‘ON THE ROAD’:
The Introduction of a Nomadic Studio as part of the MArch Programme at the University of Westminster

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Photo Credit: Lily Xutong Zhao

INTRODUCTION

The following document is an exploration study into the feasibility of introducing a nomadic travelling Architecture studio, where studying is done in combination with travelling the world. The alternative course structure is proposed as part of the Master of Architecture (MArch) programme at the University of Westminster, part of the Department of Architecture within the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment (fABE). In contrast to the existing MArch course sited at the University's Marylebone site, the nomadic studio is not based in a specific location, but instead travels around the world for the duration of a full academic year. Working and studying, as well as all tutorials, crits and exhibitions, are done 'on the road', in collaborating Universities, cafes, flexible work spaces, libraries, Architectural practices, hotels or hostels. The specific locations travelled to differ each year and examples of how one academic year may look within this course structure can be found within this study. The proposed programme would allow students to visit buildings, precedents, communities, architects and exhibitions, informing their studio design work, as well as other modules, broadening their understanding of the built environment, cultures and the context in which architects and other professionals employed within the built environment work. Students will have the support of two tutors travelling alongside them, but also be given freedom to see and explore their own interests throughout the year.

The nomadic course is proposed to fulfil the required MArch criteria for exemption from Part 2 of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Examination, prescribed by the Architects

Registration Board (ARB). The following research is being undertaken as part of the Students as Co-Creators initiative set up by the University and as part of the researcher's studies for the Masters in Architecture (RIBA Part 2) degree.

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STUDENTS AS CO-CREATORS

Students as Co-Creators is an initiative set up by the University of Westminster, through which the University funds research projects where students and staff work in partnership to improve learning and teaching methods at Westminster. Participation requires the formation of a team, including an academic partner, and the choice of area in learning and teaching at the University which, in the opinion of the team, needs to be improved. The scheme allows students to bring forward ideas and voice their opinions on new learning experiences and develop these concepts, while improving personal presentation, communication and research skills at the same time.

Photo Credit: Mirabell Schmidt

MASTERS OF ARCHITECTURE COURSE STRUCTURE & LEARNING OUTCOMES

STUDIO

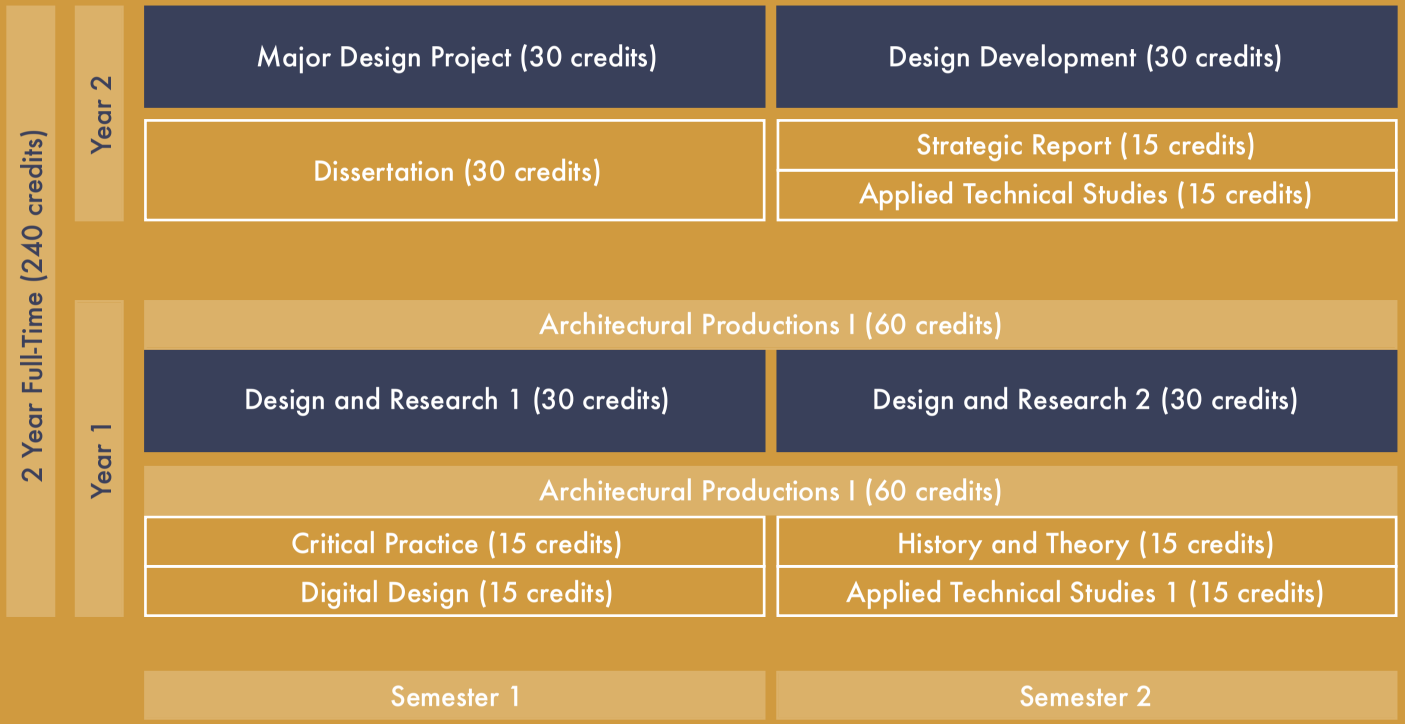
The central element of architectural teaching is the 'studio' environment and all Design Studio work is done within this framework. This module account for 50% of a students' final work in both Year 1 and 2. Through the selection of studios, a broad range of projects and design briefs are offered to the students and a broad range of design responses encouraged by the tutors, in an environment which is collaborative, supportive and allows for experimentation and exploration.[1] Depending on the nature of the studio chosen by the student, the students may complete several smaller design projects, or the Semester 2 brief may be a continuation of Semester 1.[2] The design projects encourage cyclical interplay between research, design intentions, detailed practice, and critical brief writing and specifically the Semester 2 design solutions place larger emphasis on the detailed resolution of the proposal and tackle issues such as context, materiality and technology.[3]

OTHER MODULES

Alongside the Design Studio, students also undertake other modules; four of them in Year 1 (as part of a composite module called Architectural Reflections I) and 3 in Year 2. In Year 1, Semester 1, the modules are **Digital Representation** and **Professional Studies**, and in Semester 2, students participate in **History and Theory** seminar groups, working towards the **Dissertation** module in Year 2, as well as complete an **Applied Technical Studies (1)** coursework, complementing their Design work. In Year 2, the Dissertation module is undertaken in Semester 1, while the **Applied Technical Studies (2)** Report and the **Strategic Report** is completed in Semester 2, supporting their Studio Design work.[4]

YEAR 1	
Semester 1	
Design Studio	50%
Digital Representation	25%
Professional Studies	25%
Semester 2	
Design Studio	50%
History and Theory	25%
Technical Studies	25%

YEAR 2	
Semester 1	
Design Studio	50%
Dissertation	50%
Semester 2	
Design Studio	50%
Strategic Report	25%
Applied Technical Studies	25%


2 Year Full-Time (240 credits)
Year 2
Major Design Project (30 credits)
Design Development (30 credits)
Dissertation (30 credits)
Strategic Report (15 credits)
Applied Technical Studies (15 credits)
Year 1
Architectural Productions I (60 credits)
Design and Research 1 (30 credits)
Design and Research 2 (30 credits)
Architectural Productions I (60 credits)
Critical Practice (15 credits)
History and Theory (15 credits)
Digital Design (15 credits)
Applied Technical Studies 1 (15 credits)
Semester 1
Semester 2

Digital Representation: An introduction to computer-based design strategies and digital fabrication techniques. Digital Design aims to develop and enhance computer knowledge, representation and exploration of digital media and graphic communication into transferable skills which can be applied to architectural design.[5]

Professional Studies: An introduction to professional, statutory and management concepts building on the students' work experience. The key aim is for the student to reflect over their professional development and to critically examine the role of the architect within the built environment and construction profession.[6]

Applied Technical Studies 1 and 2: This component encourages exploration into technical knowledge and environmental design, and allows the student to critically integrate this knowledge with design thinking and develop an understanding on how technology influences design. [7]

History and Theory: The teaching of cultural context, helping to broaden the students' understanding on the design of cities, past and present societies and larger global issues facing and influencing the built environment. This module eventually leads towards the Dissertation module in Year 2.[8]

Dissertation: The module allows students to pick a topic of interest in architecture and critically research and reflect over the subject area and produce an advanced research investigation in the form of a dissertation, with appropriate illustrations, imagery and references to literature, precedents, primary and secondary material and documentation.[9]

Strategic Report: The production of a report that focuses on explaining and critically analysing the critical Design Project decisions and processes, requiring students to look into the practical consequences of the project, its feasibility, procurement and implementation, and demonstrate the ability to identify and understand the architect´s role in practice and key technical and professional issues and regulatory parameters.[10]

Year		GC1	GC2	GC3	GC4	GC5	GC6	GC7	GC8	GC9	GC10	GC11	GA2
1	Architectural Productions 1												
1	Architectural Reflections 1												
2	Major Design Project												
2	Design Development												
2	Strategic Report												
2	Applied Technical Studies												
2	Dissertation												

The following pages will have clearer explanations of each of the modules in Year 1 and 2, their aims and outcomes, as set out in the University of Westminster MArch course handbook.

Photo Credit: Mirabell Schmidt

YEAR 1

Module Title: Architectural Productions I (Design Studio)

MArch Year 1
Module code: 6ARCH001W
Credit Level: Level 6
Length: 1 Year
UK Credit Value: 60 Credits
ECTS Value: 30
Status: Core Module

The key module aim is to broaden students' knowledge, ability and explorative approach to design issues set by the Design Studio group that they have elected to join. In this sense, the intention is to prepare students for the more detailed and technical demands they will face in the second semester, and to develop an independent design agenda in preparation for Level 7 design modules. Students are required to research, explore and develop an individual and critically informed proposal in relation to the conceptual and pragmatic problems, brief conditions, and constraints set out by each Design Studio. The goal is to encourage students to communicate their ideas, research work and design proposals clearly and ambitiously, using conventional and explorative forms of architectural media.[11]

Generally, the following areas of skill, design ability and knowledge are covered in the studio groups, but specific themes, approaches and subject studies vary depending on the chosen Design Studio

- Develop a conceptual and critical approach to architectural design that integrates and

satisfies the aesthetic aspects of a building and the technical requirements of its construction and the needs of the user. (General Criteria 1.3)

- The application of appropriate theoretical concepts to studio design projects, demonstrating a reflective and critical approach. (GC2.3)
- The creative application of the fine arts and their relevance and impact on architecture. (GC3.2)
- The creative application of such work to studio design projects, in terms of their conceptualisation and representation. (GC3.3)
- Theories of urban design and the planning of communities (GC4.1)
- The needs and aspirations of building users. (GC5.1)
- The way in which buildings fit into their local context. (GC5.3)
- The need to critically review precedents relevant to the function, organisation and technological strategy of design proposals. (GC7.1)[12]

Module Title:
Architectural Reflections I

MArch Year 1
Module code: 6ARCH002W
Credit Level: Level 6
Length: 1 Year
UK Credit Value: 60 Credits
(split up into 4 elements)
ECTS Value: 30
Status: Core Module

Digital Representation

The key aim of this component is to develop comprehensive and transferable skills in the use of digital technology as applied to the field of architectural design. The intention is to enhance existing computer knowledge and skills, and to this end the assessment of the work produced by students will be on a 'value added' basis. In so doing, the study will extend the students' understanding of key issues in more advanced digital media from both practical and theoretical positions; and ultimately "develop the ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements" (GC1).[13]

Specific learning outcomes are:

- Critically appraise the material and conceptual opportunities afforded by the computer as a
- medium for architectural design and representation.
- Evaluate and apply a comprehensive range of visual, oral and written media to test, analyse, critically appraise and explain design proposals. (GA2.2)
- Apply digital design strategies or techniques in the development of a design proposal.[14]

Professional Studies

A key aim of this component is to enable students to reflect on their professional experience and personal development to date, and to identify areas of future enquiry and investigation. Also key is to examine the role of the architect in the construction industry. Above all, the intention is to provide students with an opportunity – through reflection and analysis – to develop critical approaches to the professional, managerial and legal constraints that influence the work of the architect in practice.[15]

Specific learning outcomes are:

- A systematic understanding of the knowledge base of current planning policy and development control legislation, including social, environmental and economic aspects, and the relevance of these to design development. (GC4.3)
- An understanding of the current nature of professionalism and the duties and responsibilities of architects to clients, building users, constructors, co-professionals and the wider society. (GC6.1)
- A critical understanding of the role of the architect within the design team and construction industry, recognising the importance of current methods and trends in the construction of the built environment. (GC6.2)
- A systematic understanding of the contributions of architects and co-professionals to the formulation of the brief, and the methods of investigation used in its preparation. (GC7.3)
- A systematic understanding of the fundamental legal, professional and statutory responsibilities of the architect, and the organisations, regulations and procedures involved in the negotiation and approval of architectural designs, including land law, development control, building regulations and health and safety legislation. (GC11.1)
- A systematic understanding of the professional inter-relationships of individuals and organisations involved in procuring and delivering architectural projects, and how these are defined through contractual and organisational structures. (GC11.2)
- A systematic understanding of the basic management theories

and business principles related to running both an architects' practice and architectural projects, recognising current and emerging trends in the construction industry (GC11.3)

- The ability to identify and reflect on their individual learning needs, analyse their capabilities and take the personal responsibility required to prepare for qualification as an architect. (GA2.7)[16]

History and Theory

The key aim of the component is to broaden and deepen the students' understanding of the significance of individual buildings in influencing the contemporary built environment, the design of cities, the organisation of past and present societies, and wider global issues. The intention is to alert the student to the history and theories of architecture and urban design, and in doing so, to engage the student in the critical examination of the inter- relationship between people, communities, buildings, and the environment. The end result is to enable students to devise, from an informed and critical position, a viable subject for their dissertation.[17]

Specific learning outcomes are:

- Confidence and flexibility in identifying and defining complex problems, using investigative strategies and techniques in undertaking critical analysis and evaluating outcomes.
- Systematic understanding of the knowledge base of the cultural, social and intellectual histories, theories and technologies that influence the design of buildings. (GC2.1)
- A systematic understanding of the knowledge base of the influence of history and theory on the spatial, social, and technological aspects of architecture. (GC2.2)
- Systematic understanding of the knowledge base of how the theories, practices and technologies of the arts influence architectural design. (GC3.1)
- Systematic understanding of the knowledge base of the creative application of the fine arts and their relevance and impact on architecture. (GC3.2)

- Systematic understanding of the theories of urban design and the planning for communities. (GC4.1)
- Systematic understanding of the knowledge base of the influence of the design and development of cities, past and present on the contemporary built environment. (GC4.2)[18]

Applied Technical Studies 1

The component aims to build on the technical knowledge and understanding gained in the students' architectural education and in architectural practice, to develop and deepen their understanding of how architectural technology influences design, and to develop a critical response to the integration of this knowledge with their design thinking. The component also aims to develop students' skills and a critical approach that will inform their work in their final year of the MArch programme. Within this component, students explore materials & fabrication technologies, structural efficiency, and the responsible use of natural resources. Students investigate the construction process and the critical paths that would apply to the realisation of their studio design projects.[19]

Specific learning outcomes are:

- Flexibility in identifying, investigating, critically appraising and selecting alternative structural, constructional and material systems relevant to architectural design. (GC8.1)
- A systematic understanding of the physical properties and characteristics of building materials, components and systems, and the environmental impact of specification choices. (GC 8.3)
- A conceptual and critical approach towards the integration of technical requirements into architectural design. (GC1.3)
- The impact of buildings on the environment, and the precepts of sustainable design. (GC5.2)
- Critical evaluation of precedents relevant to the function, organisation and technological strategy of design proposals. (GC7.1)
- Critical understanding of the investigation, appraisal

and selection of structural, constructional and material systems relevant to their architectural design (GC8.1)[20]

