

LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

# Course Specification

BA (Hons) Landscape Architecture

2018-19 (BALAD)

[www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk](http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk)



LEEDS  
BECKETT  
UNIVERSITY

## School of Art, Architecture & Design

**Award and programme title: BA (Hons) Landscape Architecture**

**Level of qualification: Level 6**

**Interim awards available:**

Award	Title	Level
BA	Landscape Architecture	6
DIPHE	Landscape Architecture	5
CRTHE	Landscape Architecture	4

**Length and status of programme and mode of study**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Length (years) Status (FT/PT/SW)</b>	<b>Mode (campus- based / DL or other)</b>
<b>BA (Hons) Landscape Architecture</b>	<b>3 Years FT</b>	<b>Campus-based</b>
<b>BA (Hons) Landscape Architecture</b>	<b>5-6 Years PT</b>	<b>Campus-based</b>

## Course Specification

### Overview and Aims

Landscape architecture is the process of shaping the external environment through planning, design and management. It is a broad-based design discipline which considers the landscape of outdoor environments of all types, both urban and rural, and at a wide range of spatial scales from local to multi-national. As such it embodies both natural and cultural processes and entities. Landscape architects need to understand, appreciate, compliment and enhance the natural and cultural landscape but, above all, display creativity in the development and communication of their ideas at all scales of intervention. The course aims to provide the

foundation for perceptive, creative, confident and effective landscape architects who display initiative, enterprise and independence of mind but have a system of values which recognises cultural diversity and the needs of others alongside environmental awareness.

There is a relatively small number of UK HE institutions offering degree courses in landscape architecture (9 for 2012 entry). The Leeds course, with its origins in Leeds School of Art in 1966, is one of the longest established courses and places design very much at the centre of the discipline. It emphasises the importance of collaborative design and provides opportunities for students to develop professional skills through group projects and working with external clients.

The key aims of the course are to develop in the student:-

- A critical understanding of the nature, scope and role of landscape architecture in a changing world.
- A personal philosophy towards the design of landscape which recognises the interdependence of natural and human systems and establishes values appropriate to the discipline.
- An ability in the art and science of designing meaningful and enduring landscapes through appropriate analysis and sensitive, creative design solutions
- An ability in a range of technical skills to achieve creative solutions to design-based issues
- An ability to communicate ideas effectively to others, using visual, verbal and written media as appropriate.
- An ability to work collaboratively and autonomously and reflect upon the process and outcomes.

An ability to reflect on their own learning and undertake effective personal, academic and career development planning.

### Course Learning Outcomes

1	Identify and analyse a landscape in terms of the natural, cultural, social, aesthetic and perceptual qualities that combine to provide its particular character and needs
2	Appreciate the significance of landscape design theories, global and ethical perspectives (including planning and sustainability contexts) and their application to landscape architecture
3	Apply creativity, enterprise and design awareness in the exploration and development of spatial design solutions at a variety of scales, geographical locations and cultural contexts, using both traditional graphic and digital tools.
4	Demonstrate competence and innovation in landscape technology through the selection of appropriate hard and soft materials and their use in a creative and technically proficient way to realise design solutions
5	Communicate projects using a variety of graphical media, both non-digital and digital and through verbal communication

6	Experience and critically evaluate 'live' design projects in relation to future landscape architecture practice and post graduate professional study
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## Course Structure

### Course Structure

The course is structured so that each semester comprises two studio-based design modules, normally one following on from the other, and one contextual studies or landscape technology module which runs the length of the semester.

The studio-based modules at Level 4 introduce students to the elements of the design process, developing their skills and enabling them to undertake in its entirety a relatively simple design project by the end of the level. Graphic techniques for communicating the design process and solution are integral to these modules. They are supported by a contextual module which develops students' understanding of the natural and cultural landscape and a technology module which focuses on plants as a key design medium for the landscape architect.

Level 5 studio modules introduce students to more complex design challenges in both the urban and rural landscapes. These are supported by a technology module which develops further students' skills in selecting and designing with specific materials. The contextual module enhances landscape design skills by providing an underpinning of landscape principles and theories.

