

Architecture BSc (Hons) module details

Year one (Level 4)

Block 1: Studio 1: Exploring Architecture

This module introduces you to the study and practice of architecture through the exploration of the complexities of architectural design thinking and its impact on the surrounding physical and cultural environment. The primary aim of the module is, through a series of creative briefs, to begin to question and understand architectural design through close observation of things, space and place at a human scale, and to gain confidence in making architectural design decisions by learning to be playful and take risks during the design process. Studio-based workshops will introduce you to experimental architectural drawing and model-making skills, and their architectural conventions, to explore the similarities and differences of orthographic line drawings, collage (2D) and assemblage (3D) of objects and their spatial conditions.

You will also be introduced to the idea of architectural history, cultural studies and the importance of researching-writing-thinking. This focus raises questions as to the importance and role of architecture and architectural design, in understanding our past(s), present(s) and possible future(s). The module aims to raise awareness of a broad perspective of the industry and profession, alongside growing an awareness of the role of 'technical strategies' or 'technique' in architectural thinking, design and construction, and the impact these decisions have on our surrounding environment.

Block 2: Studio 2: Experiencing Architecture

In this module you will explore and test the relationships between subject, object, space and place. By fabricating and using human scaled devices, armatures, instruments or bodysuits, sequence, time, scale, movement, place, sensory experience will be explored, tested and developed through project-based exercises. Further drawing and model-making skills such as animation, film, storyboarding, time-lapse photography, will be introduced to allow you to explore and capture time-based architectures, spatial sequences and sensory experiences. Further measurement and analysis of site and context will be undertaken so that you understand the richness, complexity and depth of place that you are designing a future architectural proposition for.

You will continue to develop your critical thinking through the integration of architectural humanities with design work. The module also aims to introduce ethics to design decisions and the practice of architecture, and in particular, two aspects of this: to recognise how identity politics, inclusivity and accessibility inform spatial design and spatial agency, and to develop an awareness of the impact that material choices have on the wider built and natural environment and the role that the circular economy has for an ethical architecture.

Block 3: Studio 3: Creating Architecture

This module will be your first architectural proposal responding to both existing sites and specific users. You will reflect on your previous design work in Studio 1 and 2 to formulate a point of departure for your architectural design enquiry. From this you will create design strategies to test propositions in response to the specific site and users given in the design brief. You will learn to evolve a brief to define a more detailed understanding of your chosen user's needs. Alongside this you will develop your initial site investigations from Studio 2 to make a quantitative (hard) and qualitative (soft) survey of the site to propose considered and relevant spatial propositions for the site context.

The module will support you to apply climate literacy to all aspects of your design thinking and relate material, structural and environmental principles and strategies to the design proposal alongside developing professional behaviours relevant to ethical architectural practice. An understanding of spatial justice and the role of agency will be further developed by focusing on the specific needs of the user(s).

Block 4: Studio 4: Writing Architecture

This module introduces you modern and current architectural history, theory and practice with a particular focus on architectural tectonics, theories of experience and time-based architectures. You will learn to interpret writings and buildings, to develop your reading and writing skills, and to make use of the fundamental conventions of academic writing. You will explore significant architectural movements, architects and artists in the context of the global climate emergency and other cultural and contextual imperatives and reflect the impact this learning could have on your own architectural project in Studio 3. You will analyse and deconstruct specific case studies and texts through the reading, drawing, modelling and sketching of them.

Year two (Level 5)

Blocks 1 and 2: Exploring Ethical and Climate Literacy

This module extends the creative design skills and knowledge learnt in the first year by embedding ethical and climate literacy within the design thinking and decision making. The module provides the opportunity to join one of several different studios, exploring approaches to architectural design in response to issues introduced by the studio brief. The content of studios will vary, offering a diversity of either architectural sites, or clients or methodologies of spatial exploration. The module focuses on the importance of developing a strong and relevant design enquiry in response to the contingencies of [1] site/place and [2] community/users, integrating strategic climate responsive decisions, whilst also raising awareness of the context of professional practice in relation to these issues.

The module supports you to extend your understanding of environmental design and structural-material assembly techniques. You will be asked to demonstrate both an ability to outline strategies in responding to technical and environmental issues of the site (eg. white / green / blue infrastructure) and user requirements (eg. access, inclusivity, occupation) through the lens of a climate literacy toolkit, and resolve your spatial proposal at the meso scale (1:50) to reveal how tectonic choices and structural techniques enhance and expand the architectural idea and respond to local climatic conditions.

Blocks 1 and 2: Contextualizing Architectural Humanities

The module offers an insight into how contemporary architectural thinking and practice have emerged from earlier architectural history and theory. You are introduced to international influential architects and movements, from the 12th to 20th century. You will be supported to compare the expansion of arts and architecture in Western culture with what was taking place in other parts of the world, for example, The Golden Age of Islam, or the Song Dynasty. The module will also discuss how different cultures and architectures have embraced or ignored the balance between the built and natural environment.

