

Master of Architecture



Introduction

This programme is validated by the RIBA and prescribed by ARB at Part II level until 2018. The Department is a partner with North West Schools of Architecture in supporting the RIBA NW Part III programme which graduates are able to join.



The Programme Team

Programme leader

Each programme has a programme leader, ultimately responsible for its smooth running and organisation. The programme leader for the Master of Architecture Programme is Peter Holgate.

Year tutors

The role of each year tutor is to coordinate teaching, coursework, visiting speakers, attendance, etc. and to generally ensure the smooth running of the course.

The year tutors are:

Year 1 Paul Jones
Year 2 Ben Elliott

Teaching team

The main staff you will come across:

Name	Room	Telephone	Email
Steve Lockley	D119	227 4819	steve.lockley@northumbria.co.uk
Zaid Alwan	C202	227 7147	zaid.alwan@northumbria.ac.uk
William Campbell	C202	227 4309	w.campbell@northumbria.ac.uk
Manuel Cresciani	D202	227 3063	manuel.cresciani@northumbria.ac.uk
Andrea Couture	C101	227 3269	andrea.couture@northumbria.ac.uk
Ruth Conroy Dalton	D121	227 4107	ruth.dalton@northumbria.ac.uk
Ben Elliot	C202	227 3004	ben.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk
David Greenwood	WJ205	227 4691	david.greenwood@northumbria.ac.uk
Peter Holgate	D203	227 3720	peter.holgate@northumbria.ac.uk
Paul Jones	D203	243 7279	p.jones@northumbria.ac.uk
Oliver Jones	C202	227 4787	oliver.g.f.jones@northumbria.co.uk
Kelly Mackinnon	D119	227 4831	kelly.mackinnon@northumbria.ac.uk
Sebastian Messer	C202	243 7741	sebastian.messer@northumbria.ac.uk
David Morton	B211	2274219	david.e.morton@northumbria.ac.uk
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Stephen Roberts	C202	243 7981	paul.ring@northumbria.ac.uk
Stephen Roberts	D201	2437982	stephen.roberts@northumbria.ac.uk
Sandra Costa-Santos	D202	2437323	sandra.santos@northumbria.ac.uk
Kyung Wook Seo	D120	2274742	kyung.seo@northumbria.ac.uk
Bob Giddings	D201		bob.giddings@northumbria.ac.uk
Rosie Parnel	D201		

Programme administration

Duncan Attwell	B201	243 7346	duncan.attwell@northumbria.ac.uk (Senior Administrator)
Hazel Fiddes	B201	227 4460	hazel.fiddes@northumbria.ac.uk (Programme Administrator)

Guidance tutors

You will be allocated a guidance tutor, a member of academic staff who has the duty of providing you with advice on academic, procedural and (where desired and appropriate) personal matters. Where possible, you will retain the same guidance tutor throughout your time at Northumbria. You will be expected to consult with your guidance tutor during induction week, and regularly thereafter, including whenever modular or progression results are available, and whenever option choices have to be made. You may, in addition, ask for a meeting with your guidance tutor at any time.

How to contact tutors

Appointments

Academic staff teach on many modules and programmes, and it is advisable to make an appointment by email if you wish to see them. Occasionally you may be able to have an immediate appointment, but don't be disappointed if you are asked to return at a mutually convenient time. Please contact staff to cancel if you are unable to make the arranged appointment.

Email and Blackboard

The main means of contact for staff with students are email and the Blackboard eLearning Portal.

You will be allocated an email address automatically by the University once you have enrolled. Do remember that your Northumbria email address will be the one that is used to make contact with you by both academic and non-academic staff within the University, so make sure that you check it regularly, particularly if you also use a personal email account. Students are requested to manage their email account effectively by deleting read mail and emptying the deleted items folder on a regular basis. Important messages may be unable to be communicated where inboxes are full.

Students are reminded that it is important that they keep their contact and home addresses up-to-date, to ensure they receive any correspondence from the University. Students are requested to amend their details via Blackboard or by advising the Student Support Team.

Blackboard (eLearning Portal)

Blackboard (previously known as the eLearning Portal (eLP)) is Northumbria's managed learning environment (MLE) for staff and students. Developed by Online Services, it is based upon the Blackboard learning platform and allows students, amongst other things, to access learning over the internet, communicate with one another and their tutors, and take online assessments.

Incorporated within the portal are access to Library Services, the Students' Union, Student Support Services and many other facilities. For most students the eLearning Portal provides their first and best port of call on the internet.