The focus in Level 6 is to enable students to demonstrate fully their design skills through a culminating double module specialist design project. This requires high levels of critical awareness and reflection, attributes that are also fundamental to the Critical Study. In addition to these, two modules focus on the professional nature of the discipline through a live community-based project. A negotiated study module prepares students for professional practice by enhancing their critical awareness of landscape architecture through a reflective portfolio and opportunities to focus on their individual strengths and interests and/or learning needs.

Part-time students negotiate with the course leader an appropriate programme of studies. They normally study two studio-based design modules in one semester and one contextual studies or technology module in the other semester. To allow for the imbalance in potential workload between the semesters and the need to be responsive to the particular needs of part-time students they will be examined at the September Examination Board, allowing a calendar year to complete their studies.

In the table below credit points for each module are given in brackets.

<b>Level 4</b>			
Semester 1	Core (Y)	Semester 2	Core (Y)
LA401 Landscape Architecture Studio: Introduction to Landscape & Environment (20)	Y	LA404 Landscape Architecture Studio: Design with Materials (20)	Y
LA402 Landscape Architecture Studio: Introduction to Spatial Design (20)	Y	LA405 Landscape Architecture Studio: People & Place (20)	Y
LA403 Landscape Context 1: Development of the Landscape (20)	Y	LA406 Landscape Technology 1: Plants in the Landscape (20)	Y
<b>Level 5</b>			
Semester 1	Core (Y)	Semester 2	Core (Y)
LA501 Landscape Architecture Studio: Landscape Character and Ecological Design (20)	Y	LA504 Landscape Architecture Studio: Neighbourhood Planning and Design (20)	Y
LA502 Landscape Architecture Studio: Design Impacts (20)	Y	LA505 Landscape Architecture Studio: Public Realm Design (20)	Y
LA503 Landscape Technology 2: Materials and Management (20)	Y	LA506 Landscape Context 2. Contemporary landscape: theory and principles (20)	Y
<b>Level 6</b>			
Semester 1	Core (Y)	Semester 2	Core (Y)
LA601 Landscape Architecture Studio: Design & Community 1 (20)	Y	LA604-5 Landscape Architecture Studio: Specialist Design Project (40)	Y
LA602 Landscape Architecture Studio: Design & Community 2 (20)	Y	LA606 Landscape Professional Context: Negotiated Study (20)	
LA603 Landscape Context 3: Critical Study (20)	Y		
<i>Insert Dissertation/Extended Study Module Title (40 credits)</i>			

## **Learning and Teaching**

Details relating to contact hours and other key information sets (KIS) are available on the course page of our Online Prospectus on our website.

## **Learning and Teaching Approaches**

Our course is vocational and professional but its creative and diverse nature provides a stimulating, broad higher education, providing students with an armoury of transferable skills which enhances their employability in general. We believe very firmly in learning by doing. The course is studio-based where students work either individually or in groups to develop design and planning approaches, to train in communication and to gain management skills. A particularly valuable opportunity to apply these skills on a live project exists in our unique Level 6 Design and Community modules. We value the one-to-one tuition opportunities that the studio environment offers in fostering a student's creativity and developing their confidence. Presentations and field visits serve not only to provide context to the creative process but also to inspire students so that they approach their learning in a purposeful and enthusiastic way. Group work is an element in all levels of the course enabling students from a diversity of backgrounds to work together to common purpose but, at the same time, respect each other's views.

## **Learning and Teaching Activities**

The course is studio-based with some of the time spent at the Landscape Resource Centre. Each module has specified contact days when students spend the whole day on one module and have direct contact with module staff. Modules are project-based, comprising an initial briefing, supplementary presentation(s) and field visit, as appropriate. The last of these are particularly valuable in inspiring students, as well as grounding their design ideas in real landscapes. Design projects become progressively more challenging, culminating in the double module specialist design project at Level 6. Most modules are design-based but can include development of a portfolio on, for example, landscape materials. Students normally undertake independent research for their project with most design development taking place in the studio. Project work often requires students to work collaboratively as part of a group and the diversity of backgrounds that students bring to the course can enrich this

## **Graduate Attributes (UG only)**

### **Digital Literacy:**

This is developed from the outset of the course by utilising communication tools such as email and posting notices on X-Stream, our virtual learning environment, as a principal means of communicating with students. Students use digital sources for research, both in-house (X-Stream/CAGD) and external. Some assessments are submitted on-line from Level 4 onwards and some modules include on-line formative objective tests. Real-time distance learning tutorials can be undertaken using Elluminate or Skype.

