

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information

1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	ADBE City
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	BArch (Hons) and secondary award BA (Hons) Architecture (full time)
4.	Normal Duration:	3 years
5.	UCAS Code:	K100

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

This BArch (Hons) in Architecture course is focused on the creative and practical development of architectural design, investigated in a studio environment through a series of carefully considered practical and theoretical projects in a variety of spatial, social, cultural and topographical situations. The purpose of these projects is to align architectural concepts, thinking and values in the mind of the student with current architectural thought and practice.

These projects involve strategic thinking and creative imagination, attention to detail, traditional and digital forms of representation, public presentations and reviews. Design studio activity is supported by three types of learning:

- theoretical studies in the philosophy and history of architecture and design;
- technical and practical studies related to the environmental and material aspects of construction;
- professional practice studies related to the role of the ethical architect in the commercial world.

This course addresses the challenges of designing for diverse communities and cultures. Most projects are based in Nottingham and the East Midlands region, but some explore sites elsewhere in the UK and the world. The course develops graduates with creative vision, practical skills and an ethical position in respect of the role of the architect in a world characterised by global threats to traditional culture, ecological challenges, commercialisation, and the dominance of technological rationalism in modern life.

The aim of the course is to prepare and equip students with the skills, knowledge and awareness required for a successful and rewarding career in Architecture in the near future, laying the foundations for useful contributions to practice and for proceeding towards professional qualification as a registered architect.

The education of an architect is a long process, involving three distinct stages before the professional title of 'architect' may be deployed. It is recognised and acknowledged by the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) that recruitment at the first stage is much higher than the eventual numbers who choose to go on and qualify as professional architects.

The combination of design, humanities, managerial and technical subjects that are part of the BArch programme prepares graduates for employability in professions allied to architecture or in any other fields where there is demand for a blend of creative, entrepreneurial, inventive, strategic and visualisation talents (all exercised in the context of challenges to ethical practice).

In response to such issues, the following aims and values have been formulated in relation to the BArch programme. Students will become knowledgeable and responsive to demands for:

Responsible Design – the course highlights the importance of the site and context in the design of projects. The founding notion is that the understanding of site is actively ‘constructed’ by the architect’s comprehension and translation of the tangible and intangible characteristics of the surrounding context in which it sits. The active construction of the site emphasises the need for the architect to reflect, debate and theorise architecture within global and local contexts, while building a critical understanding and wide appreciation and respect for the values and needs of diverse communities and cultures.

Reflective Making – the course focuses on the idea of reflective making as a design methodology underpinning the design process; the principle is developed through engagement with a variety of strategies and materials in the conception, evolution and definition of projects. Reflective making encourages students to synthesise personal experiences, theory and research and practical ‘hands on’ skills in support of a reflective architectural decision-making process. The guiding premise is to design well-considered, thoughtful buildings that explore atmospheres, experiences and materiality.

Access to Practice - Employability is central to our identity and one of the main threads of NTU’s vision. The course fosters an awareness of the needs and expectations of clients, allied professionals, consultants, and other stakeholders within the construction and creative industries; in preparation for modern professional, the course aimed to develop graduates with an entrepreneurial spirit, professional skills and practice knowledge.

7. Course outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Demonstrate comprehensive awareness and experience of architectural design in terms of varying environments, cultures and contexts.
- Appreciate diverse cultures and communities and the impact of their legacies upon the development of ideas and architectural design.
- Respond appropriately through architectural design to the functional, environmental and human needs of clients and diverse cultural communities.
- Respond holistically to complex architectural and urban contexts, through development of sustainable and realistic design propositions.
- Integrate comprehensive technical, environmental, practice-based and legislative knowledge relevant to architectural practice, and apply it to the resolution of architectural design challenges.
- Apply and integrate knowledge of the responsibilities of the architectural designer to society in the context of varying socio-cultural, economic, technological and environmental constraints.
- Understand the context of professional and commercial practice, of industrial and public policy, and of legal mechanisms mediating between them.
- Demonstrate entrepreneurial initiative and creative approaches in conceiving new design and construction opportunities, capitalising on both individual and team-

based skills and attributes.