Notice Boards

Where possible we will send information via email or the eLearning Portal but in some cases we put relevant information on notice boards. **You must check the notice boards regularly.** The locations of our notice boards will be provided on enrolment. Alternatively they are available from the Student Support Team (located in B201 Ellison Building). It is particularly important to check the notices at the start of the semester when timetable changes are more likely and towards the assessment period when important information such as exam rooms and pass lists will be displayed.

Notice boards in relation to News and Events, the Library Service, Student Services, the Students' Union and Team Northumbria are located on the second floor of A Block, Ellison Building.

Master of Architecture

The following are extracts from the programme specification:

Educational aims of the programme

The essential character of the MArch derives from a culture of regional and contextual engagement incorporating a design led approach to the critical resolution of complex problems. The programme's aim is to develop the student's mastery of knowledge, understanding and skills, and to build upon the learning gained during the period of practical training, in order to engender critical evaluation, self-motivation and independent learning. Engagement with context is universal; students learn principles and strategies that are transferrable to whatever part of the world, and in whatever professional or academic capacity they may practice. Students demonstrate a deep knowledge and understanding of complex design issues through project work, which is supported by taught modules in cultural context, management, technology, environmental and sustainable design and research methods. Material within these modules is designed to be relevant to, and delivered at an appropriate stage in the project timetable; the majority of assignments inform, or are directly related to the project work.

The course is designed to encourage students to recognise the importance of research, and to apply critical evaluation in taking design decisions. The student-selected investigation provides the student with the opportunity to pursue and master a personal area of interest related to the broad culture and activities of architecture and its associated disciplines. This is the starting point for the development of a self-selected specialism, which can lead onto a higher degree or personal professional development.

The programme of study ensures compliance with the current ARB/RIBA criteria without compromising the course aims of producing self-directed graduates with high levels of knowledge and skills, capable of producing innovative and imaginative solutions to design problems which respond to social, cultural and theoretical contexts; the graduates will also acquire methodological and critical skills to respond flexibly to future changes in the professional role of the architect in society.

Delivery of the programme supports the aspiration of the School to offer postgraduate education across built environment professions, and opportunities have arisen to link the Master of Architecture curriculum with existing taught Masters programme content elsewhere in the School and University via the 'Architectural Research Methods', 'Cultural Context', 'Practice, Management & Law', 'Environmental and Sustainable Design', and 'Student Selected Investigation' modules.



The programme is studied in the wider context of design and the built environment, and is informed by current and prospective professional practice, as well as inquiry and academic debate. There is a vocational focus which aims to equip graduates with those personal and professional skills that are necessary for employment, whilst broadening understanding of the changing needs of society, concepts of sustainable development of the built environment, maintenance of appropriate ethical standards, and knowledge of the regulatory framework within which architecture is practised. As a significant number of modules are at masters level, the development of critical, independent learning and advanced skills in the analysis, synthesis and evaluation of complex issues are fundamental to the programme philosophy. Within this wider context, the programme aims to develop a range of student abilities to enable them to:

- develop an inquiring, creative, and critically analytical approach to the solution of design problems;
- acquire, synthesize and creatively apply specialist knowledge to inform their contribution as a design professional within a multi-disciplinary context;
- master skills of research and critical thinking in order to examine the subject area, evaluate alternative approaches, integrate disparate sources of information, and utilise appropriate methods to generate proposals, and to resolve complex problems;
- direct their own academic, personal and professional development, and to foster their development as critically reflective practitioners and lifelong learners.

This will be achieved through the specific objectives of the programme;

- to provide an education that fulfils and exceeds the minimum criteria set out by the Architect's Registration Board (ARB) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) for Part II of the Professional Examination in Architecture, and the European Architect's Directive
- to develop a curriculum in which students will demonstrate the abilities to generate and communicate coherent, imaginative and authentic architectural designs, through the integration of social, political, economic, regulatory and cultural drivers to embed inquiry, reflection, iteration, synthesis and application of
- specific knowledge in the resolution of research and design problems

In turn, at the end of the programme students shall be able to:

- Demonstrate high levels of skill confidence and ability in proposing Intuitive, creative and contextual design solutions in authentic and complex situations

- Evidence a systematic understanding of, and the skills to critically appraise and develop complex design briefs to ensure an original and applicable design response Understand the regulatory, economic and social constraints within the discipline of design, and integrate these in an holistic way
- Express a critical perspective on, and a comprehensive appreciation of contemporary influences on design
- Form an understanding and personal engagement with the ethical, professional, financial and social responsibilities of a design professional within a multi-disciplinary environment. Utilise appropriate communication methods and media to
- represent and demonstrate the testing, analysis, critical appraisal and resolution of complex problems
- Demonstrate application of the broader issues of management in the design and creation of buildings Evaluate interrelationships between people, buildings and the environment, relating
- buildings and their contexts to human and environmental needs, scale and well-being.
- Conduct independent learning through research and advanced scholarship within the discipline of architecture.