YEAR 2

Module title:
Major Design Project

MArch Year 2
Module code: 7ARCH010W
Credit Level: Level 7
Length: One Semester
UK Credit Value: 30 Credits
ECTS Value: 15
Status: Core Module

Learning Outcomes:
On completing the module, students will demonstrate:

- ability to prepare and present building design projects of diverse scale, complexity, and type in a variety of contexts, using a range of media, and in response to a brief; (GC1.1)
- deep and systematic understanding of the constructional and structural systems, the environmental strategies and the regulatory requirements that apply to the design and construction of a comprehensive design project;(GC1.2)
- the ability to develop a conceptual and critical approach to architectural design that integrates and satisfies the aesthetic aspects of a building and the technical requirements of its construction and the needs of the user.(GC1.3)
- analytical knowledge of the application of significant areas of current methodologies and theoretical concepts to studio design projects, demonstrating a reflective and critical approach. (GC 2.3)
- analytical knowledge of the creative application of the fine arts to studio design projects, in terms of their conceptualisation and representation. (GC3.3)
- deep and systematic understanding of the needs and aspirations of building users; (GC5.1)
- deep and systematic understanding of the way in which buildings fit in their local context; (GC5.3); an

understanding of the potential impact of building projects on existing and proposed communities; (GC6.3)

- deep and systematic understanding of the need to appraise and prepare building briefs of diverse scales and types, to define client user requirements and their appropriateness to site and context. (GC 7.3)

Module title:
Design Development

MArch Year 2
Module code: 7ARCH010W
Credit Level: Level 7
Length: One Semester
UK Credit Value: 30 Credits
ECTS Value: 15
Status: Core Module

Learning Outcomes:
On completing the module, students will demonstrate:

- systematic ability to prepare and present a complex design project using a range of media in response to a brief. (GC1.1)
- systematic ability to generate complex design proposals showing understanding of current architectural issues, originality in the application of subject knowledge and, where appropriate, to test new hypotheses and speculations. (GA2.1)
- systematic ability to undertake substantial investigations into areas of contemporary theory and to develop a conceptual and critical approach to architectural design that integrates and satisfies the aesthetic aspects of a building and the technical requirements of its construction and the needs of the user. (GC1.3)
- deep and analytical understanding of the application of appropriate theoretical concepts to studio design projects, demonstrating a reflective and critical approach. (GC2.3)
- deep and analytical understanding of the constructional and structural systems, the environmental strategies and the regulatory requirements that apply to the design and construction of a comprehensive design project; (GC 1.2)
- deep and analytical understanding of the needs of building users; (GC5.1); the impact of buildings on the environment, and the precepts of sustainable (GC5.2); the way in which buildings fit into their

local context (GC5.3).

- deep and analytical understanding of the potential impact of building projects on existing and proposed communities. (GC6.3)
- deep and analytical understanding of the need to critically review precedents relevant to the function, organisation and technological strategy of design proposals (GC7.1)
- deep and analytical understanding of the need to appraise and prepare building briefs of diverse scales and types, to define client and user requirements and their appropriateness to site and context. (GC7.2)

Module title:
Strategic Report

MArch Year 2
Module code: 7ARCH018W
Credit Level: Level 7
Length: One Semester
UK Credit Value: 15 Credits
ECTS Value: 7.5
Status: Core Module

Learning Outcomes:
On completing the module, students will demonstrate:

- critical understanding of the context of the architect and the construction industry, including the architect's role in the processes of procurement and building production, and under legislation (GA2.5)
- critical understanding of current planning policy and development control legislation, including social, environmental and economic aspects, and the relevance of these to the development of the final design project. (GC1.2),(GC4.3)
- critical understanding of the needs and aspirations of building users; (GC5.1); the impact of buildings on the environment, and the precepts of sustainable design; (GC5.2); the way in which buildings fit into their local context (GC5.3).
- critical understanding of the nature of professionalism and the duties and
- responsibilities of architects to clients, building users, constructors, co-professionals and the wider society; (GC6.1)
- critical understanding of the role of the architect within the design team and construction industry, recognising the importance of current methods and trends in the construction of the built environment; (GC6.2)
- critical understanding of the need to critically review precedents relevant to the function, organisation and technological strategy of design proposals; (GC7.1);
- critical understanding of the need to appraise and prepare building briefs of diverse scales and types, to define client and

user requirements and their appropriateness to site and context; (GC7.2)

- critical understanding of the contributions of architects and co-professionals to the formulation of the brief, and the methods of investigation used in its preparation. (GC7.3)
- a critical examination of the financial factors implied in varying building types, constructional systems, and specification choices, and the impact of these on architectural design; (GC10.1) a critical understanding the cost control mechanisms which operate during the development of a project; (GC10.2)
- advanced skills to prepare designs that will meet building users' requirements and comply with UK legislation, appropriate performance standards and health and safety requirements; (GC10.3)
- systematic understanding of the professional inter-relationships of individuals and organisations involved in procuring and delivering architectural

Module title:
Applied Technical Studies

MArch Year 2
Module code: 7ARCH002W
Credit Level: Level 7
Length: One Semester
UK Credit Value: 15 Credits
ECTS Value: 7.5
Status: Core Module

Learning Outcomes:
On completing the module, students will demonstrate:

- an advanced ability to evaluate materials, processes and techniques that apply to complex architectural designs and building construction, and to integrate these into practicable design proposals; (GA2.3)
- a systematic understanding of the constructional and structural systems, the environmental strategies and the regulatory requirements that apply to the design and construction of a comprehensive design project; (GC1.2)
- an advanced ability to develop a conceptual and critical approach to architectural design that integrates and satisfies the aesthetic aspects of a building and the technical requirements of its construction and the needs of the user; (GC1.3)
- to critically evaluate precedents relevant to the function, organisation and technological strategy of design proposals; (GC7.1)
- a current understanding of the specialist contributions of architects and co-professionals to the formulation of the brief, and the methods of investigation used in its preparation. (GC7.3)
- a critical understanding of the investigation, appraisal and selection of structural, constructional and material systems relevant to their architectural design (GC8.1)
- a systematic understanding of strategies for building construction and advanced ability to integrate knowledge of structural principles and construction techniques (GC8.2)

- a critical understanding of the physical properties and characteristics of building materials, components and systems and the environmental impact of their choice in relation to their major design project. (GC8.3)

Module title:
Dissertation

MArch Year 2
Module code: 7ARCH006W
Credit Level: Level 7
Length: One Semester
UK Credit Value: 15 Credits
ECTS Value: 7.5
Status: Core Module

Learning Outcomes:

- On completing the module, students will demonstrate:
- deep and systematic understanding of how knowledge is advanced through research to produce clear, logically argued and original written work relating to architectural culture, theory and design; (GA2.4)
- deep and systematic knowledge of the cultural, social and intellectual histories, theories and technologies that influence the design of buildings; (GC2.1)
- reflective knowledge of the influence of history and theory on the spatial, social, and technological aspects of architecture, and an understanding of current theoretical and methodological approaches; (GC2.2)
- deep and systematic understanding of the application of appropriate theoretical concepts to studio design projects, demonstrating a reflective and critical approach. (GC2.3)
- deep and systematic understanding of how the theories, practices and technologies of the arts influence architectural design; (GC3.1)
- deep and systematic understanding of the creative application of the fine arts and their relevance and impact on architecture; (GC3.2)

Photo Credit: Lela Sujani

Overall, the previous modules all contribute towards the University of Westminster's specific objectives. The core aims of the MArch course are:

- to meet the professional requirements of architecture with a broader knowledge and understanding of the subject than that gained at undergraduate / Part 1 level, as well as to enable critical reflection by students on the experience that they gained in their first period of practical training;
- to meet the intellectual aspirations of the subject of architecture, and to impart a deeper knowledge and understanding and ability that allows students to engage in increasingly self-directed and mature study, including aspects of subject specialism and original research;
- to include and teach knowledge and skills which enable the successful student to transfer to a further period of practical training experience and professional registration, and/or to progress to an MA course or higher degree in a specialist area of architecture or a cognate subject.[21]

The learning outcomes of the existing MArch course can be viewed as falling into the following four categories:

KU: Overall Knowledge and Understanding gained from the course

GA: Graduate Attributes are the characteristics developed during the course

PPP: Professional and Personal Practice learning outcomes are the skills gained from the course

KTS: Key Transferable Skills gained from the course[22]

GA

These fall into five categories:

GA.1 Critical and Creative Thinkers

The nomadic course would enhance the students' ability in critical thinking, as they will be exposed to global and local issues during their travels.

GA.2 Literate and Effective Communicator

Students will have the opportunity to learn from people such as practitioners, students, academics and other professionals from all over the world, informing their communication skills as well as skills in digital expression and 2D communication, such as drawing.

GA.3 Entrepreneurial

Students will increase their skills in teamwork and independent work, through organising travels, trips and meetings in different parts of the world and become proactive and effective problem-solvers.

GA.4 Global in Outlook and Engaged in Communities

The requirement of having a global perspective and outlook and respect people's differences and diversity will be a key aim in the nomadic course.

GA.5 Social, Ethically and Environmentally Aware

Through travelling, you are exposed to environmental, economic, social and cultural issues, informing the students' work, professional career and personal development. The impacts of architects' work will be clear to the students part of the nomadic studio.

KTS

KTS.1 Define and appraise one's own ideas/designs in relation to others

KTS.2 Identify and manage individual learning needs

KTS.3 Work as part of a team when required

KTS.4 Research and produce clear, analytical and logical reports[23]

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Knowledge of Design Principles (KU)

1. Develop theoretically-informed knowledge of conventional and emerging principles of architectural design, together with a broad range of technological, professional and historical subjects associated with architecture culture, and an ability to evaluate and interpret their relevance and currency with a professional and disciplinary context.
Awareness of Professional Standards (PPP/KU)

2. Assimilation of prescribed criteria and subject benchmark statements into reflective and critical practice.
Design-research (PPP)

3. Ability to translate all conceptual, research-based inquiry into disciplinary-specific design work.
Testing Hypotheses (KTS/PPP)

4. Ability to formulate research-led design processes, and to test these against emerging cultural, technological and environmental needs of society and professional practice.
Communication and use of Integrated Media (KTS/GS)

5. Ability to constructively absorb feedback from tutors, peers and experts into coherent arguments and proposals, either in the form of oral presentations, written reports or through a range of visual and material practice.
Leadership and Research (GA)

6. Ability to undertake self-directed study, and engage with group activities, providing communication, direction and

organisational input as and when required.
Professionalism and Employability (PPP/GA)

7. Ability to compare and judge individual academic outputs against prescribed criteria, subject benchmark statements, and professional standards, and to identified gaps and opportunities within existing disciplinary practices.
Ethical Practice (GA)

8. Compliance with ethical research practices as stipulated by the University of Westminster when undertaking self-directed research projects or independent study.

LEVEL 6 AND 7 LEARNING OUTCOMES

MArch Year 1 - Level 6

Problem Solving in Design (PPP)

L6.1 Precise articulation of a question, problem or hypothesis, derived from broad and logical investigation into a broad range of abstract and concrete data.

Conceptual Agenda Building (KU)

L6.2 Ability to identify specific entry points into creative practice and research inquiry.

Material Technique (KU/PPP)

L6.3 Utilise the digital fabrication laboratory to foster interaction between ideas, research and new techniques of making.

Multi-Media Approach (GA)

L6.4 An ability to combine verbal and visual media to articulate the link between design thinking and traditional scholarship.

Cultural Context (KU)

L6.5 Understand the relevance of background cultural inquiry, and to translate this into a disciplinary-specific language that is comprehensive to different audiences.

Critical Practice (GA/PPP)

L6.6 Ability to critique and develop received formal, graphic and professional conventions.

Digital Practice (PPP/KU)

L6.7Ability to use Digital Media as part of a design process

Technical and Environmental Strategies (KU)

L6.8 Use technological and environmental resources to re-calibrate spatial and material performance and standards of interior comfort.

MArch Year 2 - Level 7

Synthetic Judgement (PPP)

L7.1 The ability to translate cognitive, abstract knowledge into tacit understanding, situated know-how, and real-world problem-solving.

Resolution and Thesis

L7.2 The final portfolio must provide evidence of a clearly development design thesis.

Agenda Building II

L7.3 Ability to analyse current trends and deficiencies in a cultural or technological context, and to identify potential opportunities for intervention and active experimentation.

Coherent Processes (KU/PPP)

L7.4 An ability to construct sophisticated and complex arguments, expressed through illustrated text.

Cultural Context (KU)

L7.5 Ability to develop original conclusions through independent study to support the dissertation.

Ethical Practice (PPP/GA)

L7.6 Ability to use the design thesis

agenda as a basis for predicting alternative way of accessing cultural capital; creating resilient institutional and environmental structures, and to understand the ethical impact of design on common sustainable resources.

Critical Practices II (PPP)

L7.7 To use all modules as an opportunity to generate future-oriented paradigms that explore the boundaries of existing disciplinary practices.

Direct Participation in Material and Civic Processes (PPP)

L7.8 To employ where possible live material projects and research-driven agendas in studio, and to use these projects to access a broad community of producers, stakeholders, public funding streams and entrepreneurial initiatives.[24]

1 The University of Westminster, Course Handbook 2017-18 Master of Architecture (MArch) (ARB-RIBA Pt II)

2 Ibid. p.26-27.

3 Ibid. p.23.

4 Ibid. p.8.

5 Ibid. p.31-32.

6 Ibid. p.31-32.

7 Ibid. p.31-32.

8 Ibid. p.31-32.

9 Ibid. p.68-69.

10 Ibid. p.57-58.

11 Ibid. p.24.

12 Ibid. p.24-25.

13 Ibid. p.32.

14 Ibid. p.35.

15 Ibid. p.32.

16 Ibid. p.36.

17 Ibid. p.32.

18 Ibid. p.37-38.

19 Ibid. p.32.

20 Ibid. p.37.

21 Ibid. p.2.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

Photo Credit: Paresh Parmar

Photo Credit: Paresh Parmar

NOMADIC STUDIO ETHOS & STAKEHOLDERS

STUDIO ETHOS

The Nomadic Design Studio (NDS) will be advertised to prospective students in the following way:

NDS believe that the best way to learn is through travelling, exploration and real-world, first-hand experience. We will be living the nomadic lifestyle, working and studying 'on the road' and during our travels we will collaborate with communities across the world, as well as with other students, professionals and academics. The objective of the studio is for our students to become adaptable, perceptive and considerate to the framework in which they will be working in the future; from the slums of India to the high-rise apartments of Shanghai; where does the work and research they will undertake as part of their studies sit and how can they contribute to making the world a better place in the future? We believe architects should always keep learning and never lose touch with the context and built environment. We worry technologies such as the internet, social media and rise in digital design interferes with this. We invite all students to develop a reflective and critical approach to architecture and design and be innovative in design solutions and problem solving.