Skills, qualities and attributes

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Work effectively and responsibly as part of a team both with peers and in cross-level or cross-programme collaborations.
- Conceptualise and convey ideas and intentions skilfully and eloquently utilising visual, graphic, physical, written and verbal means of communication.
- Communicate clearly and effectively at different levels and with the different parties typically involved in the processes and outcomes of architectural design.
- Manage own time and work to deadlines.
- Analyse problems and synthesise convincing and sensitive solutions, through the application of logic and intuition, of rationalism and creative imagination, and of flexibility, adaptability, and innovation.
- Utilise a range of research skills, demonstrating a capacity for the critical evaluation of information and for constructing coherent theoretical arguments in support of practical solutions to realistic design and construction problems.

8. Teaching and Learning Methods

The operative norm is a structured curriculum, centred upon a pedagogically oriented Design Studio, and supported by studies in technology and environmental science, cultural context and professional practice.

Students are taught within a multi-disciplinary environment, where some modules and/or teaching are shared with other academic courses. Staff and students are encouraged to take advantage of this rich inter-disciplinary environment.

Design Studio teaching is organised by year, divided into operative studio groups led by a Year Tutor. Year Tutors co-ordinate teaching and learning in support of these studio groups. Studio groups within years are enabled to pursue different creative approaches, moral and aesthetic positions, and epistemological orientations.

Design modules are delivered through pedagogically structured projects, supported by lectures and tutorials, seminars, peer-to-peer interaction and group reviews. Frequent and regular feedback on student design work is given verbally via tutorials, and in public reviews. Coursework is pursued mainly individually, while a proportion of assessed work is undertaken collectively in groups. This approach replicates patterns typically encountered in the professional architectural practice.

Design-based projects are supported by the provision of traditional and digital studio environments, where students work, craft and prepare, display and review their projects in both traditional and digital formats.

Technical, contextual (humanities-based) and professional practice modules are delivered in a variety of modes, including lectures and seminars, role-play, group work and involvement in real-world projects. Feedback is given in a corresponding variety of formats.

Digital support via the NTU intranet (NOW), and remote on-line access to the system, is available to students as an integral part of their learning practice.

9. **Assessment Methods**

Assessment criteria are based on the Learning Outcomes set out in the applicable Module Specifications and repeated in the corresponding Module Guides. These Learning Outcomes are usually interpreted as specific objectives in relation to design projects, and are incorporated in the brief issued near the start of each assessable assignment. Assessment methods will be appropriate to the Learning Outcomes to be achieved or demonstrated, and may involve individual and group presentations as well as the submission of textual and two/three-dimensional work for grading.

In studio projects, students may receive interim assessments as part of the verbal feedback process associated with tutorials, and in public reviews. Summative assessment is given at the end of a project or academic year. Assessment is mostly project-based, and is linked to the collation of a portfolio of academic design work.

In support modules, feedback on coursework is given individually where feasible, or collectively when individual feedback is not possible or appropriate. Assessment methods range from examinations, e-assessments, or submitted coursework as specified. In the assessment of group projects, peer-to-peer assessments may be included.

Detailed submission criteria are specified in assignment briefs.

10. **Course structure and curriculum**

The BArch (Hons) programme is intended for students who wish to pursue undergraduate education and training in architecture that, upon successful completion, will grant eligibility to apply for further programmes leading towards a professional qualification in architecture (through the possession of a cognate and professionally accredited degree).

The course recognises the essential cross-disciplinary nature of architecture, which brings together skills from diverse fields of practice. As the earliest stage in a pathway towards the profession of architecture, the course aims to develop students':

- abilities in creative design and thinking
- appreciation of the humanities
- understanding of technological and environmental constraints and opportunities
- visualisation skills and awareness of basic professional and management considerations.

It is recognised that architectural education not only equips students with the skills required for understanding how to design buildings and spaces, but also develops a wealth of transferable skills and knowledge. Accordingly the BArch (Hons) programme equips students with:

- skills in strategic, analytical and critical thinking, creative planning, visualisation and presentation.
- cultural and technical knowledge.
- experience in developing imaginative approaches to problem solving, involving both team-work (with associated issues of management, leadership and group dynamics) and independent academic studies.

The BArch (Hons) course is accordingly composed of four 'strands': Cultural Context & Humanities, Technology & Environment, and Communication and Professional Practice, each interacting with Design Studio (the core of the programme). Each strand features progression from Level 4 to Level 6 involving sequentially scaled challenges over each of the three years of the programme but continuously correlated with one another so that the student's development is coherently paced. A suite of modules is associated with each strand, designed to allow a variety of opportunities to address themes related to Design Studio activities.

The curriculum at Level 4 is structured to introduce the essential skills, attributes and knowledge required for engagement with the discourse and practice of Architecture at Level 5 and 6.