Block 3 and 4: Practicing Ethical Design

In this module you will continue to work in one of several thematically diverse studios. The aim of the module is for you to develop an architectural investigation towards the design of a small to medium sized, moderately complex building. The proposal should respond appropriately to multiple contingencies and questions, such as the accessibility, needs and aspirations of building users and other stakeholders; climate literacy; an ethical response to place, people and environment; health and life safety; and the relation to the local context. This module will introduce theories and concepts regarding cities and their relationship to the surrounding countryside with the objective being for the building proposal to be a relevant and contemporary response to its urban or suburban condition, and the local planning legislation.

You will be encouraged to develop ethical professional behaviours through participation with tutors, peers and others in a creative studio community, to produce collectively made work and by taking an increasingly active role in framing your individual design work, in terms of approach, scope, brief, scale and media.

Blocks 3 and 4: Applying Climate Literate Design

This module aims to teach you that good design thinking incorporates technical and environmental decisions alongside design decisions to form a holistic design project evolution. You will learn that technical and environmental strategies inform, and are informed by, the design decisions being made in response to site, users and architectural methods and theories.

You will learn to investigate and analyse: built and natural environment design principles, the design of the building structure, construction & material specification and building services design to show an understanding of climate literacy. This includes, but is not exclusive to, low energy buildings, zero carbon, low impact design, biophilic design, waste reduction, circular economy, reuse, retrofit, adaptation, SUDs. You will be supported to propose technical and environmental solutions to specific criteria defined and this should be evidenced by the use of digital annotated diagrams, plans, sections, axonometric and physical models.

Year three (Level 6)

Blocks 1 and 2: Design Enquiry and Strategy

The module provides the opportunity to join one of several thematically diverse studios advancing a conceptual and critical approach to architectural design in response to multiple issues introduced by your studio's specific brief. The work should develop a critical spatial exploration responding to ethical, cultural, theoretical, technical, social and aesthetic considerations. The module supports you to learn the importance of how a critical and conceptual attitude can benefit an architectural project through a detailed, cohesive, ethical design brief that responds to place, people and event. This module will also teach you the strategies and principles of legislation surrounding Fire safety, Health and Life Safety, CDM and post occupancy.

Blocks 1 and 2: Critical and Cultural Thinking

This module builds on the knowledge and skills acquired in previous years to support you to plan and conduct research to be presented in a dissertation. You will define and develop a specific interest, positioning yourself within a range of concerns in the field of architecture, defined in given research themes. The teaching encourages discussion on broader socio-economic, political and cultural issues that impact architecture and the environment.

You will make a short presentation setting out the field of research and why it matters, the research question and plan for feedback from tutors and peers. This is followed up with a draft dissertation with feedback, culminating in the final dissertation.

Blocks 3 and 4: Design Proposition and Synthesis

In this module you will integrate aspects of technical, environmental and professional practice decisions with the design process, synthesis and resolution. Working in one of several thematically diverse studios, you will develop your investigations towards the design of a building proposal. The design proposal should respond appropriately and cohesively to multiple questions, including: specific issues raised by individual students and their studio, including ideas from previous projects; the needs and aspirations of building users and other stakeholders; the relation to local context; climate literacy, ethical concerns; technological and environmental principles and strategies; theoretical and conceptual reflections; professional and practice based considerations.

The module will support you to understand the role of the architect in consulting, observing, analysing, understanding, proposing and predicting how people will occupy the building and surrounding environs over multiple periods of time. The building proposal needs to explore, experiment, compose and represent spatial designs that address specific human activities but also devise structural and material flexibility that allows spatial adaptation for future scenarios.

The module concludes at the Degree Show, where you will apply professional behaviours and skills by collectively designing, producing, branding and curating all Third Year work in the Studio.

Blocks 3 and 4: Design Resolution and Professionalism

In this module you will develop and apply strategies in the built environment for climate change reduction, professional processes and tectonic positions to propose a unified zero carbon project. You will resolve environmental, structural, constructional, and material aspects of your architectural proposals, at both the strategic and detailed scale. You will research, analysis and propose technological strategies with your design project, addressing environmental performance, material selection, construction methods, structure, and sustainable design.

You will also apply professional practice, legislation and management knowledge to a design project including examination of the construction professions and their role in the construction industry in the UK; provision of an overview of the law and contractual procedures in the UK; analysis of the appropriate legislation related to the building process in the UK; awareness of the professional bodies and ethics; examination of the principles and systems of multi-disciplinary teamwork, communications and coordination which are necessary to practice in the current professional environment; development of management and business skills. In addition, you will also be introduced to architectural development and procurement through studies on the construction, real estate and architectural industries, and professional architectural economics.

You are supported to consider your own career development and position, upon graduation, within an architectural practice or other industries.

Note: All modules are subject to change in order to keep content current.