Digital Literacy is also developed through the use of subject-specific graphic applications, which increases the students' awareness of different file formats, the significance of image resolution and the importance of file sizes. Level 4 students are introduced to Photoshop, InDesign and SketchUp. There is also a brief introduction to the use of AutoCAD which is further developed in Level 5 when students are required to submit work on CAD for

assessment. At Level 6 students are expected to show competence in the use of appropriate software to explore and communicate the 3-dimensional nature of landscape design. At this level, students also have the opportunity to use InDesign for desk-top publishing, culminating in the Critical Study.

### **Enterprise:**

At our University, 'enterprise' encompasses a broad range of skills. It is traditionally associated with starting a business and, as an accredited vocational course, our BA (Hons) Landscape Architecture, has embedded within it the kinds of skills required. Central to this is the concept of 'creative problem solving', an important aspect of the design process and which is included in the majority of modules that make up the course. In addition, at all levels there are modules incorporating group work, providing opportunities for students to operate as intrapreneurs within their group. Our two Level 6 Design & Community modules provide all students with direct experience of working on a design project with an external client (e.g. primary school, hospice, local community group). Working with external clients can also be incorporated in other modules when opportunities occur. 'Seizing an opportunity and developing it' (*Embedding enterprise as a graduate attribute at Leeds Metropolitan University*, Centre for Teaching & Learning, 2011) is manifested through allowing students to enter competitions and garden shows etc., when the opportunities arise, as part of the course.

### **Global outlook:**

Landscape Architecture is concerned with designing spaces for people. The course provides opportunities for students to design spaces in a wide variety of contexts and, in so doing, requires students to respond to the diversity of society's needs (e.g. disabled access, cultural sensitivities). The course incorporates international perspectives on landscape design by examining overseas projects and the work of international designers. An optional overseas field trip is offered in Level 6 and there are international exchange opportunities in Level 5. The concept of 'global relevance' (*Embedding a global outlook as a graduate attribute at Leeds Metropolitan University*, Centre for Teaching & Learning, 2011) is interpreted as including environmental responsibility and students are required to consider such issues as ethical sources of landscape materials and the overall sustainability of their designs.

### **Use of the Virtual Learning Environment**

All modules use the VLE as a repository of documents and presentations for students to access. The VLE also facilitates communication with students through posting notices or sending group emails. Some modules, particularly in Levels 5 and 6, use the VLE for submission and return of assignments. In addition, short, formative objective tests are delivered via the VLE for some of the more contextual-based modules e.g. natural processes for LA403 and plant identification tests for LA406.

### **Use of Blended-Learning**

No modules are delivered wholly online but some modules incorporate an element of blended learning e.g. on-line formative objective tests, specified reading and the sharing of work among students.

## **Assessment Strategy**

Landscape Design Studio provides a holistic, integrated, creative learning environment. The professional requirements of the course in terms of knowledge, skills, understanding and values must be met in an integrated way in anticipation of future professional practice.

Formative assessment is provided through project design reviews (crits) which give the opportunity for students to verbally/graphically explain their design proposals at interim stages of the project development and receive feedback from staff. These timetabled reviews, together with other informal feedback in the studio, provide formative assessment, well-spaced through the module, as recommended in the Course Development Principles.

Assessment is project-focused, based on process and outcome and is therefore specifically intended to prepare students for the reality of the workplace (Course Development Principles, p15). Details vary from project to project. However, process is normally assessed by elements such as a notebook or project file that students use for research, design exploration and development. Peer assessment can assess the process of group work. Outcomes of design projects are assessed through submitted drawings and/or models.

Synoptic assessment occurs in five of the six Level 6 modules. In the case of Design & Community in level 6 the project is assessed synoptically across the two modules (LA601 & LA602). The design module in semester 2 of Level 6 (LA604-5) is assessed synoptically with the professional context module (LA606).

Design modules, supported by work from the Context and Technology modules, are reviewed at the end of level assessment. The review at the end of level 6 is in the form of an exhibition (Degree Show), which may include drawings, models, reports and sketchbooks based on individual and group work.

Contextual modules normally incorporate a written assignment and the Level 6 Critical Study (LA603) is assessed as a dissertation.