Learning Outcomes

Design is central to the programme, therefore students are required to develop their knowledge and understanding of design as an analytical and iterative process, an intellectual skill, and the appropriate communication of complex proposals. Students will develop an understanding of cultural, technological, environmental, managerial, legal, regulatory and contextual issues, and evaluate their influences upon design; the knowledge and skills to communicate and manage this process is pivotal to the student's successful development of appropriate design proposals which demonstrate quality, competence and flair. Learning outcomes are therefore expressed within the headings of knowledge and understanding, intellectual, practical, and transferable skills.

Knowledge and Understanding

Students will be able to;

Demonstrate a systematic understanding of the nature of complex design briefs in order to ensure that the design response is appropriate and transcends functional adequacy in the built environment.

Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the constraints within the discipline of design through appropriate formal study of related theories, arts, technologies, properties, processes and legislative controls, and a critical awareness which recognises human well-being and the conservation of the global environment for future generations.

Develop and elucidate an advanced level of critical understanding of the ethical, professional, financial and social responsibilities of a design professional within a multi-disciplinary environment.

Demonstrate a high level of understanding and critical awareness of the interrelationship between people, buildings and the environment, and the need to relate buildings and their contexts to human needs and scale at the local and broader context.

Intellectual Skills

Students will be able to;

Demonstrate a high level of ability to critically appraise and develop complex design briefs and develop an original design response which is appropriate and transcends functional adequacy in the built environment.

Demonstrate a high level of skill, confidence and ability in proposing intuitive, creative and innovative design solutions in complex situations.

Exhibit the skills of independent learning through research and scholarship within the discipline of architecture, to critically evaluate current issues and alternative approaches; integrate sources of information, make sound judgements and propose innovative solutions to complex problems.

Express a critical perspective on, and a comprehensive appreciation of contemporary influences on design, through study of related theoretical and cultural issues of architecture, the arts, urban design and related disciplines.

Develop and elucidate a personal engagement with the ethical, professional, financial and social responsibilities of a design professional within a multi-disciplinary environment.

Practical Skills

Students will be able to;

Demonstrate a high level of skill, confidence and ability in proposing intuitive, creative and innovative design solutions in complex situations.

Demonstrate a high level of ability to critically appraise and develop complex design briefs and develop an original design response, which is appropriate and transcends functional adequacy in the built environment.

Express the systematic and creative application of related theories, arts, technologies, properties, processes and legislative controls, which recognises human well-being and the

conservation of the global environment for future generations.

Demonstrate an application of the broader issues of management in the design and creation of buildings.

Evaluate, propose and use appropriate visual, verbal and written communication methods and appropriate media to represent the testing, analysis, critical appraisal and resolution of complex design problems.

Transferable/Key Skills

Students will be able to;

Demonstrate a high level of skill, confidence and ability in proposing intuitive, creative and innovative design solutions in complex situations.

Exhibit the skills of independent learning through research and scholarship to critically evaluate current issues and alternative approaches; integrate sources of information, make sound judgements and propose innovative solutions to complex problems.

Demonstrate, propose and use appropriate visual, verbal and written communication methods and appropriate media to represent the testing, analysis, critical appraisal and resolution of complex problems.

Demonstrate an application of the broader issues of management.

Learning and Teaching Strategy

The programme provides opportunities to enable students to develop their understanding of the subject, and it also progressively challenges them to critically analyse and evaluate alternative solutions to related problems and requirements. Creative application of methodologies, rather than simple knowledge transfer, and the integration of theory and practice are vital components of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. The Learning and Teaching methods associated with individual modules and related assessments are detailed in the individual module descriptors. Within the framework of the lecture programme, teaching and learning is encouraged to be student centred; studio facilities are provided to encourage student interaction, and students are encouraged to develop their links with practice to allow an exchange of ideas and information.

Learning and Teaching methods will include:

- Design projects, which require students to deal with authentic contexts and briefs.

- Lectures that provide new knowledge, but which also require students to question and evaluate their current knowledge
- Presentations from suppliers, consultants and practitioners, to ensure the student engages with current practice and new developments
- Seminar discussions to clarify and explore issues and subjects from the lectures.
- Case studies to demonstrate the integration of the disciplines studied and to allow students to apply theory to practice. Group working to reinforce the integrated nature of architectural design and to foster the sharing of experiences and collaborative learning.