Our brief, site and travelling destinations will change each year but will always contain a variety of locations, cities, villages and

environments, to offer students a broad understanding and overview of the world. In contrast to other design studios, the NDS will incorporate all modules within its travels and other module assignments will be adapted to fit the course structure. Students are tutored by their two main design tutors but will learn from tutors and professionals from other collaborating Universities and practices along the way, as well as having the opportunity to have virtual and email tutorials with tutors from other modules of the home campus in London.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

Prospective nomadic students will need to possess certain characteristics to successfully complete the course, and therefore an interview process is proposed in order to assess who is to join the NDS and its course programme at the beginning of the academic year. Certain personality traits are considered beneficial and these are the following;

A positive and realistic commitment

Students will need to have a positive approach to their work, studies and the course in general and be realistic when dealing with certain situations

Ability to work in a team

Students will need to work together well and have the ability to listen, encourage and lead others if necessary during their travels

Open minded

Students will need to be open to learning and excited about new opportunities

Sensitivity to Other's Needs

Students will need to be sensitive to other cultures and ways of life, non-judgemental and respectful

Adaptability

Students will need to be flexible and open to last minute changes and not afraid to cope and deal with unexpected and unforeseen issues

Practical

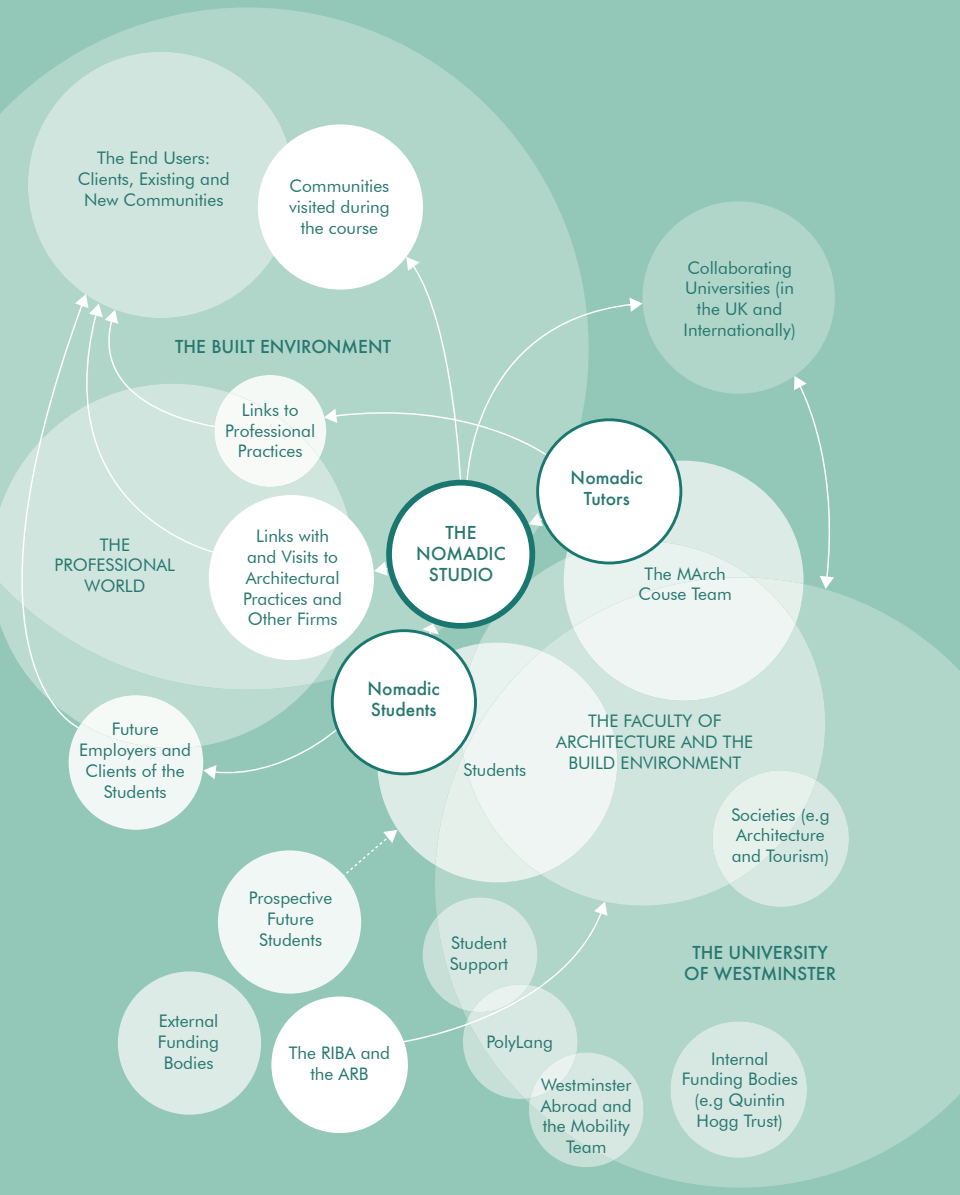
Students will need to have the ability to problem-solve effectively, be inventive in coming up with solutions if either time or resources are limited

Self-assurance

Students will need to have a sense of personal insight, understand their limits and emotions and acknowledge if they are in need of help and seek it with confidence

From our tutor surveys, 58% of tutors believed the NDS should contain a group of 16-20 students, while 50% suggested 11-15 students. From the survey responses and personal experience in travelling, we are suggesting a group of 13-18 students, depending on the specific individuals of that group and interest in the studio that year.

STAKEHOLDERS



The most important stakeholders of the nomadic studio are the nomadic students; the primary customers, as without them there would be no studio at all. The nomadic tutors are a close second as their wishes need to be equally catered for and recognised. Both of these main primary stakeholders are the ones actively involved and engaged during the travels, they both affect the outcome and success of the studio and are also the ones affected by its outcomes and successes. It is up to both the students and the tutors to make sure the studio is run smoothly, and the trips and visits during the year are organised. The tutors will take a more active role in the organisation of the course, while the students need to take responsibility in making sure they meet all the requirements in a more challenging and demanding environment to their peers located at the home campus; the studio is definitely not the easy way out for completing the year, but more rewarding and fulfilling if followed through.

The Nomadic Students are part of the total cohort of students of the MArch, all of which are potential 'customers' to the course in the future and therefore also crucial stakeholders. Prospective future students that are not yet enrolled on the course are also important and it is vital the Nomadic Studio will keep a high standard of quality in order to attract future Nomadic Students, which is crucial for the Studio's achievements and in order to continue in the future. Another stakeholder, which is created through the Nomadic Students, are the employers, or clients, of the future graduates who have participated in the course, who will benefit from the improved and enhanced knowledge, experience and global perspective which the Nomadic Students will have gained through the duration of the course. The end users of the built environment, which is all of us, will become the final benefiting stakeholder because we all live in the environment in which the students will influence and design.

The case is similar with the Nomadic Tutors; they are part of the larger MArch course team and the course will need to offer an appealing course programme and benefits to the tutors in order to attract tutors to join and run the studio. Therefore, the extended MArch course team are stakeholders too. In case the tutors also run, are involved or employed by practices outside of teaching, their respective practices would potentially also be affected by the Nomadic Studio. The tutors would, similarly to the students, be affected and learn through their travels, be given research opportunities and the chance to collaborate with and form professional links with professionals and academics all over the world, which would benefit their work as Architects in the UK, and their corresponding work places. These benefits would too eventually reach their clients and the end users of the built environment.

The places visited by the Nomadic Course would also be affected by the travelling students and tutors. This doesn't only include the obvious links; such as the particular Universities collaborated with (and its students and tutors) or the professional practices visited (as well as its employers), but also the cities, towns, villages, communities and environments which the Nomadic Studio will learn from, work in, study and interact with. Through incorporating small assignments and involving the students in local projects as part of their study, the local communities will also benefit from the work of the studio.

As for the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, of which all tutors and students are 'members' and the Nomadic Studio is part of, the improved network links with collaborating Universities and professional practices (through the travels of the Nomadic Studio) will benefit the work of the faculty, the improved network links, research opportunities and the expected

intake of students. A lot of these benefits will also reflect on the University as a whole. Other Universities may learn from and be inspired by this new teaching method and reflect in their course syllabus too.

Other stakeholders are certain groups and professionals within the University who will be affected by and can benefit from the travelling studio. Examples of these are certain societies, PolyLang, Westminster Abroad and the Mobility Team. All of these could potentially partner with the work of the Nomadic Studio and tap into their programme and structure to grow their own work and aims. Student Support, including physical and mental health services, is also a stakeholder, as they will need to adapt their services to apply to the Nomadic structure and its members. There may also be internal funding bodies, the main one being Quintin Hogg Trust, that may provide funding for certain elements of the Nomadic Studio, particularly in its initial stages when a clear organisation and programme layout is still not fully clear. External funding options may also be considered.

For external stakeholders, the RIBA/ARB is definitely an interested and affected party. The Nomadic Studio will need to show they hit all the required learning outcomes and would have to be in close contact with the RIBA when developing its structure and programme, which we will look at later.

Photo Credit: Paresh Parmar

NOMADIC STUDIO LEARNING OUTCOMES

To identify the learning outcomes of the nomadic studio, we will respond these to the ARB/RIBA General Criteria to make sure the course satisfies its requirements for Part II accreditation.

General Criteria 1 (GC1) of RIBA validation: Ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements

GC1 Ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements

GC1 The graduate will have the ability to:

GC1.1 prepare and present building design projects of diverse scale, complexity, and type in a variety of contexts, using a range of media, and in response to a brief;

GC1.2 understand the constructional and structural systems, the environmental strategies and the regulatory requirements that apply to the design and construction of a comprehensive design project;

GC1.3 develop a conceptual and critical approach to architectural design that integrates and satisfies the aesthetic

Response:

The students on the nomadic course will be equally supported and encouraged by their tutors to produce high-quality designs as the students at London-based studios. Focus is on the preparation and presentation of 'building design projects of diverse scale, complexity, and type in a variety of contexts, using a range of media, and in response to a brief' (GC1.1). The students' sensitivity to cultures and a diversity of contexts is increased through the nature of the studio. Visits to a range of cultures, cities, buildings

and architectural practices will also introduce the students to alternative ways of perceiving beauty and aesthetics in architecture and design as well as present the students with different methods in realising a certain project, through innovative and unconventional technical solutions from all over the world. (GC1.3) Real-life experience, through site visits and fieldwork, will allow students to see the construction of projects, at a range of stages, through their own eyes, enhancing their understanding of structural and constructional systems and their related environmental strategies. (GC1.2) Travelling will also allow the students to see how other professionals have tackled the balance between aesthetic and technical requirements and allow them to make up their mind about their view on this.[1]

General Criteria 2 (GC2) of RIBA validation: Adequate knowledge of the histories and theories of architecture and the related arts, technologies and human sciences

GC2 Adequate knowledge of the histories and theories of architecture and the related arts, technologies and human sciences

GC2 The graduate will have knowledge of:

GC2.1 the cultural, social and intellectual histories, theories and technologies that influence the design of buildings;

GC2.2 the influence of history and theory on the spatial, social, and technological aspects of architecture;

GC2.3 the application of appropriate theoretical concepts to studio design projects, demonstrating a reflective and critical approach.

Response:

The nomadic studio will offer the students with increased exposure to real-life precedents and greater understanding of a variety of cultures and contexts, aimed at further deepening their design work and their maturity and development as future architects. Students will be encouraged by the tutors to study how the context influences architectural design and its spatial, social and technological aspects; such as history and theory, culture and social factors. (GC2.1 and GC2.2) While on the course, the students will be encouraged, through independent study and smaller coursework briefs, to study and reflect over the cultural, social, economic and political contexts they travel to, and this will ultimately be fed into their design work brief, resulting in a richer and more convincing final project. Critical thinking and a critical approach is encouraged when applying the concepts of a range of theories to studio design projects. (GC2.3)[2]

General Criteria 3 (GC3) of RIBA validation: Knowledge of the fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural design

GC3 Knowledge of the fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural design

GC3 The graduate will have knowledge of:

GC3.1 how the theories, practices and technologies of the arts influence architectural design;

GC3.2 the creative application of the fine arts and their relevance and impact on architecture;

GC3.3 the creative application of such work to studio design projects, in terms of their conceptualisation and representation.

Response:

An expansive range of artists, designers, exhibitions and museums in a series of locations around the world can easily be accessed and will be visited as part of the nomadic course. The students will be encouraged to study the theories, practices and technologies of the arts and understand their importance, relevance and influence on architectural design. (GC3.1 and GC3.2) As the students travel, they can see a wide variety of arts from a range of cultures and countries, giving them a broader overview of the diversity of fine arts in the world, inspiring the students in applying these concepts, of conceptualisation and representation, to their studio design projects. (GC3.3)[3]

General Criteria 4 (GC4) of RIBA validation: Adequate knowledge of urban design, planning and the skills involved in the planning process (GC4)

GC4 Adequate knowledge of urban design, planning and the skills involved in the planning process

GC4 The graduate will have knowledge of:

GC4.1 theories of urban design and the planning of communities;

GC4.2 the influence of the design and development of cities, past and present on the contemporary built environment;

GC4.3 current planning policy and development control legislation, including social, environmental and economic aspects, and the relevance of these to design development.

Response:

The students will become considerate to the importance of 'context' and develop an increased understanding of possible difficulties and differences depending on location on the globe, deepening their understanding on how and why certain projects and designs need to be realised and tackled differently depending on the circumstances and the final end users of that society and their living standards. The understanding of urban design theories and the planning of communities from all over the world are crucial aspects as part of the nomadic course. (GC4.1) Urban design is influenced by historical, social, environmental and economic factors, as well as relevant development control legislation and planning policies of that area, and by visiting a range of communities, urban as well as rural, the students will become sensitive to these issues and learn to design considerately. (GC4.2 and GC4.3)[4]

General Criteria 5 (GC5) of RIBA validation:
Understanding of the relationship between people and buildings, and between buildings and their environment, and the need to relate buildings and the spaces between them to human needs and scale.

GC5 Understanding of the relationship between people and buildings, and between buildings and their environment, and the need to relate buildings and the spaces between them to human needs and scale

GC5 The graduate will have an understanding of:

GC5.1 the needs and aspirations of building users;

GC5.2 the impact of buildings on the environment, and the precepts of sustainable design;

GC5.3 the way in which buildings fit into their local context.

Response:

As previously mentioned, the increased understanding of a range of contexts and cultures is one of the main drivers of the course, and the improved knowledge of the needs of local societies and users are inevitably another aspect closely related to this. Different environments and societies look at dwelling needs differently and the students will be exposed to these different factors and ideas, deepening their understanding and critical evaluation of what architecture is and needs to contain, in terms of needs and aspirations of the final building end users. (GC5.1) Understanding how buildings fit into local contexts and respond to the local environment, as well as sustainable design principles, is another crucial aspect and the students are encouraged to study these factors, helping them to produce successful and efficient architecture. (GC5.2 and GC5.3)

General Criteria 6 (GC6) of RIBA validation: Understanding of the profession of architecture and the role of the architect in society, in particular in preparing briefs that take account of social factors

GC6 Understanding of the profession of architecture and the role of the architect in society, in particular in preparing briefs that take account of social factors

GC6 The graduate will have an understanding of:

GC6.1 the nature of professionalism and the duties and responsibilities of architects to clients, building users, constructors, co-professionals and the wider society;

GC6.2 the role of the architect within the design team and construction industry, recognising the importance of current methods and trends in the construction of the built environment;

GC6.3 the potential impact of building projects on existing and proposed communities.

Response:

The nomadic travelling course, with its numerous stops and visits to a variety of existing cities, villages and communities, will increase the students' understanding of how the built environment impacts on its surroundings and its local people and social context. This will aid in the development of students' design projects and the tutors will encourage students to be sensitive and critical of the potential impact of building projects on proposed, as well as existing, communities. (GC6.3) The nature of the course will also aid in recognising the role of the architect within the construction industry and within the design team and allow students to identify the duties and responsibilities of the architect. The architect doesn't only have responsibilities within the professional design team and to the client, but his or her work also impacts on wider society, building users and other co-professionals. (GC6.1) The first-hand experience of built

projects in a range of locations and contexts, will also let the students see and identify current methods and trends in the construction industry and the built environment, and they will become more knowledgeable as a result. (GC6.2)[5]

General Criteria 7 (GC7) of RIBA validation: Understanding of the methods of investigation and preparation of the brief for a design project

GC7 Understanding of the methods of investigation and preparation of the brief for a design project

GC7 The graduate will have an understanding of:

GC7.1 the need to critically review precedents relevant to the function, organisation and technological strategy of design proposals;

GC7.2 the need to appraise and prepare building briefs of diverse scales and types, to define client and user requirements and their appropriateness to site and context;

GC7.3 the contributions of architects and co-professionals to the formulation of the brief, and the methods of investigation used in its preparation.