Graduate attributes are integrated closely within the assessments. Examples include the quality of digitally produced drawings in LA505 and use of digital sources for LA603 (digital literacy); successful functioning in group work in LA601 and appropriate selection of project for LA606 (enterprise); appropriateness of design solutions for disabled access and multicultural sensitivities, in several modules, and awareness of international design perspectives in LA604-5 (global outlook).

Project submission dates may vary, depending on the nature of the project. However, the course team are aware of the need to avoid clustering submission dates from different modules and this is addressed at course planning meetings.

## **Feedback on Assessed Coursework**

The studio-based nature of the course provides for on-going formative verbal feedback during one to one tutorials at the drawing board/computer and student presentation seminars.

Students are alerted to the importance of this at the start of the course and encouraged to record the comments themselves as part of their reflective portfolios. Written summative feedback is provided at the end of a module. Students are encouraged to discuss with the relevant module tutor any issues they have with this.

## Module Assessment Methods

Module Titles	Core (Y)	Project	Synoptic assessment	Final Project	Learning Contract	Insert Assessment Method	Insert Assessment Method	Insert Assessment Method	Insert Assessment Method
LA401 Landscape Architecture Studio: Introduction to Landscape & Environment	Y	100							
LA402 Landscape Architecture Studio: Introduction to Spatial Design	Y	100							
LA403 Landscape Context 1: Development of the Landscape	Y	100							
LA404 Landscape Architecture Studio: Design with Materials	Y	100							
LA405 Landscape Architecture Studio: People & Place	Y	100							
LA406 Landscape Technology 1: Plants in the Landscape	Y	100							
LA501 Landscape Architecture Studio: Landscape Character & Ecological Design	Y	100							
LA502 Landscape Architecture Studio: Design Impacts	Y	100							
LA503 Landscape Technology 2: Materials & Management	Y	100							
LA504 Landscape Architecture Studio: Neighbourhood Planning & Design	Y	100							
LA505 Landscape Architecture Studio: Public Realm Design	Y	100							
LA506 Landscape Context 2: Contemporary Landscape: Theories & Principles	Y	100							
LA601 Landscape Architecture Studio: Design & Community 1	Y		100						
LA602 Landscape Architecture Studio: Design & Community 2	Y		100						

LA603 Landscape Context 3: Critical Study	Y	100							
LA604-5 Landscape Architecture Studio: Specialist Design Project	Y		100						
LA606 Landscape Professional Context: Negotiated Study	Y		100						
Work Related Activity/ Placement	Embedded within much of the course but manifested particularly within LA601 & LA602.								

## Employability and Professional Context

Our course is fully accredited by the Landscape Institute, the professional body which oversees the landscape architecture profession. The normal route for entering the profession has a 3 + 1 structure with students studying for the honours degree over three years full-time, taking a year-out working in practice and then returning for a further one year full-time to study for the Post-graduate Diploma. Students can study full time or part time and credit for work in practice can be facilitated. On successful completion of this they are eligible to become licentiate members of the Landscape Institute. By then studying a further three masters level modules students can gain an MA in landscape architecture.

There are variations to this pattern which the flexibility of the programme facilitates (e.g. for part time students) and an undergraduate qualification in Landscape Architecture and Design provides the opportunity for students to leave at this stage to pursue a career in an associated area such as garden design, horticulture or other environmental professions (e.g. Natural England, local wildlife trust). There are also growing opportunities for employment overseas. The broad contextual skills, holistic thinking, creativity, and ability to communicate that landscape students achieve, enhance job prospects both in and out of the landscape professions.

Students with a Post-graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture who gain employment in a landscape practice can continue their professional development by following the Landscape Institute's 'Pathway to Chartership'. This involves assembling a portfolio of their work, typically over a period of about 2 years, meetings with a mentor and a final interview. Successful completion of the pathway results in Chartered membership of the Landscape Institute.

Although the market for qualified landscape architects has been affected by the global financial crisis the significance of the profession in addressing environmental issues means that there are many opportunities with landscape practices both in the UK and overseas. Through its relatively long history the course has contacts with many landscape practices and provides frequent opportunities for students to meet with practicing landscape architects. It also has a close relationship with the Yorkshire & Humber Branch of the Landscape Institute, frequently hosting its meetings and events.

DLHE statistics for 2009-10 (the latest figure available) indicate that 94% of our landscape architecture graduates obtained employment or were doing further study.

