners and architects, evaluating how codes of conduct guide sustainable and socially responsible decision-making, and understanding one's role in advancing these practices.

Assessment strategy: The BA (Hons) Architecture and Planning programme employs a comprehensive, programmatic assessment strategy that aligns with UWE Bristol's commitment to making assessment an integral part of the learning journey. This approach ensures that assessments build critical skills, reinforce key competencies, and provide structured opportunities for reflection, growth, and professional readiness. By employing authentic, varied, and practice-oriented assessment methods, the programme supports students in developing the skills and confidence needed to succeed in both academic and professional contexts.

Integrated Assessment Types and Alignment with Learning Outcomes

Assessments are intentionally diverse and carefully aligned with the knowledge, skills, and competencies that graduates are expected to demonstrate. Core assessment types include:

Portfolio Development: Portfolios are a central assessment method, capturing students' design progression and technical mastery across all levels of study. They

enable students to showcase their understanding of key architectural principles, including sustainability, cultural responsiveness, and technical proficiency. By documenting their learning journey, students develop reflective insights and demonstrate their growth over time. The portfolio format supports assessment for learning, allowing students to refine their work iteratively based on continuous feedback.

Design Projects and Reflections: Design-based assessments challenge students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical, creative contexts. These projects often involve responding to real-world briefs, fostering skills in problem-solving, stakeholder engagement, and ethical decision-making. Reflective components encourage students to analyse their design process critically, integrating feedback to improve their problem-solving strategies and professional understanding.

Oral Presentations and Design Reviews: Regular presentations help students articulate their ideas effectively to peers, tutors, and industry professionals. These sessions are designed to simulate professional environments, enabling students to develop their communication and critical thinking skills. Immediate feedback from presentations fosters assessment as learning, helping students refine their designs and adapt their approaches.

Written Assessments and Case Studies: Written assessments encourage students to explore architectural theory, sustainability, and historical contexts in depth. These tasks develop research skills, critical analysis, and evidence-based reasoning, which are essential for making informed design decisions. Essays and case studies also support students in understanding architecture's broader societal and environmental implications.

Authenticity and Professional Relevance

The assessment strategy is designed to mirror professional architectural practice, ensuring that students are well-prepared for industry expectations. By incorporating tasks that align with practice roles and responsibilities, assessments promote both employability and professional relevance.

Live Projects: Live projects and collaborative assignments are integral to the programme, allowing students to engage with community and industry stakeholders. These experiences deepen their understanding of architecture's ethical and social dimensions, preparing them for professional challenges.

Digital and Technological Competency: Assessments incorporate the use of industry-standard tools, including CAD, BIM, and GIS. These tasks help students develop digital literacy, ensuring they are proficient in the technologies shaping modern architectural practice.

Sustainability and Inclusivity Focus: Assessments require students to integrate ecological considerations, climate resilience, and accessibility into their designs. This emphasis on sustainability and inclusivity ensures that students develop a socially responsible approach to architecture, aligned with professional standards.

Support for Student Development and Feedback Literacy

Feedback is central to the BA (Hons) Architecture and Planning programme's assessment strategy, helping students develop resilience, adaptability, and self-directed learning habits. A range of mechanisms supports students in engaging with and acting upon feedback effectively:

Formative Feedback Opportunities: Students receive regular formative feedback through one-to-one tutorials, interim reviews, draft submissions, and peer critiques. These opportunities allow students to refine their work and address challenges before final assessments, promoting a culture of continuous improvement.

Peer Review and Collaboration: Peer assessment encourages students to give and receive constructive feedback, fostering a collaborative learning environment. This approach builds teamwork skills while encouraging students to reflect critically on their own and others' work.

Guidance on Feedback Integration: Modules include explicit guidance on how to use

feedback to improve future work. For example, feedback on early portfolio submissions is carried forward to final assessments, allowing students to demonstrate how they have responded to critiques and refined their designs.

Holistic Progression and Inclusivity

The assessment strategy supports progressive learning across the three years of the programme, ensuring students develop the competencies needed for professional readiness. Assessments are designed to align with the increasing complexity of the curriculum, allowing students to build on their skills and knowledge systematically.

Structured Assessment Timeline: Assessments are strategically distributed across semesters, avoiding clustering and ensuring that students have sufficient time to focus on each task. This structure promotes effective time management and reduces stress, supporting student well-being.

Inclusive Assessment Design: A variety of assessment types, portfolios, presentations, written work, and collaborative projects, caters to diverse learning styles and preferences. Flexibility within assessments also ensures accessibility and inclusivity. These approaches support all students in achieving their potential, regardless of background or learning needs.

By embedding authentic, inclusive, and practice-oriented assessments throughout the curriculum, the programme prepares students to navigate the complexities of the profession with confidence, adaptability, and responsibility.

Student support: This programme at UWE Bristol is committed to providing a comprehensive student support system that promotes academic success, professional development, and personal well-being.
Key support elements include:

Academic Personal Tutors (APTs): In line with the National Union of Students (NUS) Charter on Personal Tutors, every student is assigned an Academic Personal Tutor

(APT). APTs provide individualised academic guidance, monitor student progress, and act as a first point of contact for any concerns or challenges. Regular meetings with APTs help students reflect on their learning and set goals for their academic and professional growth.

Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity: The programme emphasises a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Students have access to mental health resources, including counselling services, success coaches and stress management support. Peer mentoring schemes encourage students to share experiences and foster a sense of community within the programme.
Students from diverse backgrounds are supported through accessible materials, activities, and assessments designed to accommodate varying abilities, geographic locations, and levels of digital access. The strategy integrates diverse cultural perspectives, ensuring all students feel represented and can explore their identities. Scaffolding helps students from different educational pathways build skills progressively, with explicit training for unfamiliar tasks like group work and presentations. Inclusive teaching fosters mutual respect, addressing microaggressions and biases, while varied assessment options allow students to play to their strengths. Continuous feedback, co-creation opportunities, and tailored support sessions empower students to succeed academically and professionally in a respectful and equitable environment.

Skills Workshops and Digital Training: Regular skills workshops are integrated into the curriculum, ensuring students stay up-to-date with the latest design software, including CAD, BIM, GIS and visualisation tools.

Feedback and Reflective Learning: UWE places a strong emphasis on feedback literacy, ensuring students understand how to interpret and apply feedback effectively. Feedback is provided through portfolio reviews, critiques, and progress tutorials. Students are encouraged to document their growth and development, fostering reflective learning habits.

Technology-Enhanced Learning: UWE leverages digital platforms such as Blackboard and MS Teams to provide students with access to lecture recordings,

assignment submissions, and collaborative workspaces. This ensures students can engage with course materials flexibly, catering to diverse learning preferences.

Part B: Programme Structure

Year 1
Students must take 120 credits from the modules in Year 1.

Year 1 Compulsory Modules
Students must take 120 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLL58-15-1	Contexts of Architecture 1 - Cities and Society 2025-26	15
UBLL6T-30-1	Making Sustainable Architecture 2025-26	30
UBLL5S-15-1	Professional Principles and Digital Practice 2025-26	15
UBLL4S-30-1	Studio 1.1 - Form and Context 2025-26	30
UBLL4Y-30-1	Studio 1.2 - People and Environment 2025-26	30

Year 2
Students must take 120 credits from the modules in Year 2.

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

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLLCH-15-2	Planning Theory 2026-27	15
UBLEXP-15-2	Planning in the UK - Structures and Challenges 2026-27	15
UBLL74-30-2	Studio 2.1 - Living 2026-27	30

UBLL76-30-2	AP Studio 2.2 2026-27	30
UBLL7C-15-2	Collaboration and Coordination 2026-27	15
UBLL7D-15-2	Contexts of Architecture 2 - Histories and Theories 2026-27	15

Year 3
Students must take 120 credits from the modules in Year 3.

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

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLLBX-15-3	Spatial Planning Dissertation 2027-28	15
UBLL7G-30-3	AP Studio 3.2 2027-28	30
UBLL83-15-3	Agency 2027-28	15
UBLL7F-30-3	AP Studio 3.1 2027-28	30
UBLL7H-30-3	Planning Global Cities 2027-28	30

Year 4
Students must take 120 credits from the modules in Year 4.

Year 4 Compulsory Modules
Students must take 120 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLL7K-15-3	Employability, Ethics, and Enterprise 2028-29	15
UBLL7S-30-3	Integrated Planning Practice 2028-29	30
UBLL7R-60-3	AP Studio 4 2028-29	60
UBLL7J-15-3	Low Carbon Design 2028-29	15

Part C: Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) Synopsis

Graduates of this programme will have developed critical, creative, and technical skills essential for architectural practice. They will possess expertise in sustainable design, construction technologies, and material systems, with the ability to conceptualise, communicate, and realise innovative, environmentally responsible architectural solutions. Through hands-on learning and interdisciplinary collaboration, they will be adept at addressing complex societal and environmental challenges, demonstrating ethical and professional competence. Equipped with digital and technical literacy, they are prepared to navigate the demands of contemporary practice with creativity, inclusivity, and technical precision.

Part D: External Reference Points and Benchmarks

The curriculum, learning methods, aims and learning outcomes of this award respond to the guidelines and requirements of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Royal Town Planning Institute. and the QAA benchmark statements for architecture and planning.

RIBA's Education and Professional Development Framework: The Way Ahead Procedures for Validation and Validation Criteria for UK & International Courses and Examinations in Architecture RIBA 2021
Guidelines for Initial Professional Education published by the Royal Town Planning Institute.
QAA publications subject benchmark statements:
QAA Architecture benchmark statement 02/2020
QAA Town and Country Planning benchmark statement 04/2024

Programmatic Alignment with Professional Standards

Assessments are designed to prepare graduates for post graduate studies where they will need to align with the ARB Competency Outcomes and RIBA Themes and Values. Thereby preparing them for Part 2 studies and eventual professional recognition.

The programme has been mapped to the UNSDGs and AdvanceHE's Education for Sustainable Development competencies, ensuring sustainability is embedded throughout the course.

Part E: Regulations

Approved to University Regulations and Procedures.

1. The degree classification is based upon the best marks achieved across 300 credits at levels 5 and 6. In calculating the classification marks for the best 200 credits at level 6 are weighted at three times the next best 100 credits at level 5 and above. The mark for the final year design module must be included within the 200 level 6 credit pool of marks to be weighted at three times the next best 100 credits at level 5 or above.