Response:

Because of the nature of the nomadic course, the students will naturally be exposed to a great range of precedents and societies, all with different priorities, needs and circumstances, such as functions, organisation and technological strategies, which forces the students to critically consider their specific design requirements. (GC7.1) Through their travels, the students have the chance to compare unfamiliar cultures and as a result pick up on differences of the different contexts, further informing their design work and understanding of the world, allowing them to recognise the importance in defining a brief and setting out client requirements and appropriateness to site and contexts. (GC7.2) Also, through visiting professionals and academics from separate parts of the world, all working within different contexts, the students will receive a broad and discursive understanding of the field of architecture and other related professions and in which ways these professionals contribute to the formulation of, and help prepare, the brief. (GC7.3)[6]

General Criteria 8 (GC8) of RIBA validation: Understanding of the structural design, constructional and engineering problems associated with building design

GC8 Understanding of the structural design, constructional and engineering problems associated with building design

GC8 The graduate will have an understanding of:

GC8.1 the investigation, critical appraisal and selection of alternative structural, constructional and material systems relevant to architectural design;

GC8.2 strategies for building construction, and ability to integrate knowledge of structural principles and construction techniques;

GC8.3 the physical properties and characteristics of building materials, components and systems, and the environmental impact of specification choices.

Response:

By visiting projects at different stages; from seeing the initial design stage, through to a number of construction stages to already completed projects, students will see, first hand, the engineering, construction and technical aspects of a design coming to life. This will also enhance the students' knowledge of the physical properties and characteristics of certain building systems, components and materials and help them understand how the specification of these impact on the design and its construction process, as well as the environment. (GC8.3) Involving students in architectural and small construction projects as part of their travels will further enhance this learning outcome. Experience on site, both through participation and observation, is a vital element to understanding the full extent of an architect's responsibilities, particularly the practical aspects, and this will help the students in understanding the strategies for building construction and increase their 'ability to integrate

knowledge of structural principles and construction techniques'. (GC8.2) By visiting and talking to engineers and architects closely involved in building construction, students will gain a broad understanding of structural, material and constructional systems available, and how different parts of the world may tackle these differently to each other. This experience will allow students to investigate, understand and critically reflect over the variety of technical systems which exist in the world and apply these to their architectural designs and studio projects. (GC8.1)[7]

General Criteria 9 (GC9) of RIBA validation: Adequate knowledge of physical problems and technologies and the function of buildings so as to provide them with internal conditions of comfort and protection against the climate, in the framework of sustainable development

GC9 Adequate knowledge of physical problems and technologies and the function of buildings so as to provide them with internal conditions of comfort and protection against the climate, in the framework of sustainable development

GC9 The graduate will have knowledge of:

GC9.1 principles associated with designing optimum visual, thermal and acoustic environments;

GC9.2 systems for environmental comfort realised within relevant precepts of sustainable design;

GC9.3 strategies for building services, and ability to integrate these in a design project.

Response:

The students will be exposed to a range of different climatic conditions and will be able to study in which way the built environment responds to these. Through coursework and case studies, the students can identify principles associated with 'designing optimum visual, thermal and acoustic environments', (GC9.1) informing their individual design work. These technological and environmental aspects will be further studied while completing their technical modules, with the possibility in receiving feedback and support from professionals all over the world. The environmental impacts of the built environment will also become apparent while travelling and the aspect of sustainability and sustainable design focused on and encouraged by the tutors. (GC9.2) Students will have improved learning in how to integrate environmental systems for optimal internal comfort as well as building services, as their understanding of how designs come to life will be superior to those students based in a fixed location and with less field trips as part of their studies. (GC9.3)[8]

General Criteria 10 (GC10) of RIBA validation: The necessary design skills to meet building users' requirements within the constraints imposed by cost factors and building regulations

GC10 The necessary design skills to meet building users' requirements within the constraints imposed by cost factors and building regulations
GC10 The graduate will have the skills to:
GC10.1 critically examine the financial factors implied in varying building types, constructional systems, and specification choices, and the impact of these on architectural design;
GC10.2 understand the cost control mechanisms which operate during the development of a project;
GC10.3 prepare designs that will meet building users' requirements and comply with UK legislation, appropriate performance standards and health and safety requirements.

Response:
Similar to previous points, the real-life experience of the students on the nomadic course will allow students to gain a better understanding of practical aspects of design projects, which includes aspects such as cost and building regulations. Travelling will allow them to compare UK legislation restrictions with other cultures and countries, as concepts such as performance standards and health and safety requirements differ depending on context. The students are also encouraged to be inspired by other culture's responses to certain design projects and client requirements, which may be different to how one would tackle an issue in the UK. This will give students the ability to think outside the box and apply innovative design options to their studio work and in their future career. (GC10.3) Elements such as financial factors and cost control will be highlighted to students as critical aspects of the architect's work, as the students will experience how real people in

the real world live, integrate and use the built environment. The students' design projects will therefore be grounded in a realistic framework and be sensitive to cost restrictions as the students will have the knowledge of how certain building types, constructional systems, and specification choices are influenced by financial factors and how these, in turn, impact on architectural design. (GC10.1 and GC10.2)[9]

General Criteria 11 (GC11) of RIBA validation: Adequate knowledge of the industries, organisations, regulations and procedures involved in translating design concepts into buildings and integrating plans into overall planning

GC11 Adequate knowledge of the industries, organisations, regulations and procedures involved in translating design concepts into buildings and integrating plans into overall planning

GC11 The graduate will have knowledge of:

GC11.1 the fundamental legal, professional and statutory responsibilities of the architect, and the organisations, regulations and procedures involved in the negotiation and approval of architectural designs, including land law, development control, building regulations and health and safety legislation;

GC11.2 the professional inter-relationships of individuals and organisations involved in procuring and delivering architectural projects, and how these are defined through contractual and organisational structures;

GC11.3 the basic management theories and business principles related to running both an architects' practice and architectural projects, recognising current and emerging trends in the construction industry.

Response:

The students on the nomadic course will gain a good understanding of the 'fundamental legal, professional and statutory responsibilities of the architect, and the organisations, regulations and procedures involved in the negotiation and approval of architectural designs, including land law, development control, building regulations and health and safety legislation' (GC11.1) Visits to architectural practices, Universities, relevant research facilities, site visits and fieldwork, as well as contact with other professionals within the built environment will increase the students'

knowledge in these areas. First-hand experience will also enhance students' understanding of the professional inter-relationships of individuals and organisations involved in architectural projects, how these are defined through contractual and organisational structures and how they are practically procured and delivered. (GC11.2) Possible involvement in smaller construction projects during their travels will give students experience within these areas as well as the opportunity to talk to communities, understand their requirements, local procedures, regulations, management theories and business principles related to running both an architects' practice and architectural projects, and recognising current and emerging trends in the construction industry. (GC11.3)[10]

1 Royal Institute of British Architects, RIBA Procedures for Validation and Validation Criteria for UK and International Courses and Examinations in Architecture, (RIBA Education Department, 25 July 2011). p.59.

2 Ibid. p.59.

3 Ibid. p.60.

4 Ibid. p.60.

5 Ibid. p.60.

6 Ibid. p.60.

7 Ibid. p.61.

8 Ibid. p.61.

9 Ibid. p.61.

10 Ibid. p.61.

Photo Credit: Paresh Parmar

INDEPENDENT STUDY & RESEARCH METHODS

INDEPENDENT STUDY

The concept of 'Independent Study' is pointed out in the Masters of Architecture Course Handbook (2017-18) as a key learning skill for one's academic study and future employability. Both specific contact hours and independent learning are expected from all students by all modules as part of the MArch course and it is equally important for participants on the nomadic travelling course.[1] Independent Study is done through the completion of coursework and this is the primary learning method and involves the student working individually, sometimes in groups, to complete their work. This mode of learning takes up the largest part of the students' time and effort.[2] Contact hours and independent study hours may differ depending on subjects and the teaching approach. Independent work may include the following tasks, as set out in the Course Handbook:[3]

- Group collaborative tasks
- Research
- Reading
- Revision
- Assessment preparation
- Projects that feed into presentation and debates
- Lab-or studio-based work[4]

The travelling tutors will encourage, support and guide the students into developing the skills required to work

independently and 'on the road'. The Course Handbook mentions guided independent study is 'a crucial aspect of the formation of a student's education, and the skills and knowledge required to assemble a portfolio / thesis for oneself are vital to any professional career'. The nomadic course would both offer the opportunity to discuss your progress with your travelling tutors through tutorials at regular intervals throughout the course, as well as giving people the opportunity to interact with architects, academics and practitioners abroad, giving students more varied feedback. The Handbook recognises regular tutorials are sometimes not applicable or possible as students are occasionally expected to work without the help of regular tutorials from staff; the two main periods being following the final Design Studio reviews and the final 'writing-up' period of the Dissertation.[5]

EXISTING TEACHING METHODS PART OF THE MASTERS OF ARCHITECTURE COURSE

The learning environment at the University of Westminster encourages students to;

- Question received knowledge
- Evaluate issues within a critical and theoretical framework
- Think in a reflective way and be increasingly capable of projective and speculative thought
- Learn through practice/learn by doing
- Make decisions at the appropriate time
- Be multi-skilled and flexible in their approach
- Be good communicators, both verbally and textually
- Work in teams whenever necessary[6]

Attendance of the equivalent of 2 to 3 days per week is

expected from full-time students of the MArch course. The Design Studio days are usually on Mondays and Thursdays, while other modules are often planned on Tuesdays. The Open Lecture series are normally on Thursday evenings. The rest of the study is independent and self-directed and may be planned and organised according to the students' own time schedules and around other commitments.[7]

OTHER TEACHING METHODS

On top of the crucially important 'Independent Study' element, there are other teaching and learning methods of the MArch course (contact hours), which can be split into a range of different approaches. Some key ones are explained below.

Tutorials: Design studio tutorials take place at least once a week between each student and the studio tutors in order to discuss the progress of students' individual Design Studio work. These allow the students and tutors to examine the possibilities, problems and solutions of specific designs put forward by the student.[8] Tutorials are also important in modules such as Dissertation and Applied Technical Studies.

Seminars: this method involves the engagement and dialogue between tutors and students related to the project or brief, often through lectures, group seminars, site visits, associated presentations or round-the-table discussions.[9] Seminars are used as teaching methods in modules such as the Design Studio, History and Theory and Dissertation.[10]

Reviews: During Design reviews or 'crits' (from 'criticisms'), students are required to verbally explain their design project

and design intentions and a discussion as well as feedback by the tutors follow.[11] The review panel usually consist of the Design Studio tutors, other University tutors and external critics, such as practising architects, academics or people employed in other relevant professions. The sessions are also attended by student peers and colleagues and all are invited to discuss the work, with the aim of informing future design development of each design project.[12]

Lectures: Students are asked to attend lectures relating to technology and the environment each week, which introduces them to a wide selection of possible construction methods and design opportunities they may decide to look into further as part of their design module.[13]

Other sessions, such as additional seminars, group or individual presentations, workshops and other activities can also be set out by the specific module tutors, and students are required to attend these too. [14]

The specific learning and teaching methods of each of the modules are explained in the pie charts.

Independent Study

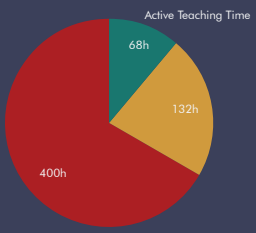
Active Teaching Time

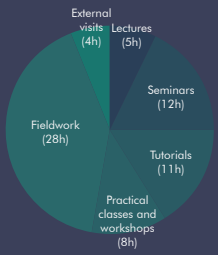
Supervised Study

Total learning and teaching hours

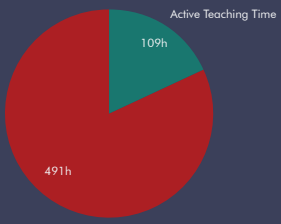
Active Teaching Time

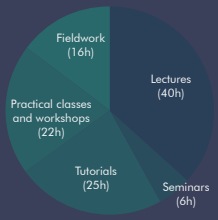
Architectural Productions I
total student learning and teaching hours: 600h





Architectural Reflections I
total student learning and teaching hours: 600h

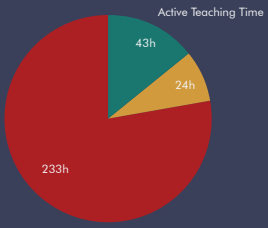


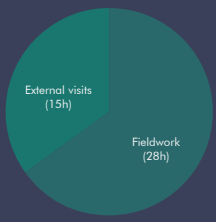


Total learning and teaching hours

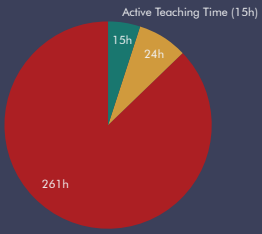
Active Teaching Time

Major Design Project
total student learning and teaching hours: 300h

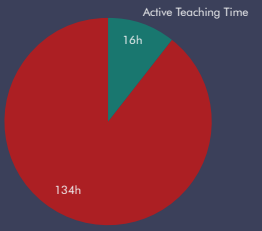


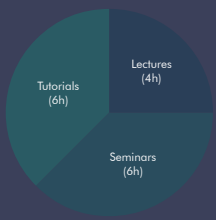


Design Development
total student learning and teaching hours: 300h

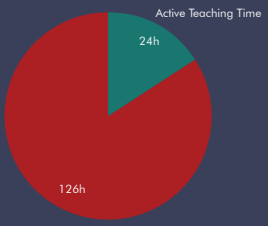


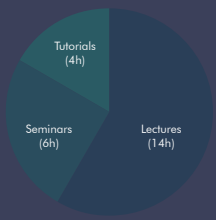
Strategic Report
total student learning and teaching hours: 150h



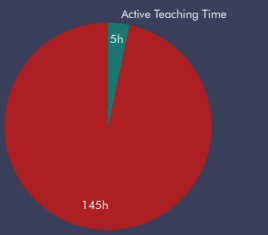


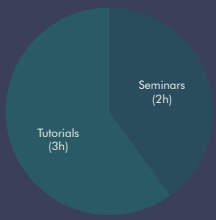
Applied Technical Studies
total student learning and teaching hours: 150h





Dissertation
total student learning and teaching hours: 150h





1 The University of Westminster, Course Handbook 2017-18 Master of Architecture (MArch) (ARB-RIBA Pt II). p.7.

2 Ibid. p.8.

3 Ibid. p.7.

4 Ibid. p.7.

5 Ibid. p.7.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid. p.11.

8 Ibid. p.8.

9 Ibid. p.8.

10 Ibid. p.9.

11 Ibid. p.15.

12 Ibid. p.8.

13 Ibid. p.9.

14 Ibid. p.8.

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Photo Credit: Lily Xutong Zhao

NOMADIC LIFESTYLE & ESSENTIAL LIVING

Most Architecture courses across the United Kingdom all have a fixed location of study, a building which comprises of a department of Architecture with studio spaces and other facilities to accommodate students' needs. The nomadic travelling course on the other hand encourages students who are open to a lifestyle of essential living travelling the world with a backpack and laptop. Instead of being located in one fixed campus, the nomadic studio proposes to work in cities across the world; this becomes their new campus, allowing students to find endless locations suitable to work in, learn and benefit from.

Architecture students grasp a great deal of knowledge through viewing primary resources, instead of secondary ones. Surveys undertaken by 100 Architecture and Interior Architecture students within the Faculty of Architecture and Built Environment at the University of Westminster suggest the overriding majority agree witnessing architecture in person is more beneficial to themselves as future architects and individuals (99%). Whilst students participate in outdoor learning such as site visits, surveys and drawing classes, one of the most enjoyable and beneficial methods of learning are the scheduled field trips covering a minimum duration of one week. Architecture field trips have played a huge influence to academic education and the nomadic course expands on this for one academic year. The nomadic course wants to take essential qualities from nomadic lifestyles which allows students to identify who they are and what they want to do for

the future of Architecture. A nomadic lifestyle brings awareness and understanding to culture, society, globalisation, politics and more, which we believe is needed within architecture schools.

Arguably, a major problem is that Architectural education has become very costly, due to the expenses students are recommended to make, such as buying books, a computer, software, materials of all sorts as well as printing.[1] Many of these expensive purchases are continued through undergraduate education to Masters level, extending the expenditure for what is deemed necessary to the course. For the nomadic course, students must think carefully about the essentials, especially when travelling; not only for their studies but also their personal needs and requirements. The nomadic course welcomes students to work digitally, however this does not limit students to work with various mediums and materials. The sketchbook is an integral part of any student and Architect and all students will be asked to record their experience and findings in one. Models and hand-drawings can also be produced at certain moments throughout the trip, and can be carried along, sent or taken back to the home University during holidays, photographed, or left at collaborating Universities and/or practices throughout the year and then picked up later.