Level 4

Module Titles	Credit Points (CPs)
Design Studio	60
Technology and Environment in Architecture 1	20
Architecture in Context 1	20
Architectural Communication and Representation	20
Total	120

Level 4 establishes the foundational education in the areas of architectural design, communication and representation, contextual studies and technology. The student's creative ability to design in a variety of spatial, cultural and temporal contexts is developed through pedagogically sequenced and appropriately scaled projects that demand knowledge and understanding of basic technological and environmental constraints and opportunities, coupled with awareness of some of the mechanisms associated with building production.

Level 5

Module Titles	Credit Points (CPs)
Integrated Design Studio	60
Technology and Environment in Architecture 2	20
Architecture in Context 2	20
Interdisciplinary Design Studies	20
Total	120

Level 5 develops the student's skills in integrating understanding of cultural contexts, knowledge of technology and environment, and awareness of approaches adopted in allied professions. The structure of the studio projects at Level 2 (NQF 5) is closely correlated with support modules, in order further to promote inter-disciplinary approaches.

Level 6

Module Titles	Credit Points (CPs)
Comprehensive Design Studio	60
Architecture in Context 3	20
Technology and Environment in Architecture 3	20
Professional Practice	20
Total	120

Level 6 serves to develop the creative abilities associated with a holistic approach to architectural design and thought. This encompasses ethical positions on: • technological decision-taking in the context of global sustainability. • the phenomenal nature of human habitation in a multi-cultural world.

- ethical professional practice and engagement with contemporary architectural challenges.

Total Credit Points (CPs)

360

Students who successfully achieve the above 360 credits (meeting programme, professional and statutory body Learning Outcomes) are eligible for the award of BArch (Hons) in Architecture with accompanying professional Part 1 accreditation. (Refer also to Section 15 with regard to compensation of marks).

11. Admission to the course

The programme welcomes applications from students from all backgrounds. Those applying with non-standard entry profiles are considered on an individual basis. Students are not interviewed except in special cases or where there is insufficient clarity of information. All applicants are considered in their own right, in line with the University's access policy.

Standard entry profiles:

- Minimum entry requirements are the possession of at least 2 full A-Levels or equivalent, normally including one Art/Design-based subject.
- All applicants are asked to submit examples of their creative and design ability via a digital portfolio of work.
- Applicants should also possess GCSE Mathematics and English passes at minimum Grade C or equivalent.
- Current UCAS asking points for the course are to be found on Nottingham Trent University's web site.

The University is actively interested in applications from mature students and from candidates with non-standard entry profiles. Applications can be made through UCAS, Route A or B.

Applications from students requesting credit for specific sections or levels of the programme will be considered under the University's standard APCL and APEL (Acquired Prior Experiential Learning) process.

12. Support for Learning

At the outset of their studies, students undergo an induction programme, which introduces the BArch course, its organisation and operation, methods of delivery and the University's expectations of student conduct. A library induction introduces the learning resources available within the library. Inductions to workshop usage are conducted during the programme, at levels deemed appropriate to the students' needs. A student handbook, updated annually, assists students in navigating the University support services, academic and personal conduct, academic course administration, facilities and resources.

The Student Support Service also offers a wide range of support to facilitate ongoing

academic development and to accommodate disabilities while at university. Pastoral care, when required, is provided in the first instance by academic staff on the course through individual support sessions; further or specialised pastoral care is provided by the University's Student Support Service. All students also receive an induction to Health and Safety requirements.

In relation to each module they undertake, students are provided with a comprehensive Module Guide, which describes and specifies expectations, delivery structure and assessment outputs required in conjunction with the module. These guides, together with other relevant module information, are made available via the Nottingham Trent University's online workspace (called 'NOW'). This network is utilised for all modules and provides a centralised and dynamic locus of communications.

During the year, on-going academic support is given via a range of staged formative and evaluative sessions, both within and across modules. Staff also offer counselling to students who have referred work. A study-centre and studio space is available for students between 8.00am and 8.00pm each working day.

13. Graduate destinations / employability

BArch graduates usually seek employment or work experience in professional architectural practices, but may alternatively find employment in other design disciplines, and in the wider planning, construction, property and management areas. Architectural education is wide-ranging, and is valued by employers for the way in which it develops creative individuals, strong in strategic thinking and capable of imaginative contribution within a range of related disciplines. A high proportion of architectural graduates build successful careers outside of professional architectural practice.