## **Work-Related Activities**

As a vocational and professional course, work-related activity can be said to occur in all three levels. Design modules, which make up approximately two-thirds of the course, usually require students to work on real sites that they have visited. This, often coupled with group-based site analysis and design development, provides students with direct experience of elements of the landscape profession and working within it. More specifically though, the two Design & Community modules in Level 6 require all students to work with an external client, usually community based (e.g. school, old-people's home, hospice, local community group). This involves client consultation, negotiating a brief, collaborative design development, presenting final designs to the client and managing, or having regard to, a budget. The project occupies approximately 75% of the two modules collectively, i.e. 300 hours of notional study time.

### **Placement or Work-Related Activity Level:**

Specific work-related modules take place in Level 6 and there are opportunities for students to work with external clients in Level 5.

### **Placement or Work-Related Activity Length in Weeks:**

Minimum of about 300 hours (equivalent to at least 7 weeks)

### **Type of Placement or Work-Related Activity:**

Live project

## **Reference Points used in course design and delivery**

All our courses leading to Leeds Beckett University awards have been designed and approved in accordance with UK and European quality standards. Our courses utilise the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and relevant subject benchmarks (where these are available) and professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements (for professionally accredited courses).

We review our courses annually and periodically, responding to student feedback and a range of information to enhance our courses. Our University is also subject to external review by the Quality Assurance Agency. Our latest report can be found on the QAA website at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports>

We appoint External Examiners to verify that our University sets and maintains standards for awards which adhere to relevant national subject benchmark statements and the FHEQ (UK), ensure standards and student achievements are comparable with other Higher Education Institutions in the UK, with which they are familiar, and ensure that assessments measure achievement of course and module learning outcomes and reach the required standard.

External Examiners may also provide feedback on areas of good practice or potential enhancement.

### **Student Support Network**

If you have a question or a problem relating to your course, your Course Administrator is there to help you. Course Administrators work closely with academic staff and can make referrals to teaching staff or to specialist professional services as appropriate. They can give you a confirmation of attendance letter, and a transcript. You may also like to contact your Course Rep or the Students' Union Advice team for additional support with course-related questions.

If you have any questions about life at our University in general, call into or contact the Student Hub on either campus to speak to our Student Experience Team. This team, consisting of recent graduates and permanent staff, are available to support you throughout your time here. They will make sure you have access to and are aware of the support, specialist services, and opportunities our University provides. There is a Student Hub on the ground floor of the Rose Bowl at City Campus and one in Campus Central at Headingley. You can also find the team in the Gateway in the Leslie Silver Building at City Campus. The telephone number is 0113 812 3000, and the e-mail address is [StudentHub@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:StudentHub@leedsbeckett.ac.uk).

Within MyBeckett you will see two tabs (Support and Opportunities) where you can find online information and resources for yourselves. The Support tab gives you access to details of services available to give you academic and personal support. These include Library Services, the Students' Union, Money advice, Disability advice and support, Wellbeing, International Student Services and Accommodation. There is also an A-Z of Support Services, and access to online appointments/registration.

The Opportunities tab is the place to explore the options you have for jobs, work placements, volunteering, and a wide range of other opportunities. For example, you can find out here how to get help with your CV, prepare for an interview, get a part-time job or voluntary role, take part in an international project, or join societies closer to home.

## Record of Enhancement

<b>No.</b>	<b>Detail of modification</b> (Provide a brief description of the modification and where the Course Specification has been updated)	<b>Date Effective</b> (Indicate the academic year of entry and course level(s) to which the modification will apply)
1	Level 5 Module, LA502 Landscape Architecture Studio Ecological Design & Planning change of Module title to LA502 Landscape Architecture Studio Design Impacts	September 2016
2	Level 5 Module, LA501 Landscape Architecture Studio Landscape Character and Design change of Module title to LA501 Landscape Architecture Studio Landscape Character & Ecological Design	September 2016
3	Level 6 Module LA604-5 Landscape Architecture Studio: Specialist Design Project assessment method changed to synopic assessment with LA606 Negotiated Study	September 2016
4	Level 6 Module LA606 Landscape Professional Context Negotiated Study assessment method changed to synopic assessment with LA604-5 Landscape Architecture Studio: Specialist Design Project	September 2016