The teaching staff delivering modules are suitably qualified, experienced and skilled to teach at part II level. They will have an appropriate Professional Qualification or a higher degree, and be either research active, engaged in high levels of design and professional activity, or experienced practitioners. Staff are supported in the further acquisition of skills and knowledge by the School which has an active staff development policy. Use will be made of practitioners as visiting tutors and critics.



Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy aims to reflect the range of teaching and learning practices and the breadth of subject matter, and is designed to test the learning outcomes of each module in the most appropriate way. Modules will assess the students' ability to investigate theoretical frameworks, analyse and critically evaluate core issues. Coursework includes elements of student choice to encourage a self-selected focus for study. The focus of the level 7 design project, and subject of the Student Selected Investigation are chosen by the student in negotiation with the tutors.

Formative assessment occurs throughout in both lecture based and project modules through regular reviews where students present their work to tutors and their own peer group. Self-assessment approaches are also used, and the student will be expected to evaluate their own major design project against the ARB/RIBA criteria to ensure that they comply with the requirements.

Summative assessment of the projects is by a portfolio of design work with supporting documentation. These will be assessed against declared criteria. Other modules are generally assessed by written submission. In the Student Selected Investigation, imaginative approaches to communication will be encouraged, in order to assess work against agreed learning outcomes.

Programme Structures

In line with other academic institutions, the University operates a unitised system of programmes. Each undergraduate degree is made up of three academic levels – Levels 4, 5 and 6. The Postgraduate Diploma continues at Level 6 for the majority of the first year, and Level 7 in the second year. Level 7 is the level of Masters programmes.

Level 6

Level 6 is normally the final year of an undergraduate programme, but is also the level of a 'graduate diploma' and provides the academic challenge for the student to demonstrate an ability to deal with decision-making at strategic levels; identify and analyse problems; and to synthesise solutions. The University describes the outcomes of Level 6 modules as:

“Critically review, consolidate and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, utilising specialised skills across an area of study; critically evaluate new concepts and evidence from a range of sources; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills and exercise significant judgement in a range of situations and accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.”

Level 7

Level 7 extends and develops Level 6, with the expectation that the student will:

“Display mastery of complex and specialised areas of knowledge and skill, employing advanced skills to conduct research or advanced technical or professional activity for related decision-making ...”

There is a national requirement that all programmes of study have a publicly available 'Programme Specification'. The Programme Specification provides an account of the 'Learning Outcomes' of a programme of study (broadly – the student's capabilities at the end of the programme) and how these are to be achieved in a structured way by progression through the programme.

This section of the handbook is based on the Programme Specification for your programme. The full and definitive version can be found at <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/programmespecs/>

Modules

Each module on the course carries credit points:

Single module = 10 credit points

Double module = 20 credit points

Triple module = 30 credit points

Quadruple module = 40 credit points

Each 10 credits represents 100 hours of student work load which on average equates to about 6–7 hours per week of lectures, seminars, preparation, revision, assessment, etc. Staff contact time will be approximately 10–15 hours per week. The students own self-managed study time should amount to approx 30–35 hours per week.

Assessment schedules are designed to avoid submission clashes and dates will be provided at the commencement of the academic year.

Master of Architecture

Year 1					
Semester 1	BE0992 Design project 1; Enquiry 20 credit points Level 6	BE0989 Advanced Technologies 10 credit points Level 6	BE0990 Cultural Context 20 credit points Level 6	BE1198 Architectural Research methods 20 credit points Level 6	BE0994 Practice Management and Law 20 credit points Level 6
	BE1115 Design project 2: Realisation 30 credit points Level 6				
Semester 2					

Year 2				
Semester 1	BE0997 Student Selected Investigation 30 credit points; Level 7		BE1098 Environmental and sustainable design 10 credit points Level 7	BE0995 Design project 3; Analysis and proposal 40 credit point Level 7
	BE0996 Design project 4: Realisation 40 credit points Level 7			
Semester 2				

Part-time

Stage 1			
BE0992 Design Project 1; Enquiry 20 credit points Level 6	Option: either BE0989 or BE1159		BE0990 Cultural Context 20 credit points Level 6
	BE0989 Advanced Technologies 10 credit points Level 6	BE1159 Work Based Architectural Technologies 10 credit points Level 6	
BE1115 Design Project 2: Realisation 30 credit points Level 6			

Stage 2			
BE0995 Design Project 3; Analysis and proposal 40 credit point level 7	Option: either BE0994 or BE1160		BE1198 Architectural Research Methods 20 credit points Level 6
	BE1160 Work Based Practice Management & Law (option) 20 credit points Level 6	Practice Management and Law (option) 20 credit points Level 6 BE0994	

* Either BE0989 or BE1159

**Either BE0994 or BE1160

Stage 3		
BE0996 Design Project 4: Realisation 40 credit points level 7	BE0997 Student Selected Investigation 30 credit points level 7	BE1098 Environmental and Sustainable design 10 credit points Level 7

Assessment Regulations

The Assessment Regulations for Northumbria Awards (ARNA) are the standard regulations which apply to all of the University's academic programmes. Any variations to ARNA have to be approved for a particular programme.