For graduates who wish to pursue the pathway towards the professional title of 'architect', the University offers continuing support through an optional 'Professional Certificate in Architecture' programme. Students opting to enrol on this course are normally expected to be in architectural practice, or in relevant employment as detailed by the ARB/RIBA (dependent on the state of the economy), for Professional Experience and Development Record (PEDR) purposes. The course offers professional mentoring, PEDR monitoring, recall days, lectures and digital support as well as continued University student status and privileges, including access to the NTU library and intranet facilities, to teaching and learning support, and to employment advice. Successful graduates may then proceed to an ARB/RIBA Part 2 course, which is also available at Nottingham Trent University

14. Course standards and quality

Systems for quality management of the curriculum within NTU's School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment are well established, being based upon observations and feedback from students, staff, external examiners and commercial practice/industry. Feedback is continuously reported, recorded and acted upon in a variety of ways:

- **Course committee meetings**, attended by student representatives and academic staff, provide termly opportunities for all to raise issues relating to the course.

- **Student feedback questionnaires** are circulated at various stages in the academic year, normally inviting students to review and evaluate their learning experiences. These gauge student satisfaction with the organisation and delivery of teaching and learning, and provide an opportunity to acknowledge good practice, to suggest new ideas and to address areas of concern. All feedback is reported to the Course Committee for consideration.

- **External examiners** assess and benchmark the course's content and delivery, and student achievements annually. Three external examiners are normally appointed, with at least one being an academic and one a practitioner. External examiners submit annual reports on the standards, benchmarks and quality of the course, based upon their review of student work and course material and upon discussions with students and staff.

ARB prescription/RIBA Validation

The BArch (Hons) course is validated by the RIBA and prescribed by the ARB who both undertake reviews on a periodic basis.

15. **Assessment regulations**

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in its [Academic Standards and Quality Handbook](#)). Course-specific assessment features are described below.

In accordance with the University's Common Assessment Regulations, progression requires 120 credit points (CPs) at each level although students may be allowed to carry referrals into the next level (at the discretion of the Examination Board).

In accordance with RIBA/ARB requirements, no compensation will be allowed in relation to either module or element failure at Levels 5 or 6. Examination boards will follow this exception to the University's Common Assessment Regulations. The award of the BA (Hons) Architecture degree may be offered to students who – through compensation – fail to meet the professional bodies' validation and prescription criteria for completion of Level 5 and 6 but who nevertheless meet the overall learning objectives of the BArch.

As noted at the end of Section 10 above, students who successfully complete 360 credits (120 CPs in each of the years of study) will be eligible for the award of BArch (Hons) in Architecture with accompanying professional Part One accreditation.

Students who do not obtain 360 credit points may be eligible for one of the following awards:

- Certificate of Higher Education – 120CPs at Level 4;
- Diploma of Higher Education – 120CPs at Level 4 plus 120CPs at Level 5;
- Ordinary degree (not available to the BArch course) – 120CPs at Level 4 plus 120CPs at Level 5, plus 60 CPs at Level 6.

Professional accreditation and prescription applies only to the BArch (Hons) award. All

other possible awards in this course as described at the completion of Level 5 and Level 6 do not carry this accreditation/prescription.

Some parts of projects are undertaken in groups. Should a student fail any individual component within a Design Studio module, a group project mark cannot be used to compensate an overall pass in the module.

All coursework must be submitted on or before the indicated deadlines, which may be phased, interim staged or final submission dates.

Your final degree classification will be based on an aggregate of your level 5 grade and your level 6 grade, with a weighting of 20 (level 5):80 (level 6).

16. **Additional Information**

Collaborative partner(s):

Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements:

The course has been referenced to National QAA Subject Benchmarks, Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and Architects Registration Board (ARB) joint criteria.

Course recognised by:

ARB: Full prescription to 30 September 2019
RIBA Part 1: Continued Validation at the visit held in June 2018

Date this Course Specification approved:

December 2018

Additional information:

Extended Study Visit

The course may include an extended study visit as part of one or more of the modules. Students will be expected to contribute financially to subsistence, travel and academic costs of such a study visit, as well as all other areas of personal expenditure. Locally based appropriate alternative study opportunities will be negotiated if, for any reason, a student should be unable to participate in extended visits.

Erasmus Exchange

Academic exchange with partner institutions in Europe is encouraged. Students may opt to spend one term on exchange in Level 2. Students at Level 1 and 3 are not normally encouraged to participate in such exchanges.