Passport

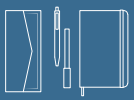
Hard Drive & Charger

Laptop

Books

First Aid

Towel

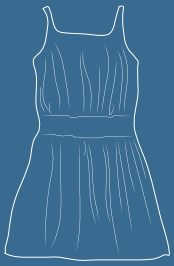


Stationary

Camera

Toiletries

Travel Backpack



Clothes

The 'Digital Nomad' is a new evolutionary movement which takes a modern look on the nomadic lifestyle with people relying on the internet to live and support themselves as they travel between cities and counties whilst working. The trend is growing due to the rapid use and reliance on technology and this has allowed for overall improvement of internet speed, an increase in travel apps and services, numerous digital nomad blogs and importantly, an increase of co-working spaces.[2] The proposed nomadic studio welcomes the rise of the digital nomadic lifestyle, which allows people to work remotely and flexibly, and could benefit from utilising these spaces for work. The importance in finding appropriate locations of study and work along the way is as integral as the actual travelling. During 'On the Road', the crucial element of Independent Study is therefore encouraged to be undertaken at a range of locations, such as flexible work spaces, public libraries, cafes and other public buildings, while necessary contact hours can be arranged at architectural practices, Universities as well as at cafes, libraries, cultural centres and public buildings, depending on the availability of the specific location or city. The nomadic studio therefore uses a similar concept to the newly established LSA's (London School of Architecture) idea of 'the city as its campus', in order to provide the students with invaluable real-world learning and involvement, which would also reduce the need for facilities at the host University campus at Marylebone, therefore saving on running and maintenance costs.[3]

To provide a better understanding of the nomadic lifestyle, four stages have been identified.

- Preparation: Understanding the destinations which may be visited and the measures need to be taken in order to travel there, such as vaccinations, visas, currency.

- Living Essentially: Bringing the essential items knowing additional necessities can be picked up in the future.
- Accommodation: Exploring and being prepared for various types of accommodation.
- Document Journey: Documenting the journey digitally to capture memories of each destination as well as providing updates to the University and those interesting in the travelling nomadic studio.[4]

1 Singha, Sumita, Linkedin.com, 'Why is it so expensive to study architecture?', (15 Dec 2014) accessed at linkedin.com/pulse/why-so-expensive-study-sumita-sinha/ (27/07/2018)

2 David, Eli, Become Nomad, 'Digital Nomad Lifestyle The Modern Nomad', accessed at becomenomad.com/digital-nomad-lifestyle/ (27/07/2018)

3 London School of Architecture, 'Why We Set Up a New School', accessed at the-lsa.org/about/usp/ (27/07/2018)

4 David, Eli, Become Nomad, 'Living a Nomadic Lifestyle', accessed at becomenomad.com/tips-on-how-not-to-lose-your-sanity-on-the-move/ (27/07/2018)

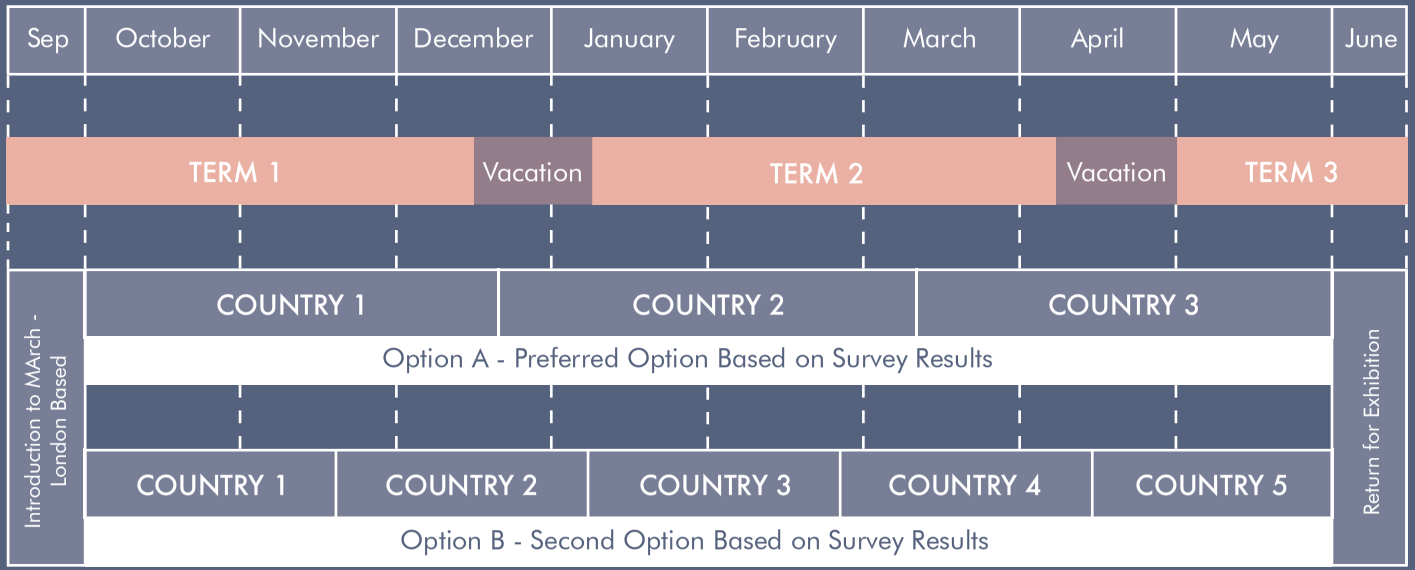
Photo Credit: Paresh Parmar

Photo Credit: Lily Xulong Zhao

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Through the research findings from the paper and online surveys, the majority of staff (41.7%) believed the nomadic course should visit between 3-5 countries in one academic year. Most students, however, preferred 0-3 countries (36%), while 32% and the option to see 3-5 countries came a close second. We will therefore use 3 countries as an example for a more detailed programme structure below. As the academic year consists of 8-9 months (September – May/June), a studio programme structure will be based on one country roughly per a duration of three months.

By allowing the students to spend a longer amount of time in one country (around three months), a deepened knowledge will be acquired by the students as they will benefit and learn from their surrounding environment, culture, demographics and architecture over a longer period of time, which also allows the students to explore more of the specific country, instead of having a tourists' perception. As current architecture field trips tend to last around 2 weeks, this often results in constant travel from city to city in order to view and experience as many relevant architectural precedents as you can, and whilst it is important to document as much information as possible during a short stay, it may limit the understanding of the architectural precedent and the environment or culture of the place. It is however important to note this is very dependent on the particular country visited, as some are much larger and varied in culture and context, while other countries are smaller and therefore offer less in diversity.


Sep
October
November
December
January
February
March
April
May
June
TERM 1
Vacation
TERM 2
Vacation
TERM 3
Introduction to MArch - London Based
COUNTRY 1
COUNTRY 2
COUNTRY 3
Return for Exhibition
Option A - Preferred Option Based on Survey Results
COUNTRY 1
COUNTRY 2
COUNTRY 3
COUNTRY 4
COUNTRY 5
Option B - Second Option Based on Survey Results

Key dates within the academic year must be taken into consideration before creating a programme structure for the nomadic course, in order to ensure students can complete submissions with ease, have necessary access to particulars/ specific requirements and follow the course layout as much as possible to match with the necessary RIBA accreditation requirements. The programme structure will consider these dates to guarantee accessible internet for online submissions, a fixed location (meaning there will be a less or no travelling around these dates), and essential support from tutors prior to the final submissions. The fixed location and essential support from tutors means students and tutors must meet at a specific location prior to the submission which will give students a ground base and flexibility to submit their work without unnecessary hassle.

The following key dates are based on the 2017/2018 academic year programme for the March RIBA Part II.
Submission deadlines, important reviews and talks are highlighted in bold.

TERM 1

- 18 September - MArch Staff Meeting
- 22 September - MArch II Introduction
- 25 September - Design Studio Introductions & Voting
- 26 September - Dissertation Groups Reconvene (March II)
- 27 September - Digital Design Introductions and Voting (MArch I)
- 28 September - First Design Studio Teaching Day
- 30 Oct/2 Nov - Design Studio Cross-Reviews I
- 06 November - Critical Practice Hand-in Pt 1 (MArch1)
- 21/22 November - Dissertation Presentations (MArch II)
- 4 December - Critical Practice Hand-in Pt 2 (MArch I)
  6 December - MArch Course Committee Meeting
- Monday 11/14 December - Individual Design Studio End of Term Reviews

TERM 2

08 January - MArch Staff Meeting

- **08 January - Digital Design Hand-in (MArch I)**
- **10 January - Dissertation Hand-in (MArch II)**

11 January - Term 2 Design Studio Resumes

- **23 January - Design Studio Interim Portfolio Hand-in (MArch I & II)**

23 January - Wednesday 24 January - Interim Portfolio Assessment (Studio Staff)

25 January - Interim Portfolio Moderation (Studio Staff)

- **22 to 26 January - Applied Technical Studies: Studio Meetings (MArch II)**
- **19/22 February - Design Studio Cross-Reviews II**

12/15 March - ATS Visiting Consultant tutorials begin (MArch II) - ends 6 April

09/12 April - Design Studio Technical Studies Review

TERM 3

01 May - MArch Staff Meeting

- **03 May - Strategic + ATS Technical Report Hand-in (MArch II)**

03 May - Term 3 Design Studio Resumes

- **08 May - History & Theory essay / dissertation abstract hand-in (MArch I)**
- **10 May/14 May - Final Crit/Cross-Review III**
- **11 May - ATS1 Technical Report Hand-in (MArch I)**
- **23 May - Design Studio Final Portfolio Hand-in (MArch I)**
- **24 May - Design Studio Final Portfolio Hand-in (MArch II)**

29–30 May - Internal Portfolio Assessment Period (Studio Staff)

31 May - Internal Portfolio Moderation

05/06 June - External Examiner Interviews

12 June - Assessment Board

14 June - Results published, and: OPEN Exhibition Private View

15 June - Awards Night

22 June – Term Ends [1]

PROPOSED PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The proposed programme structure covers visits to three countries; India, Bangladesh and China, on a fortnightly basis. The programme structure ensures there is a fixed location for proposed deadlines and explains what will be seen in each country. The programme is largely based on our own experience from previous field trips during our MArch course, part of Design Studio 12. In Year 1 we visited India, New Delhi – Ahmedabad – Mumbai (3 weeks) and in Year 2 we travelled to China, Beijing – Hong Kong – Shanghai, (2.5 weeks).

TERM 1

18 SEPTEMBER – 02 OCTOBER

- 18 September - MArch Staff Meeting
- 22 September - MArch II Introduction
- 25 September - Design Studio Introductions & Voting
- 26 September - Dissertation Groups Reconvene (March II)
- 27 September - Digital Design Introductions and Voting (MArch I)
- 28 September - First Design Studio Teaching Day

28 September/02 October – Introducing studio unit, explaining brief, purpose of studio and plan for the academic year.
London based for introductions, voting, interviews and preparation for travels.

02 OCTOBER – 16 OCTOBER

02/09 October - Confirmation of obtaining visas, vaccinations, currency and essentials for traveling

09/16 October - Flight from London (Gatwick) to New Delhi;
2 week stop including 3 days in Agra to see the Red Fort and Taj Mahal
Travel in New Delhi and Agra via rickshaw
Accommodation at hostel and hotels
New Delhi to Agra transportation via arranged coach

16 OCTOBER – 30 OCTOBER

16/30 October – New Delhi:
Exploring shanti towns, President's house, New Delhi Craft Museum
Accommodation at hostels and hotels
Travel in New Delhi via rickshaw

16/27 October – New Delhi to Rajasthan via night bus;
Two week stop in Rajasthan visiting Abhaneri, Jaipur, Kishangarh, Ajmer, Jodhpur
Visit The Barefoot College in Ajmer, which helps connect rural communities by improving their wellbeing, education, profession and access to essential nutrition
Travel in Rajasthan via rickshaws and mini-bus
Accommodation at hostels and hotels

27/30 October – Fixed location at hotel in Rajasthan. Preparation for Design Studio Review.

30 OCTOBER – 13 NOVEMBER

- **30 October/02 November - Design Studio Cross-Reviews I**

02/07 November – Jodhpur to Sidphur via night bus:
5 day stop exploring the town of Sidhpur
Accommodation in local haveli and hotels
Fixed Location for Critical Practice Hand-in

- **06 November - Critical Practice Hand-in Pt 1 (MArch1)**

07/13 November – Sidphur to Patan via coach:
1 week exploring Patan, visiting stepwells, patola sari (hand woven garment clothing) construction, and local villages
Accommodation in local villages
Transport via rickshaws and public transport

13 NOVEMBER – 27 NOVEMBER

13/17 November – Patan to Ahmedabad via coach:
Exploring central Ahmedabad, local villages, markets and Gandhi Ashram paper factory

Transport via rickshaws at the House of MG
Accommodation in local haveli and hostels

17/21 November – Fixed location in Haveli in central Ahmedabad for Dissertation Presentations to be sent digitally.

- **21/22 November - Dissertation Presentations (MArch II)**

22/27 November – Central Ahmedabad:
Visiting famous architectural buildings by Louis Kahn, Le Corbusier, Balkrishna Doshi, Charles Correa and more.
University collaboration with Cept University Department of Architecture
Transport via rickshaws at the House of MG
Accommodation in local haveli and hostels

27 NOVEMBER – 11/14 DECEMBER

27/28 November – Ahmedabad to Aurangabad, Maharashtra via coach:
Visit the Ellora Caves
Accommodation in Hotel
Transport via coach/minibus

28 November/01 December – Aurangabad to Sakharwadi, Maharashtra via coach:
Visit the Jetavan Centre designed by Samdeep Padora and Associates
Accommodation with local community and village

01/02 December – Sakharwadi to Pune via public transport
Fixed location at hotel in preparation for Critical Practice digital submission

- **04 December - Critical Practice Hand-in Pt 2 (MArch I)**

05/11December – Pune to Mumbai via public transport (bus or train)
Visit Samdeep Padora and Associates Office
Visit and collaborate with Sir JJ College of Architecture
Explore shanti towns and slums in India such as Dharavi

06 December - MArch Course Committee Meeting
11/14 December – Fixed Location in Mumbai for upcoming review.

- **Monday 11/14 December - Individual Design Studio End of Term Reviews**

14 DECEMBER /11 JANUARY - Student Vacation: Students are free to travel home or elsewhere but must return when the studio resumes

TERM 2

08 JANUARY - 23 JANUARY

08 January - MArch Staff Meeting

- **08 January - Digital Design Hand-in (MArch I)**
- **10 January - Dissertation Hand-in (MArch II)**

11 January - Term 2 Design Studio Resumes

11/12 January – Arrive in Khulna, Bangladesh at the Khan Jahan Ali Airport

12/19 January – Khulna, Bangladesh:
Explore architecture, landscapes and local communities
Accommodation at hostels and hotels

19/23 January – Fixed location for portfolio submission

23 JANUARY – 05 FEBRUARY

- **23 January - Design Studio Interim Portfolio Hand-in (MArch I & II)**

23 January - Wednesday 24 January - Interim Portfolio Assessment (Studio Staff)

25 January - Interim Portfolio Moderation (Studio Staff)

- **22 to 26 January - Applied Technical Studies: Studio Meetings (MArch II)**
  Set up Skype call to Applied Technical Tutors

27 January/05 February – Khulna to Bogra, Bangladesh via coach:
Visit ancient Mahasthangarh village and see the historic landmarks
Accommodation with the local village
Transportation via public transport

05 FEBRUARY – 26 FEBRUARY

05/16 February – Bogra to Dhaka, Bangladesh via coach:
Visit Louis Kahn's Dhaka building, explore urban city environments, cultural buildings such as Star Mosque and Ahsan Manzil, and local communities

Accommodation in local hostels and hotels
Transportation via public transport

16/19 February – Fixed Location in Dhaka for Cross Review preparations

- **19/22 February - Design Studio Cross-Reviews II**

22 February/02 March– Central Dhaka:
Continue exploring urban city environments, cultural buildings, society and local communities
Accommodation in local hostels and hotels
Transportation via public transport