Below is a summary of the University's Assessment Regulations, which are applicable to this programme.

Progression Regulations

To attain an award a student is required to progress through a number of levels of study by achieving a specified number of credits. In this programme 120 credits are required at each of the Levels 6 and 7. (ARNA Section 12).

Requirements to gain the award

Under the University modular system, each student must achieve a total of 240 credit points to receive the Master of Architecture. Normally, this is divided into two academic years, each year equal to 120 credit points. Each year is then divided into two semesters, with the equivalent of 60 points of study each semester. In some cases subjects are taught in multiple modules, and some single modules are taught across both semesters.

How the award is determined

The following is an extract from the University Document 'Assessment Regulations for Northumbria Awards 2013/14

For further details of the relevant sections, consult the document, which can be found on: <http://northumbria.ac.uk/arna>

12.17 MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE	
FHEQ level	Honours Level 7
Credit required	240 credits. 120 credits at Level 6; 120 credits at Level 7
Progression	A student will progress to Level 7 on the attainment of 120 credits at Level 6. An overall average of 40% at the first attempt is required at Level 6. Referral is subject to the regulations in section 5.1/5.2.
Award	To achieve the award a student must attain the 240 credits and obtain an overall average of 50% at Level 7 at the first attempt. Any referred modules must be passed (section 5.2). Compensation rules (section 7.2) apply to the lower level award of Graduate Diploma only. Referral is subject to the regulations in section 5.1/5.4.
Lower level award	Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate
Distinction/ Commendation	Distinction/Commendation rules apply (section 8) determined by overall average at final level of the award.

Module Descriptors

Module descriptors give information about each module (subject) delivered on your programme.

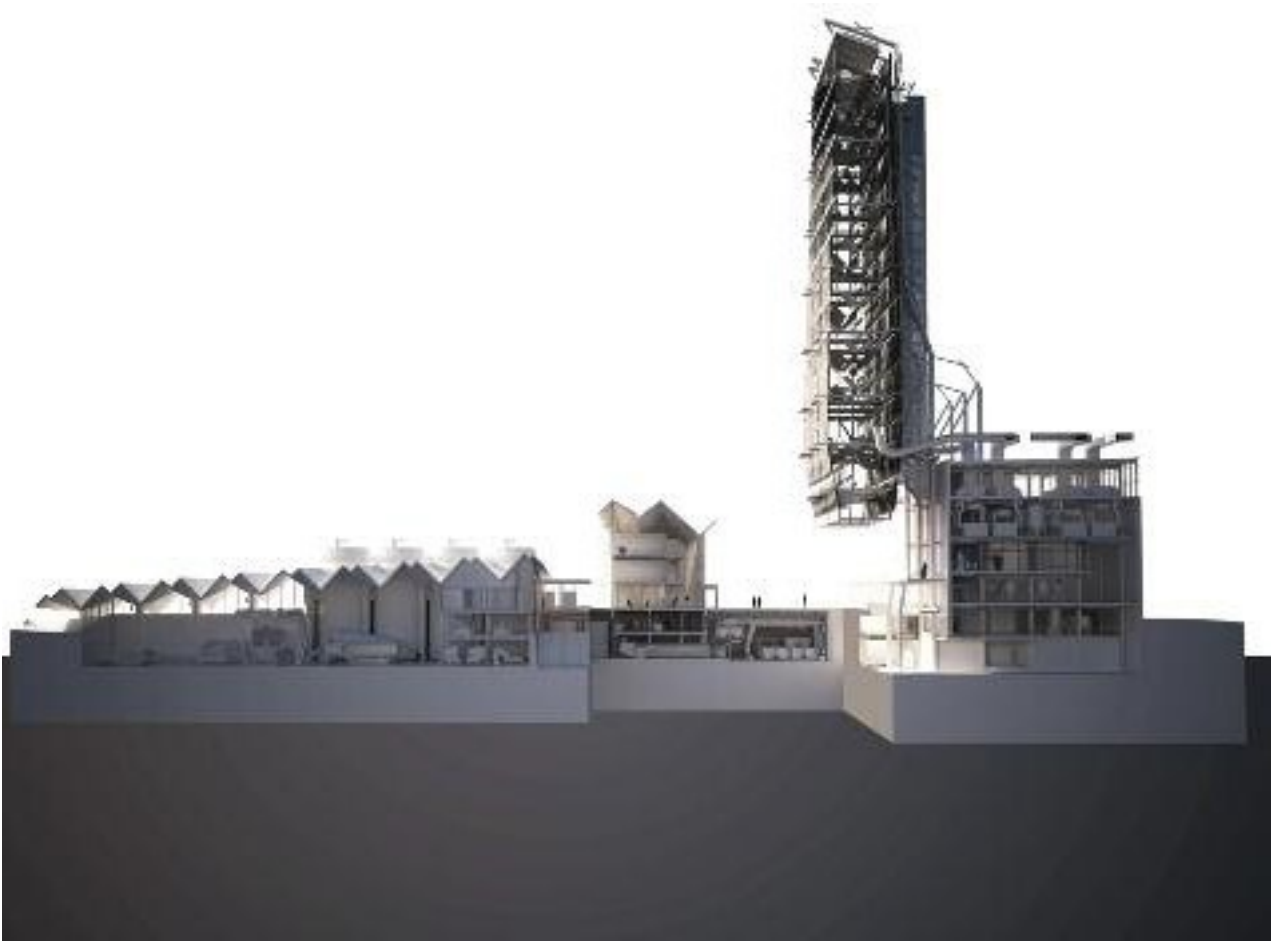
How to obtain a module descriptor from the University's website First, log into the Northumbria University website at www.northumbria.ac.uk/.

Click on:

1. My Northumbria
2. Module Search
3. Type in module code
4. Click on 'Go'

Or alternatively, type the following address into your browser:

<http://nuweb.northumbria.ac.uk/live/webserv/mod.php>



What you will study

Year 1 – Design Projects provide opportunities for students to widen their inquiries into broader territories than at undergraduate level. The first semester engages the student with authentic urban and social issues, working at a variety of scales and encouraging inter-disciplinary research, and imaginative proposals. The second semester allows students to select and research their own sites and to develop and interrogate design briefs geared towards their specialist interests. The second semester also encourages participation in design competitions, whereby students can measure their abilities against peers and practitioners.

Year 2 – Design Projects are designed to show that the student satisfies the requirements of Part II of the ARB/RIBA criteria.

A year-long module enables the student to evidence abilities in the critical appraisal of site and context, develop and critique design briefs to ensure that the architectural response is appropriate, and maintain a critical dialogue between theory and practice for the duration of the final project.

In the second module, the student demonstrates the ability to produce and communicate coherent and well resolved architectural designs by showing a high level of skill and confidence in intuitive, creative and innovative design ability. The student will also demonstrate a high level skill in the appropriate use of visual, verbal and written communication methods, in order to propose imaginative solutions to complex problems. Design proposals will be supported by design, technology, and management reports that evidence compliance with, and build upon, the Part II criteria for prescription.

Cultural Context provides students with opportunities to critically engage with theories and practice of architecture, art, urbanism and related creative disciplines. It provides a platform for dialogue, analysis, evaluation and synthesis of ideas to support design activity and to foster a critical vocabulary. A lecture and seminar programme, which relates to current cultural issues will provoke related discourse within the context of the students' own design practice and inquiry. The inter-relationships of art, architecture, regionalism, cinema, literature and history will inform both the content of presentations, and the dialogue and research proposals of the student group.

Advanced Technologies investigates principles and theories of construction from a critical standpoint, with respect to their successful application in architectural design. Students are encouraged to research, compare and evaluate different constructional proposals with respect to factors including aesthetics, historical development, context, sustainability, performance criteria, production and craftsmanship, legislation and codes of practice, buildability, and costs.

Environmental and Sustainable Design critically evaluates environmental services and strategies, investigates the impact of environmental tempering of buildings, and explores the technological and cultural implications of adopting energy-efficient and sustainable approaches to building design.

Architectural Research Methods develops students' skills and abilities in research methods as applied to the professional and academic arenas of architecture. Key skills such as the design of research questions, critical thinking and analysis, research management, academic writing and presentation will support both written and design modules elsewhere in the programme.

Practice Management and Law gives an insight into the roles, organisations, and resources of professional practice, and examines the inter-relationship between architectural practice and the wider design team. It also provides guidance in project procurement with respect to the architect's professional duties and responsibilities.

Student Selected Investigation develops the student's knowledge, and understanding of a self-directed specialist area related to the discipline of architecture and associated fields. The student will, through independent research and critical thinking, examine the chosen subject and evaluate alternative approaches, integrate sources of information and communicate an understanding of the area.