26 FEBRUARY – 12 MARCH

02/09 March – Dhaka Bangladesh to Hong Kong via flight:
Visit ShaTin, Happy Valley, street markets, HK City Edge, New Territories farms, Tian Tan Buddha, Victoria Peak.
Accommodation in central hostels
Public transport via metro and buses

09/12 March – Fixed Location in Hong Kong for Cross Reviews preparations

12 MARCH – 26 MARCH

12/19 March Continue in Hong Kong:
Visit ShaTin, Happy Valley, street markets, HK City Edge, New Territories farms, Tian Tan Buddha, Victoria Peak.
Accommodation in central hostels
Public transport via metro and buses

12/15 March - ATS Visiting Consultant tutorials begin (MArch II) - ends 6 April

19/26 March – Hong Kong to Shenzhen via train:
Explore Shenzhen residential districts, HK Wetland Park, Tien Hou Temple, Nanshan Mountain, Hakka villages
Accommodation at local hostels
Public transport via metro and buses

26 MARCH – 09 APRIL

26 March/09 April – Shenzhen to Longyan via train:
Visit Fujian Hakka Tolou district and villages
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via mini bus

09 APRIL – 23 APRIL

09/23 April – Longyan to Xiapu via train:
Visit Xiapu Fujian mudflats, fishing village, Chi'an village.
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via public transport and mini bus

16/27 APRIL – Student Vacation: Students are free to travel home or elsewhere but must return when the studio resumes and meet at an agreed location

23 APRIL – 30 APRIL

23/30 April – Xiapu to Hangzhou via train:
Visit New Academy of Art designed by Wang Shu, Amateur Architecture Studio, Zhongshuge-Hangzhou designed by XL-Muse, West Lake, Zhongshan Road, Wencun Village, XiXi wetland estate and local communities
Visit Wang Shu and Amateur Architecture Studio office
Collaborate with China Academy of Art, Xiangshan Campus
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via public transport and mini bus

TERM 3

01 MAY – 14 MAY

01/14 May – Continue in Hangzhou:
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via public transport and mini bus

Fixed location for upcoming digital submissions
01 May - MArch Staff Meeting

- 03 May - Strategic + ATS Technical Report Hand-in (MArch II)
- 08 May - History & Theory essay / dissertation abstract hand-in (MArch I)
- 10 May/14 May - Final Crit/Cross-Review III
- 11 May - ATS1 Technical Report Hand-in (MArch I)

14 MAY – 28 MAY

14/21 May - Hangzhou to Shanghai via train:
Shanghai Bund, City God Temple, Yu Gardens
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via public transport

21/23 May – Fixed location for upcoming digital submissions

- **23 May - Design Studio Final Portfolio Hand-in (MArch I)**
- **24 May - Design Studio Final Portfolio Hand-in (MArch II)**

25 May/01 June Shanghai to Beijing via flight:
Visit Great Wall of China (Mituanyu) including a one night stay in a local farm house, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, Temple of Heaven, Arts District, Donghuamen night market and silk and pearl markets.
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via public transport such as metro and buses

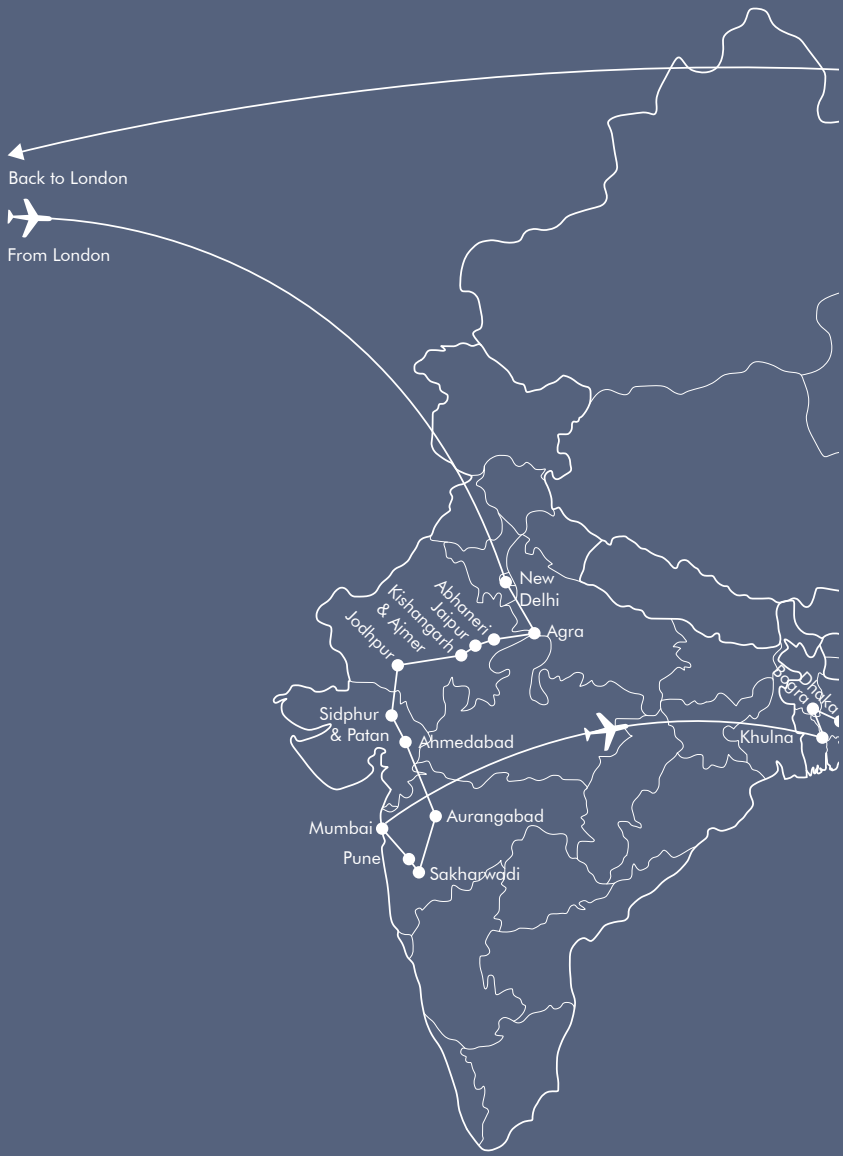
28 MAY – 11 JUNE

28 May/01 June – Continue in Beijing:
Visit Great Wall of China (Mituanyu) including a one night stay in a local farm house, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, Temple of Heaven, Arts District, Donghuamen night market and silk and pearl markets.
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via public transport such as metro and buses

01 June Beijing to London via flight: Return to London for Exhibition Preparation
05/06 June - External Examiner Interviews

JUNE 11 – 25 JUNE

12 June - Assessment Board
14 June - Results published, and: OPEN Exhibition Private View
15 June - Awards Night


Back to London
From London
New Delhi
Agra
Abhaneri
Jaipur
Kishangarh & Ajmer
Jodhpur
Sidphur & Patan
Ahmedabad
Mumbai
Pune
Aurangabad
Sakharwadi
Khulna

Beijing
Shanghai
Hangzhou
Xiapu
Hakka Villages
Shenzhen
Hong Kong

1 The University of Westminster, Master of Architecture (RIBA Pt2) 2017/18 Key Dates

Photo Credit: Paresh Parmar

Photo Credit: Mirabell Schmidt

COST ANALYSIS

The cost analysis study of the Nomadic Studio is crucial, as well as a comparison with the average expenditure of people living in London, in order to understand the feasibility of travelling for a whole year. The following study has been produced by using the programme structure, our survey results from students of the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment (100 students) as well as known expenditure from our previous University field trips to India and China.

Following the survey, 33.8% believed finance and funding of the course would be a major problem, one student referring to the University field trip as a major expenditure in the existing MArch course. The finance issue was often brought up as a possible obstacle through verbal discussions with our peers and this is why we included a question in our survey asking if the students believe more would be inclined to join the course, if the course was proved to cost the same as living in London. This question was, however, only answered by 62 students, as it was added at a later date when 38 people had already filled in the questionnaire. However, 58 out of the 62 students (94%) who responded to this question believed this to be the case, that more students would find the course appealing if the cost would stay the same, and we expect most people to have answered similarly if all had been posed with the question.

In order to make this comparison study, we also asked students how much they currently spend on living costs (including all bills) while studying at University. Most students, 30%, spend between £500 and £750, while 25% spend between £750 and £1000.

14% spend more than this; 11% pay between £1000 and £1500 and 3% pay more than £1500. 10% spend less than £500 and 15% live at home, while 6% preferred not to state their expenses. To compare the monthly expenditure on the travelling course with expenditure on living in London, an average cost has been calculated from the information gathered; £809.37 per month. This average does not include travel costs in London, but for this we will use an average figure of £135 per month (a study by Deutsche Bank in 2017).[1] Students have 1/3 off travel costs in London, therefore students will spend an average figure of £90 per month.

Average cost of accommodation based on survey:
£809.37 per month

Average cost of accommodation including travel costs:
£899.37 per month

ACCOMMODATION COSTS AT UNIVERSITY

The University of Westminster provides accommodation for prospective students near its campuses; Marylebone, Cavendish, Harrow, Regent Street and Little Titchfield Street. The halls of residence are based in Harrow, Marylebone, Hoxton and Wembley.

Marylebone
Weekly rent: £178.57 - £269.50
Monthly rent: £714.28 - £1078.00

Hoxton
Weekly rent: £178.99
Monthly rent: £715.96

Wembley
Weekly rent: £192.00
Monthly rent: £715.96

Harrow
Weekly rent: £127.54 - £230.02
Monthly rent: £715.96 - £920.08[2]

As we have seen, the majority of students spend a maximum of £750 per month (55%), 25% of these paying less than £500 or no rent at all as they live at home, while 39% can afford a rent higher than £750. Therefore, although the University aims to provide suitable accommodation as per the above figures, the rent can often be towards the high end and exceed many student budgets, especially for people looking for student accommodation in central London.

The University also promotes private accommodation if a student's application for halls has been unsuccessful and a support team can be contacted through the University to explore options available.

COST ANALYSIS AGAINST PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Although we are using the average of £899.37 per month for our budget study, we are aiming to provide a course cheaper than that, in order to apply to the largest amount of students and budgets.

TERM 1

18 SEPTEMBER – 02 OCTOBER

18 September - MArch Staff Meeting
22 September - MArch II Introduction
25 September - Design Studio Introductions & Voting
26 September - Dissertation Groups Reconvene (March II)
27 September - Digital Design Introductions and Voting (MArch I)
28 September - First Design Studio Teaching Day

28 September/02 October – Introducing studio unit, explaining brief, purpose of studio and plan for the academic year.
London based for introductions, voting, interviews and preparation for travels.

Temporary Accommodation in Student Halls

02 OCTOBER – 16 OCTOBER

02/09 October - Confirmation of obtaining visas, vaccinations, currency and essentials for traveling

India Visa: £120
Bangladesh Visa Single Entry: £105
China Visa: £125
Travel Insurance: £135 (Potentially covered by the University of Westminster)

Total: £485

09/16 October - Flight from London (Gatwick) to New Delhi;
2 week stop including 3 days in Agra to see the Red Fort and Taj Mahal
Travel in New Delhi and Agra via rickshaw
Accommodation at hostel and hotels
New Delhi to Agra transportation via arranged coach

UK to Delhi Flight: £300
Accommodation per day: £10
Travel costs per day: £2
Delhi to Agra return coach: £20

UK to Delhi Flight: £300
Accommodation: £70
Travel costs: £14
Delhi to Agra return coach: £20

Total: £424

16 OCTOBER – 30 OCTOBER

16/30 October – New Delhi:
Exploring shanti towns, President's house, New Delhi Craft Museum
Accommodation at hostels and hotels
Travel in New Delhi via rickshaw

16/27 October – New Delhi to Rajasthan via night bus;
Two week stop in Rajasthan visiting Abhaneri, Jaipur, Kishangarh, Ajmer, Jodhpur
Visit The Barefoot College in Ajmer, which helps connect rural communities by improving their wellbeing, education, profession and access to essential nutrition
Travel in Rajasthan via rickshaws and mini-bus
Accommodation at hostels and hotels

27/30 October – Fixed location at hotel in Rajasthan. Preparation for Design Studio Review.

Night bus: £3
Accommodation per day: £10
Travel costs per day: £2

Night bus: £3
Accommodation: £140
Travel costs: £28

Total: £171

30 OCTOBER – 13 NOVEMBER

30 October/02 November - Design Studio Cross-Reviews I

02/07 November – Jodhpur to Sidhpur via night bus:
5 day stop exploring the town of Sidhpur
Accommodation in local haveli and hotels
Fixed Location for Critical Practice Hand-in

06 November - Critical Practice Hand-in Pt 1 (MArch1)

07/13 November – Sidhpur to Patan via coach:
1 week exploring Patan, visiting stepwells, patola sari (hand woven garment clothing) construction, and local villages
Accommodation in local villages
Transport via rickshaws and public transport

Night bus: £5
Accommodation per day: £10
Travel costs per day: £2

Night bus: £5
Accommodation: £140
Travel costs: £28

Total: £173

13 NOVEMBER – 27 NOVEMBER

13/17 November – Patan to Ahmedabad via coach:
Exploring central Ahmedabad, local villages, markets and Gandhi Ashram paper factory
Transport via rickshaws at the House of MG
Accommodation in local haveli and hostels

17/21 November – Fixed location in Haveli in central Ahmedabad for Dissertation Presentations to be sent digitally.

21/22 November - Dissertation Presentations (MArch II)

22/27 November – Central Ahmedabad:
Visiting famous architectural buildings by Louis Kahn, Le Corbusier, Balkrishna Doshi, Charles Correa and more.
University collaboration with Cept University Department of Architecture
Transport via rickshaws at the House of MG
Accommodation in local haveli and hostels

Patan to Ahmedabad coach: £10
Accommodation per day: £15
Travel costs per day: £2

Patan to Ahmedabad coach: £10
Accommodation per day: £210
Travel costs per day: £28

Total: £248

27 NOVEMBER – 11/14 DECEMBER

27/28 November – Ahmedabad to Aurangabad, Maharashtra via coach:
Visit the Ellora Caves
Accommodation in Hotel
Transport via coach/minibus

28 November/01 December – Aurangabad to Sakharwadi, Maharashtra via coach:

Visit the Jetavan Centre designed by Samdeep Padora and Associates
Accommodation with local community and village

01/02 December – Sakharwadi to Pune via public transport
Fixed location at hotel in preparation for Critical Practice digital submission

04 December - Critical Practice Hand-in Pt 2 (MArch I)

05/11December – Pune to Mumbai via public transport (bus or train)
Visit Samdeep Padora and Associates Office
Visit and collaborate with Sir JJ College of Architecture
Explore shanti towns and slums in India such as Dharavi

06 December - MArch Course Committee Meeting
11/14 December – Fixed Location in Mumbai for upcoming review.
Monday 11/14 December - Individual Design Studio End of Term Reviews

Accommodation per day: £15
Travel costs per day: £2

Accommodation: £255
Travel costs: £34

Total: £289

14 DECEMBER /11 JANUARY - Student Vacation: Students are free to travel home or elsewhere but must return when the studio resumes

TERM 2
08 JANUARY - 23 JANUARY
08 January - MArch Staff Meeting
08 January - Digital Design Hand-in (MArch I)
10 January - Dissertation Hand-in (MArch II)
11 January - Term 2 Design Studio Resumes

11/12 January – Arrive in Khulna, Bangladesh at the Khan Jahan Ali Airport

12/19 January – Khulna, Bangladesh:
Explore architecture, landscapes and local communities

Accommodation at hostels and hotels

19/23 January – Fixed location for portfolio submission

Flight from Mumbai to Bangladesh: £120
Accommodation per day: £10
Travel costs per day: £2

Flight from Mumbai to Bangladesh: £120
Accommodation: £150
Travel costs: £30

Total: £300

23 JANUARY – 05 FEBRUARY

23 January - Design Studio Interim Portfolio Hand-in (MArch I & II)
23 January - Wednesday 24 January - Interim Portfolio Assessment (Studio Staff)
25 January - Interim Portfolio Moderation (Studio Staff)