Learning Style

The programme modules are largely evolved around student-centred learning strategies. They are predominantly project or assignment-based and rely on experiential learning. Lecture programmes are supported by field study visits to cities, buildings, and urban environments. Students are encouraged to make extensive use of the dedicated design studios, workshops, and computing laboratories to develop knowledge, skills, techniques and understanding. The interaction of the student body in this respect is regarded as a critically important factor in the learning process.

Assessment Processes Explained

Why are assessments necessary ?

Assessment makes an essential contribution to your education. It acts to motivate you to focus and reflect on your learning and to apply and synthesise your knowledge. It also permits you to gauge your progress and act to address any weaknesses. Assessment methods are therefore an integral part of the learning process. From the University's perspective, it enables your tutors to monitor your progress, measure your attainment, maintain standards on the programme, and determine your final degree classification.

How can you be sure that the assessments are appropriate and relevant ?

The mix of assessments across each programme is carefully selected to enable students to demonstrate a range of skills and knowledge which become progressively more challenging level-by-level. Assessment techniques are chosen to fit the subject discipline and reflect the expectations of employers and accreditation bodies. Each assessment task is aligned with module and programme learning outcomes and contributes in part to the development of discipline-specific knowledge and understanding, academic, practical or transferable skills.

How can you be sure that the assessments which are set are fair ?

Individual assessment tasks are written by Module Leaders and are subject to peer-review by other staff in the Department before they are agreed and distributed to students. In addition, External Examiners, who are colleagues from other Universities and (for professionally accredited programmes) from industry, are appointed to ensure that the standards at Northumbria are appropriate, and a key role is to review the assessment questions and marking schemes.

How do we inform you about the criteria we use to judge your work ?

Generic grade descriptors by level of study are supplied within your School Handbook. These reflect the increasing demands and expectations of standards as students progress through their programme. In addition, you are supplied with specific assessment criteria at the module level as part of your coursework specifications.

How do we undertake marking ?

Marking involves staff allocating marks according to defined marking criteria that have been approved in advance. Assessments may be marked by a single staff member or a team of markers (depending on the size of the module). These are invariably the staff who delivered the module and their expertise in the subject discipline is assured. If the work is marked by a team, initial meetings and sample marking is undertaken to establish common expectations in relation to the marking criteria to minimise variations across markers.

How do you know that marking is fair ?

Once all the marking has been completed for an assessment, a sample of the work is selected for 'moderation'. The sample size is

proportional to the number of scripts and is selected from the whole range of marks. Student work is anonymous during the marking and moderation process and your name will only be revealed once all the marks have been agreed following the sample check. Prior to the Examination Board, the External Examiner also verifies the appropriateness of the marks awarded within the sample, and it is only at the Exam Board stage that the marks are fully approved. If there are disparities between markers during the moderation process, then additional work may be sampled and third markers may be called upon to resolve any differences. By the end of the whole process the Exam Board must report that it is satisfied that the marks that have been awarded are a true reflection of the quality of the work.

Why does it take 4 weeks to mark your work ?

Although 20 working days (4 weeks) may seem to you like a long time for work to be marked and returned to you, it is important that we allocate sufficient time for staff to carefully consider the work, so that the mark allocated fairly reflects the quality of your submission. Tutors' marking workloads have to be considered in relation to the other academic duties they have to perform. We estimate that, on average, each assessment takes approximately 20-30 minutes to mark and provide feedback. In addition, once marked, all assessments have to be moderated (see above) to ensure fairness and consistency.

What level of feedback should you expect ?

Feedback is a vital part of your learning process and will occur throughout your engagement with academic staff. Informal levels of feedback will often occur in lectures, seminars, lab work and project activities, and through the use of in-class activities and questioning. More formal feedback occurs during the assessment process and usually involves staff writing comments on scripts that are returned to students. Whilst there will invariably be differences in the styles that individual staff members adopt to provide feedback, their comments should serve 3 main purposes: (1) to explain the mark awarded; (2) to identify strengths within the work; and (3) to indicate areas that could be improved on for future work.

What should you do with the feedback you receive ?

It is imperative that you collect all your assessment scripts so that you benefit from the feedback comments provided by the tutors. Your feedback provides you with the key opportunity to use assessment to improve your learning. Hence, if you have any problems understanding the feedback on your work, you should arrange a meeting with the staff member to clarify their comments.

It is important to review the comments you have received on all your work to identify any consistent issues that have arisen across several pieces of assessment.

This will help you formulate an action plan to deal with recurring weaknesses affecting your attainment. The Skills Plus programme managed by the University Library is an extremely valuable resource for students who require general advice such as 'Writing Assignments', 'Preparing for Exams' or 'Thinking Critically'

The libraries at City Campus and Coach Lane provide access to a wide range of print and electronic resources including over half a million print books, over 700,000 eBooks and more than 50,000 electronic journals. More details can be found on the University Library website: <http://library.northumbria.ac.uk/home>

City Campus Library (number 14 on City Campus map) is housed near the Student Union building (number 30 on City Campus map).