22 to 26 January - Applied Technical Studies: Studio Meetings (MArch II) Set up Skype call to Applied Technical Tutors

27 January/05 February – Khulna to Bogra, Bangladesh via coach:
Visit ancient Mahasthangarh village and see the historic landmarks
Accommodation with the local village
Transportation via public transport

Khulna to Bogra: £50
Accommodation per day: £10
Travel costs per day: £2

Khulna to Bogra: £50
Accommodation £130
Travel costs £26

Total: £206

05 FEBRUARY – 26 FEBRUARY

05/16 February – Bogra to Dhaka, Bangladesh via coach:
Visit Louis Kahn's Dhaka building, explore urban city environments, cultural buildings such as Star Mosque and Ahsan Manzil, and local communities
Accommodation in local hostels and hotels
Transportation via public transport

16/19 February – Fixed Location in Dhaka for Cross Review preparations

19/22 February - Design Studio Cross-Reviews II

22 February/02 March– Central Dhaka:
Continue exploring urban city environments, cultural buildings, society and local communities
Accommodation in local hostels and hotels
Transportation via public transport

Bogra to Dhaka: £50
Accommodation per day: £10
Travel costs per day: £2

Bogra to Dhaka: £50
Accommodation: £210
Travel costs: £42

Total: 302

26 FEBRUARY – 12 MARCH

02/09 March – Dhaka Bangladesh to Hong Kong via flight:
Visit ShaTin, Happy Valley, street markets, HK City Edge, New Territories farms, Tian Tan Buddha, Victoria Peak.
Accommodation in central hostels
Public transport via metro and buses

09/12 March – Fixed Location in Hong Kong for Cross Reviews preparations

Bangladesh to Hong Kong: £200
Accommodation per day: £15
Travel costs per day: £6

Bangladesh to Hong Kong: £200
Accommodation: £210
Travel costs: £84

Total: £494

12 MARCH – 26 MARCH

12/19 March Continue in Hong Kong:
Visit ShaTin, Happy Valley, street markets, HK City Edge, New Territories farms, Tian Tan Buddha, Victoria Peak.
Accommodation in central hostels
Public transport via metro and buses

12/15 March - ATS Visiting Consultant tutorials begin (MArch II) - ends 6 April

19/26 March – Hong Kong to Shenzhen via train:
Explore Shenzhen residential districts, HK Wetland Park, Tien Hou Temple, Nanshan Mountain, Hakka villages
Accommodation at local hostels
Public transport via metro and buses

Hong Kong to Shenzhen: £25
Accommodation per day: £15
Travel costs per day: £6

Hong Kong to Shenzhen: £25
Accommodation: £210
Travel costs: £84

Total: £319

26 MARCH – 09 APRIL

26 March/09 April – Shenzhen to Longyan via train:
Visit Fujian Hakka Tolou district and villages
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via mini bus

Shenzhen to Longyan: £25
Accommodation per day: £15
Travel costs per day: £6

Shenzhen to Longyan: £25
Accommodation £210
Travel costs £84

Total: £319

09 APRIL – 23 APRIL

09/23 April – Longyan to Xiapu via train:
Visit Xiapu Fujian mudflats, fishing village, Chi'an village.
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via public transport and mini bus

Longyan to Xiapu: £25
Accommodation per day: £15
Travel costs per day: £6

Longyan Xiapu train: £25
Accommodation: £210
Travel costs: £84

Total: £319

16/27 APRIL – Student Vacation: Students are free to travel home or elsewhere but must return when the studio resumes and meet at an agreed location

23 APRIL – 30 APRIL

23/30 April – Xiapu to Hangzhou via train:
Visit New Academy of Art designed by Wang Shu, Amateur Architecture Studio, Zhongshuge-Hangzhou designed by XL-Muse, West Lake, Zhongshan Road, Wencun Village, XiXi wetland estate and local communities
Visit Wang Shu and Amateur Architecture Studio office
Collaborate with China Academy of Art, Xiangshan Campus
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via public transport and mini bus

Xiapu to Hangzhou: £25
Accommodation per day: £15
Travel costs per day: £6

Xiapu to Hangzou: £25
Accommmodation: £105
Travel costs: £42

Total: £172

TERM 3
01 MAY – 14 MAY
01/14 May – Continue in Hangzhou:
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via public transport and mini bus

Fixed location for upcoming digital submissions
01 May - MArch Staff Meeting
03 May - Strategic + ATS Technical Report Hand-in (MArch II)
08 May - History & Theory essay / dissertation abstract hand-in (MArch I)
10 May/14 May - Final Crit/Cross-Review III
11 May - ATS1 Technical Report Hand-in (MArch I)

Accommodation per day: £15
Travel costs per day: £6

Accommodation: £210
Travel costs: £84

Total: £294

14 MAY – 28 MAY
14/21 May - Hangzhou to Shanghai via train:
Shanghai Bund, City God Temple, Yu Gardens
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via public transport

21/23 May – Fixed location for upcoming digital submissions
23 May - Design Studio Final Portfolio Hand-in (MArch I)
24 May - Design Studio Final Portfolio Hand-in (MArch II)

25 May/01 June Shanghai to Beijing via flight:
Visit Great Wall of China (Mituanyu) including a one night stay in a local farm house, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, Temple of Heaven, Arts District, Donghuamen night market and silk and pearl markets.
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via public transport such as metro and buses

Hangzhou to Shanghai: £25
Accommodation per day: £15
Travel costs per day: £6

Hangzhou to Shanghai: £25
Accommodation: £210
Travel costs: £84

Total: £319

28 MAY – 11 JUNE

28 May/01 June – Continue in Beijing:
Visit Great Wall of China (Mituanyu) including a one night stay in a local farm house, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, Temple of Heaven, Arts District, Donghuamen night market and silk and pearl markets.
Accommodation at local hostels
Travel via public transport such as metro and buses

01 June Beijing to London via flight: Return to London for Exhibition Preparation
05/06 June - External Examiner Interviews

Accommodation per day: £15
Travel costs per day: £6
Beijing to London: £250

Accommodation: £75
Travel costs: £30

Beijing to London: £250

Total: £355

JUNE 11 – 25 JUNE

12 June - Assessment Board

14 June - Results published, and: OPEN Exhibition Private View

15 June - Awards Night

Total Cost: £5189

Monthly Cost: £648.62

CONCLUSION

The total cost for the proposed Nomadic Studio programme structure totals up to £5189, meaning students would pay an average cost of £648.62 per month. This cost includes accommodation, visa applications prices, insurance and transport costs, including flights and other transport to various countries, cities and villages with trains and buses. The cost analysis therefore suggests the travelling course would be £250.75 cheaper per month than living in London, based on our average of £899.37 per month. Although there may be unexpected costs whilst travelling which we will cover next, it is clear travelling abroad for one academic year is expected to be less expensive than, at worst equally costly, to living and studying in London.

1 BBC News, bbc.co.uk, 'London's monthly travel cost 'most expensive in world'', (4 May 2017) accessed at bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-39806865 (27/07/2018)

2 The University of Westminster, 'Our Halls', accessed at westminster.ac.uk/study/accommodation (27/07/2018)

3 The University of Westminster, 'Private Rented Accommodation', accessed at westminster.ac.uk/study/accommodation/private-rented-accommodation (27/07/2018)

Photo Credit: Mirabell Schmidt

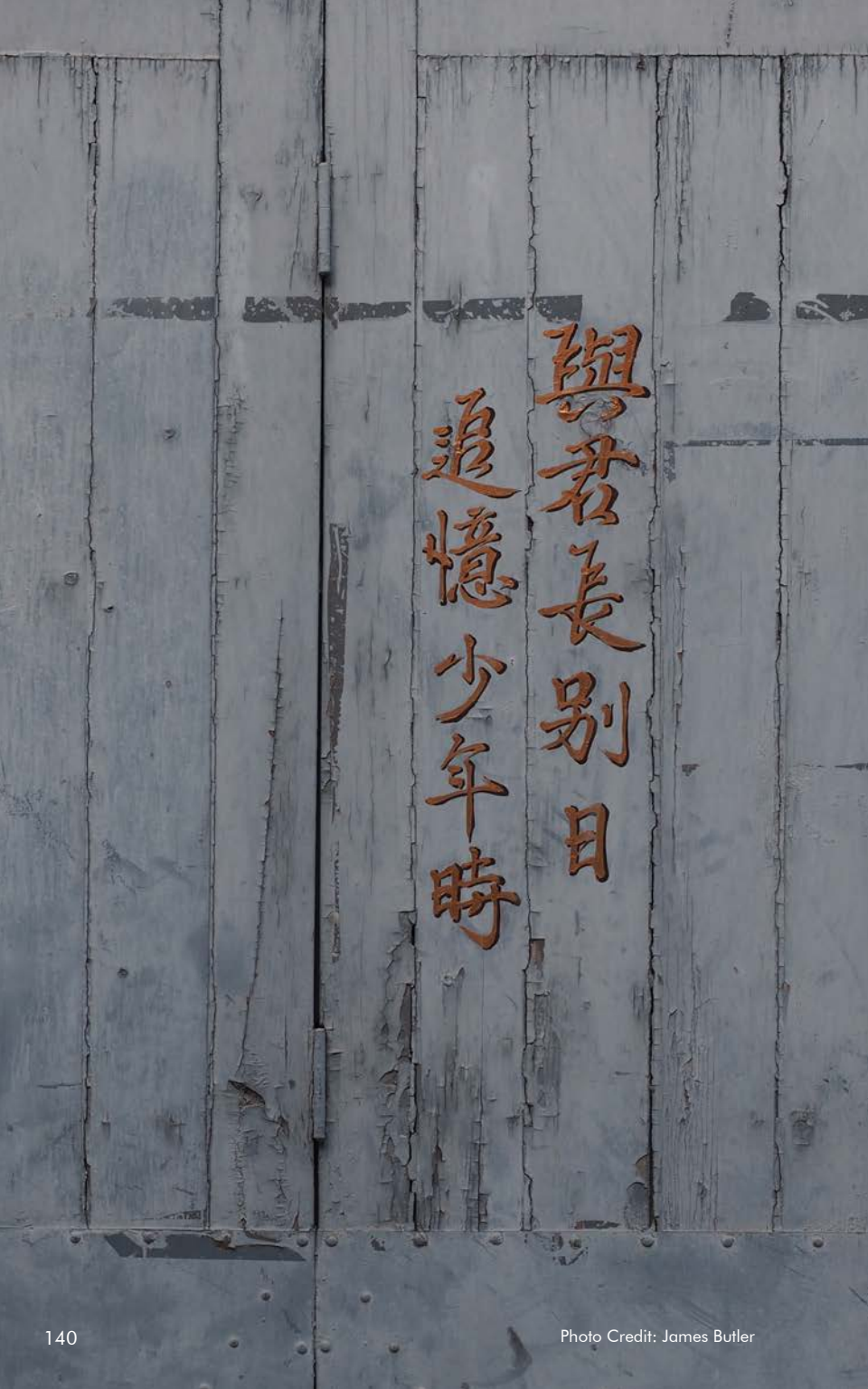


Photo Credit: James Butler

FUNDINGS OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

The University of Westminster offers various funding opportunities that promotes academic learning through travelling internationally and learning new experiences.

The Distant Horizons Awards offers undergraduate students, specifically studying at the University of Westminster, funding towards travel costs, accommodation and fees to individuals partaking in a university approved academic or career related event for up to one academic year.[1]

The 125 Fund and the Quinten Hogg Trust aims to enhance student's employability by supporting projects which benefit personal and professional development for current undergraduate and postgraduate students at the university. Typically, application for funding are for purchasing new equipment, developing a relevant university project and undertaking personal or professional opportunities to progress.[2]

EXTERNAL TRAVEL STUDY SCHEMES, SCHOLARSHIPS AND FUNDING

RIBA offer scholarship and bursaries for students in need of funding for their architectural studies, varying from tuition costs, everyday expenses, field trips and material costs.[3]

The RIBA Norman Foster Travelling Scholarship is one of the most recognised scholarships offered and has close links to proposed nomadic studio.

'As a student I won a prize that allowed me to spend a summer travelling through Europe and to study first hand buildings and cities that I knew only from the pages of books. It was a revelation - liberating and exhilarating in so many ways.'
Norman Foster [4]

Norman Foster, a leading architect of his generation,[5] stressed the importance of travelling and learning through his personal experience which sparked the travelling scholarship which awards a nominated student £7000 who is able to provide discovery of new and exciting innovative issues on counties, cities and towns in need of survival. The scholarship is specifically for students of Architecture who have completed Part 1 studies and be enrolled in a RIBA Part 2 course or be been granted a placement offer.[6]

The RIBA AHR Stephen Williams Scholarship is an annual funding scheme which provides £6000 for up to 12 months

of postgraduate studies in the UK or abroad. The scholarships ambitions are for students 'to make a significant contribution in the field of architecture'. It has the support of partners AHR Architects, who remember past Director, Stephen Williams, and provide the winning application a mentor for the duration of the scholarship.[7]

The RIBA Boyd Auger Scholarship offers £5000 to assist research proposals by architecture students and graduates which must involve international travel between 6 and 12 months. The scholarship was produced following a donation from Mrs Margot Auger who donated money to RIBA in memory of Boyd Auger, her late husband who was an architect and civil engineer.[8]

Whilst the Norman Foster Travelling Scholarship, AHR Stephen Williams and Boyd Auger Scholarship all involve funding and travelling, RIBA do provide funding in order to aid students with their education.

These include:

- RIBA Student Support Fund
- RIBA Wren Insurance Association Scholarships
- RIBA Part 1 and Part 2 Bursaries
- RIBA BSR Giles Worlsley Fellowship
- RIBA Ice McAslan Bursary
- RIBA Research Fund
- RIBA LKE Ozolins Studentships
- RIBA Gordon Ricketts Memorial Fund

Externally, there are a huge number of volunteer scholarships and grants. Many organisations provide the opportunity to volunteer abroad with affordably priced programmes.[9]

An example of architecture related schemes is the Build Abroad Travel Scholarship which aims to 'build and repair communities across the world' which entails of a minimum one week to 6 month programme in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nepal and Peru for the starting price of $625 which extends to $6490. The scholarship offers airport pickup, pre-departure support, accommodation, 2 meals a day, in country coordination and support, organised construction projects and access to free wifi for communication – insurance and flights are to be purchased by the participant. As it is related to construction, participants are only eligible if they are a current student studying architecture, civil engineering, interior design or a related field or have graduated with a degree in those subjects within 5 years.[10] Participants are encouraged to fundraise in order to pay for volunteering.[11]

Another example is ASF-UK, Architecture Sans Frontières United Kingdom, aims to use future architects and professional's skills to 'empower impoverished communities and help them create better living environments. They are supported with two structures; Change by Design and Resilience by Design, which addresses urban contexts and sustainable development approaches. There focus in 2018 through Change by Design focuses on re-imagining urban housing in Cape Town, South Africa, which seeks volunteers to travel for 5 to 12 weeks.[12] The scholarship offers meals, accommodation and travel for 12 days at a cost of £800 – flights and airport pickups are to be purchased by the participant.[13] Similar to the Build Abroad Travel Scholarship, participants are encouraged to fundraise to aid payments for volunteering.

The shared familiarity of the external scholarships is the awareness in understanding, developing and designing for communities internationally by using the skills of the next generation. There is a common interest in ensuring people within the field of design are engaging with architecture and communities and that is shared with the nomadic studio. Whilst there are important similarities, the nomadic studio differs from existing organisations with it being imbedded in to a recognised course at the University of Westminster, therefore there will be a greater emphasis on learning to ensure its participants are meeting outcomes and objects related to their briefs and the Masters of Architecture course. It also provides students to travel for one academic year whereas most existing volunteering programmes only provide durations up to 6 months and move to multiple locations rather than a fixed location providing students/participants freedom to explore neighbouring cities.

1 The University of Westminster, 'Distant Horizons Awards', accessed at westminster.ac.uk/study/current-students/your-studies/scholarship-information/distant-horizons-awards (27/07/2018)

2 The University of Westminster, 'The 125 Fund Awards', accessed at westminster.ac.uk/study/current-students/support-and-facilities/the-125-fund-awards (27/07/2018)

3 RIBA Architecuture.com, 'General Advice on Funding your Architectural Studies', (2017) accessed at architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/advice-on-funding-your-architectural-studies (27/07/2018)

4 RIBA Architecuture.com, 'RIBA Norman Foster Scholarship', (2017) accessed at architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/advice-on-funding-your-architectural-studies/funding-opportunities-for-students-of-architecture/riba-norman-foster-travelling-scholarship (27/07/2018)

5 Archdaily, Archdaily, 'Norman Foster', accessed at archdaily.com/tag/norman-foster (27/07/2018)

6 RIBA Architecuture.com, 'RIBA Norman Foster Scholarship', (2017) accessed at architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/advice-on-funding-your-architectural-studies/funding-opportunities-for-students-of-architecture/riba-norman-foster-travelling-scholarship (27/07/2018)

7 RIBA Architecuture.com, 'RIBA AHR Stephen Williams Scholarship', (2017) accessed at architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/advice-on-funding-your-architectural-studies/funding-opportunities-for-students-of-architecture/riba-ahr-stephen-williams-scholarship (27/07/2018)

8 RIBA Architecuture.com, 'RIBA Boyd Auger Scholarship', (2017) accessed at architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/advice-on-funding-your-architectural-studies/funding-opportunities-for-students-of-architecture/riba-boyd-auger-scholarship (27/07/2018)

9 Vandenberg, Sarah, Volunteer Forever, '200 Volunteer Abroad & Study Abroad Scholarships & Grants' (29 Mar 2017) accessed at volunteerforever.com/article_post/200-volunteer-abroad-study-abroad-scholarships-grants (27/07/2018)

10 BuildAbroad, buildabroad.org, 'Travel Scholarship', accessed at buildabroad.org/travel-scholarship/# (27/07/2018)

11 BuildAbroad, buildabroad.org, 'Program Costs, accessed at buildabroad.org/about-us/faq/program-costs/ (27/07/2018)

12 Architecture sans frontières, asf-uk.org, 'About Us', (2018) accessed at asf-uk.org/about-us/ (27/07/2018)

13 Architecture sans frontières, asf-uk.org, 'Change by Design', (2018) accessed at asf-uk.org/change-by-design-capetown-2018/ (27/07/2018)

Photo Credit: James Butler

RISK ASSESSMENT

Travelling is definitely riskier than staying at home, but with a sensible approach and appropriate risk management strategies, these can be mitigated. The following risks have been identified, related to a scale on 'likelihood', 'severity' and 'risk level', and action plans have been put in place to deal with them.

Theft or Loss of Belongings

Likelihood: Medium
Severity: Low - Medium
Risk: Medium

Travelling, especially if moving location often, involves carrying all, or most of, your belongings with you which greatly increases the chances for theft and loss of belongings. The level risk and type of theft/scam will depend on the country and region visited. Students will be advised to not bring too many valuables with them, except for the most important and crucial elements; such as passport, money, phone, camera, laptop and a hard-drive.

Action:
We propose all students will need to purchase (or be provided with from the University of Westminster) a backpackers travel insurance which covers their belongings for all countries visited, and which includes cover for gadgets; smartphones, laptops, tablets and cameras. The Students will also have the opportunity to back up all their work on the unlimited storage on Google Drive offered by the University, as well as on external hard-drives, in case there is no internet connection at every location visited.

Violent Crime

Likelihood: Low
Severity: High
Risk: Medium

Tourists can often be considered easy targets, especially if travelling in unfamiliar areas in developing countries, either for robbing scenarios or other violent crime.

Action:
Reduce risk by doing prior research and avoiding problematic locations and areas known for unsafe and unsocial behaviour, especially at night-time. Also, all students will always need to travel in groups of two or more, depending on the location. Never show off your valuables, and if confronted, don't resist unless it is your only way out. The best advice is to trust your intuition and if a place doesn't feel right, get out.

Health Risk

Likelihood: Medium
Severity: Low - High
Risk: Medium

Health issues, if not located at home, can become more problematic as you are in a new setting with sometimes unfamiliar methods of dealing with health problems, such as doctor's appointments and hospital environments.

Action:
Similar to the theft scenarios, all students are to purchase, or be provided with, a health travel insurance plan which covers a variety of health issues and sicknesses. Prior to travelling, each student is also to do a full medical check and be given information, by a doctor, regarding the specific destination's health risks and how to deal with them in emergency scenarios. Vaccines are to be provided to all students, as well as emergency first aid medicines and other useful medication.[1]

Finance

Likelihood: Medium
Severity: Low - High
Risk: Medium

There are risks which could lead to supplementary financial expenses along the trip, which weren't originally taken into account. These could be issues such as hospital bills, missed flights, damages caused by the students, weather inflicting on travel plans, unexpected entrance fees or lost passports.

Action:
None of these are known and all of them unexpected, and the best action plan is to make sure all students have enough money on their account to cover unforeseen expenses, or have family members at home who can financially help the student, through bank transfers, if required.

Transportation

Likelihood: Low
Severity: Low - High
Risk: Low

Using transportation, especially in developing countries, can lead to accidents. Traffic regulations, quality of infrastructure and driving habits can differ massively from country to country.[2]

Action:
If located in a place with perceived heightened risk, consider spending more on a decent bus company or airline. Seats in the middle, or in the aisle, of a bus are also considered safer in case of an accident. Since students on the Nomadic Course may sometimes take different routes to certain destinations, it is up to the student to assess the risk and its severity.

Border Control and Visa Issues

Likelihood: Low
Severity: Medium
Risk: Low

Border Control and Visa issues could become very problematic and delay your journey, if not followed and dealt with correctly.

Action:
Never carry problematic or illegal possessions while crossing a border and make sure to check Visa laws before travelling to a specific country. If incidents do happen, a cool temper and friendly behaviour will help, as aggressive or unhelpful comments often make things worse. Keep your passport safe and make sure it is valid for the duration of your travels, and keep a note of useful phone numbers to your country's embassy in the relevant location in case your passport is lost, damaged or in any other way unfit for travel.

Family Issues

Likelihood: Low
Severity: Low
Risk: Low

There may be unforeseen family issues at home, which may cause the student to have to leave the Nomadic Course.

Action:
Students are to have their phones with them at all time and be reachable by their relatives and close friends. It is also a good idea for the tutors and some other Nomadic Students to have everyone's emergency contacts, so that everyone can be reached if necessary. In case the student needs to travel home, the student, with the help of a tutor if necessary, needs to take responsibility in travelling to a location with internet access (if needed) and make the necessary arrangements to fly back home.

Mental Health

Likelihood: Low
Severity: Low
Risk: Low

There are cases of people travelling for a long time that get disconnected from society and themselves, or when travelling in a group, find the lack of private space and constant interaction exhausting and mentally draining. Other mental health issues, either chronic or new ones, could also occur at any time.

Action:
It is important for no student on the Nomadic Course to become disconnected from the group, but it is equally crucial for everyone to be allowed private time. The course therefore allows for both intense social interaction and travel, as well as periods of passivity in which the studio is based in one single location for several weeks. All Nomadic Students are to provide the University with information on current mental health issues and go on a mental health screening prior to embarking on the trip. In case mental health issues do happen while on the road, the Student Support team at Westminster needs to be available over phone and email, and students, if required, have the opportunity to travel home or seek help where they are.[3]

1 David, Eli, Become Nomad, 'Risks of Travelling, accessed at becomenomad.com/risks-of-travelling/ (27/07/2018)

2 Aaftink, Didi, KLM Blog, 'These are the 5 main health risks while travelling', (28 Dec 2016) accessed at blog.klm.com/these-are-the-5-main-health-risks-while-travelling/ (27/07/2018)

3 David, Eli, Become Nomad, 'Risks of Travelling, accessed at becomenomad.com/risks-of-travelling/ (27/07/2018)

Photo Credit: Lily Xutong Zhao

STRATEGY, IMPLEMENTATION & NEXT STEPS

THE LEARNING & TEACHING STRATEGY 2015-2020

The Learning & Teaching Strategy 2015-2020, prepared by the University as part of the Learning Futures Programme, sets out the principles informing student experience expectations and course design for all students at the University. It aligns with the University's 2020 Strategy and identify the strategic priorities in respect of learning and teaching. The Strategy was prepared in consultation with staff and students.[1] The Strategic Priorities are the following:

1. Employability-Focused Curriculum

We will offer a distinctive, challenging and inspiring curriculum designed to develop the capabilities our graduates need to be highly employable, effective practitioners with a global perspective in a constantly evolving professional world.

2. Learning Communities

We will foster learning communities in which students, staff and other stakeholders work collaboratively as partners in the construction of knowledge and understanding and in the development of the curriculum.

3. Research, Inquiry and Practice

We will maintain learning, teaching and assessment practices

that enable students to experience learning through research and inquiry, and through engagement with disciplinary and professional practices.

4. Inclusivity and Flexibility

We will promote an inclusive curriculum that caters for the requirements and expectations of our diverse learning communities

5. Teaching and Supporting Learning

We will ensure that those involved in teaching and supporting learning are appropriately qualified, supported and rewarded, and that our learning and teaching practices are informed by scholarship and reflection.

6. Technology and Infrastructure

We will integrate technologies into our learning environment to enhance learning and teaching, and we will develop an infrastructure that supports active participation in learning opportunities.[2]

Each faculty at the University was expected to develop their own plan which investigates how their courses will meet these strategic priorities. The 'Students as Co-Creators' concept plays a key role in the ongoing development of teaching and learning, allowing students to get involved.[3]

THE 2020 STRATEGY

The 2020 Strategy, prepared in 2015, is a document which set out the vision, mission and aims for the University until the year 2020.[4]

Our five key drivers for success in 2020:

1. To shape the future of professional life
2. To build the next generation of highly employable global citizens
3. To build relationships with professional bodies across the globe
4. To push boundaries through research, practice, and enterprise
5. To drive the know-how that a modern knowledge economy demands

The following four areas; Innovation, Collaboration, Research and Mobility, have been highlighted from the document to specifically relate to the objectives of the nomadic course. The quotes are taken from the document followed by responses.

Innovation

'Our University was the original blueprint for the sought after model of collaboration with industry and practice and today occupies a distinctive place as an independent, commercially aware institution. To 2020 and beyond Westminster will build on its progressive, inclusive and enterprising history to shape the future of professional life'[5]

Response:
The nomadic course will place the University at the forefront of the implementation of innovative teaching methods,

specifically focusing on the 'collaboration with industry and practice', as students will directly get involved with and experience the environment in which they will work in as graduates. A vibrant global learning environment is achieved and the students will be taught to become global citizens and professionals, with an improved appreciation of 'the need for interdisciplinary approaches in understanding and resolving the constantly evolving intellectual, professional and business challenges of the 21st century', which is pointed out as a key vision in the document.[6]

Collaboration

'We will stay true to our roots seeking out intellectually able students from a wide variety of backgrounds whilst embracing new thinking, new technology and new practices whenever it enhances our Institution'[7]

Response:
One of the missions of the 2020 Report is the establishing of 'key international partnerships', which is also one of the missions of the nomadic course. The course would create increased and improved relationships with other international Universities, bringing more attention and interest to the faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at Westminster, generating a growth of the student population. The travelling nature of the course wouldn't create overcrowding of the faculties and campuses, or the existing Architecture studios, as the students are based 'on the road'. As the nomadic students collaborate with and visit partner Universities around the world, Westminster would benefit from the possible international exchange students visiting the campuses based in London in return. Graduate employability would increase, as Westminster

graduates would be viewed as better equipped, skilled and experienced and with a more global outlook than graduates from competitor Universities.[8]

Research

'We are committed to ensuring that the University promotes and develops innovative, cutting-edge, and interdisciplinary research which adds value through its originality, significance and rigour and its critical impacts on global society.'[9]

Response:
The 2020 Report recognises the need for creating further links with a range of professional sectors in order to provide more research and practice-focused opportunities. Improved research networks and active mentoring will raise the amount of staff operating at levels of international excellence and engage staff in research opportunities. Westminster aims to push the boundaries and become more research engaged, exploring the links between practice and research, areas which the students on the nomadic course can become involved in.[10]

Mobility

'We will strengthen the competitive position of the University by transforming the learning and teaching experience for students and staff. We will empower staff to create and support distinctive, innovative courses that address the needs of the modern mobile student'

Response:
A key element part of the 2020 report is the above paragraph. The report highlights the existence of the 'modern mobile student' and meeting the demands and

needs of these. The University understands the need for a possible new teaching method, such as a course, to be introduced and are giving staff freedom and power to bring to light new solutions. A distinctive, innovative course which would perfectly meet this development is the proposal of the 'nomadic course', generating graduates for a global world and economy. The students would benefit from an international curriculum and setting, creating flexible and agile professionals through a combination of 'transferable and interdisciplinary skills, openness to perpetual learning, commercially successful and able to exercise a social conscience'; all of these skills acquired from the nomadic studio.[11]

NEXT STEPS

The preliminary research completed so far and contained within this booklet has allowed us to set out a feasible outline programme structure to which we believe is suitable for one academic year, and we believe in order to take the idea further the next step would be to introduce a 3-month 'test-run' of the proposed course of 10-15 students and two accompanying tutors. The test-run would allow us to back our research and iron out unforeseen issues; make sure our finance calculations are correct and that you can indeed travel using the same money spent in London, understand where any flaws and difficulties in management and organisation may arise as well as highlight moments of risk and other potential issues. We believe the length of the test-run wouldn't compromise on the students' studies and their produced work but believe the limit is needed in order to avoid this possibility. The test-run could also be arranged not to fall within the students' last year of study, so to avoid any negative impacts on their final grades.

During this nomadic test-run of studying and learning 'on the road', we would have the opportunity to create new connections and network with professionals and academics at collaborating Universities and architectural practices, and identify suitable locations to visit and communities to connect and interact with. We are hoping as the course grows and the longer it is running, the more connections the University will acquire and therefore the more opportunities for learning there will be for future students.

We recommend the 3 month 'test-run' to be implemented in either the BA Architecture course (in their second year of study) or as part of the MArch course. For completing the test run,

funding would be required, as all students of this cohort couldn't be expected to give up on their living premises on such short notice and for such a short period of time. We intend to look for funding for this opportunity.

1 The University of Westminster, Learning & Teaching Strategy 2015-2020 Information for Students

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 The University of Westminster, Westminster 2020

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

CONCLUSION

'We are consciously international in our educational thinking and academic links… and as a result our graduates are amongst the most sought after anywhere in the world'.[1]

The above quote is taken from the MArch course handbook and we believe the Nomadic Studio applies to and would contribute to and support this vision. The nomadic course will offer superior graduate attributes and employable skills and knowledge, as the travelling aspect will give the students unique experiences opposed to a student based in a fixed location. In addition to the benefits to the individual student, the travelling tutors and the University as a whole will increase its links with institutions, professionals and other Universities all over the world. The Westminster 2020 strategy states: 'Westminster is a pioneering institution' – let's introduce an element to prove this point.[2]

The purpose and aims of the study 'On the Road' was to reinforce the importance and benefits of travelling and our aim was to highlight to faculty decisions-makers the interest and feasibility of introducing a travelling studio to the MArch programme, and to push the idea further into possible realisation in the future. We believe a fresh and radical view on architectural education is required as it is a very topical and very much debated subject at the moment and we have received immensely encouraging and positive feedback from both tutors and students. This programme

would inform not only the students' studio design work, but also other modules, broadening the understanding of the built environment, cultures and the context in which architects work. The students would receive invaluable experience and grow in maturity and confidence, creating better architects of the future, resulting in better environments to live in.

'We remain committed to inspiring the next generation of global citizens and leaders.'

Geoffrey Petts, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Westminster.[3]

1 The University of Westminster, Course Handbook 2017-18 Master of Architecture (MArch) (ARB-RIBA Pt II). p.2.

2 The University of Westminster, Westminster 2020

3 Ibid.

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