Coach Lane Library is situated on the East Side of the Campus, in F Block (number 16 on Coach Lane Campus map).

City Campus library is open 24/7 during term time and from 9am to midnight during vacation times. Coach Lane library is open 7am until midnight (Monday to Friday), 9am until midnight (Saturday and Sunday). Opening hours are prominently displayed in the foyers of the library buildings, any changes are advertised on the Library website and on social media. Opening hours vary during bank holidays and are subject to change, so please check before you travel.

You will need to keep your smartcard with you to gain access to and leave the libraries. Your Smartcard is a universal card which not only gives access to the Libraries and other University buildings, but it also allows you to print, copy, scan, borrow books and make cashless payments.

The Library Catalogue can be accessed on and off-campus through the University Library website and the dedicated catalogue computers on each floor of both Libraries. The catalogue can be used to search for books and eBooks located in the University Library. It is quick and easy to use and will give you the information you need to locate the material on the shelves or read online. eBooks can be read on and off-campus, anytime, anywhere. NORA can be used to search for, and retrieve, up-to-date scholarly materials including articles, reports and statistics that are relevant to your studies. You can browse through all the online resources relating to your subject in one place including databases, journals and websites.

Students are entitled to borrow up to 15 items at any one time. Items can be issued using the self-issue machines on the ground floor of City and Coach Lane Libraries. You can renew your library books online through the MyLibrary section of MyNorthumbria or via the Library Catalogue.

Northumbria students can use other libraries such as the Robinson Library at Newcastle University and Newcastle City Library using the SCOUNL access scheme. For more information see the Library SCOUNL information page: <http://library.northumbria.ac.uk/scounl-holiday>

The Northumbria Skills Programme is a comprehensive skills programme designed to develop the key skills you need to succeed at university and beyond provided by the Library. It runs throughout the year and provides classroom style skills sessions on many topics including academic writing skills, giving accomplished presentations, and referencing your work correctly, as well as regular drop in surgeries. Some sessions are bookable; simply consult the timetable on the Northumbria Skills Programme website: <http://library.northumbria.ac.uk/skillsdev-nsp>

Skills Plus is the Library's collection of online learning materials, with a focus on digital literacy and study skills that can be accessed on and off-campus. Using these resources is an excellent way to develop your skills through a range of online tutorials with quizzes, video demonstrations and printable help guides. <http://nuweb2.northumbria.ac.uk/library/skillsplus/topics.html?l3-0>

If you need help or advice, on or off campus, you can contact Ask4Help. The Ask4Help service provides you with help and support to access a range of University services including Library, Disability Support, Student Finance and Careers. The quickest way to find answers to some of the most popular questions asked by students is to look at Ask4help online. You can also contact us by phone and speak to a member of our dedicated enquiry team or email us your questions.

www.northumbria.ac.uk/ask4help

ask4help@northumbria.ac.uk

0191 227 4646

Northumbria Students' Union (NSU) is here to make sure you have the best experience possible. NSU is one of the largest and most exciting Unions in the country and that's all because of YOU. We represent you, the student, on all levels, on the issues students are concerned about; receiving a great academic experience, being very employable when you graduate, being safe on campus and in the city and having a fantastic time while a student.

NSU is run by students for students. You can have your say in what NSU does and how it is run, by contacting your [Sabbatical Officers](#) or by coming along to [Student Council](#)

MEMBERSHIP: As a student of Northumbria University you are automatically a member of the Students' Union. We also sell NUS Extra Card from the Students' Union at both [Coach Lane](#) and [City Campus](#) giving you discounts in shops and online, but you don't need one to use any of our services.

DIVERSE: Your Students' Union is a place which brings together students from all walks of life, all parts of the country and the world and many different cultures. NSU provides lots of opportunities for you to [Get Involved](#), make lasting friendships, increase employability and have FUN!

INDEPENDENT: NSU is independent of the University, with its own staff, services and decision-making structure. Run by students for students, providing the best services and opportunities for students we push for change from the University to deliver for students. Find out more at our [You Said, SU Did](#) page. If you need advice about academic appeals or other issues, we can help. Check out the [Advice Page](#).

VALUE: Your NSU offers the best value for money, and everything you spend goes straight back into the Students' Union to fund all the activities that we run for you.

If you would like more information check out the website www.mynsu.co.uk or come and see us at our [offices](#) in City, Coach Lane and London.