

Module specification

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Refer to guidance notes for completion of each section of the specification.

Module Code	ARA717
Module Title	Dissertation
Level	7
Credit value	60
Faculty	FACE
HECoS Code	100583 AID / 100590 GD
Cost Code	GAAA

Programmes in which module to be offered

Programme title	Is the module core or option for this programme
MA Architectural Interior Design	Core
MA Garden Design	Core

Pre-requisites

N/A

Breakdown of module hours

Learning and teaching hours	30 hrs
Placement tutor support	30 hrs
Supervised learning e.g. practical classes, workshops	30 hrs
Project supervision (level 6 projects and dissertation modules only)	110 hrs
Total active learning and teaching hours	200 hrs
Placement / work based learning	0 hrs
Guided independent study	400 hrs
Module duration (total hours)	600 hrs

For office use only	
Initial approval date	03/09/2019
With effect from date	03/09/2019



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Date and details of revision	05/07/2024 – Updated breakdown of module hours, indicative assessment tasks and derogations.
Version number	4

Module aims

The aim of this module is to enable students to expand knowledge and theoretical awareness through the investigation of a specific or specialised area of interior design, garden design or a cognate subject. The student will manage a significant research project in the self-directed development and analysis of a chosen question of design theory or practice. The student will conduct an extensive critical review of current relevant literature using a range of professional and academic sources. Students will apply practical research skills and/or design methods to demonstrate their ability to conduct research ethically and thoroughly. In so doing they will produce a written or design dissertation through a conceptual and analytical approach to reach a creative and informed conclusion.

Module Learning Outcomes - at the end of this module, students will be able to:

1	Develop a critically argued and coherent proposal for a Master's level dissertation on a negotiated subject demonstrating a clear programme of methodology and research.
2	Demonstrate advanced knowledge of relevant published research and/or design and the management of additional sources of information.
3	Critically reflect upon the identification and evaluation of researched material from current and emerging knowledge presenting a clear and informed argument and justifiable conclusion.
4	Continue to advance their knowledge through the critical exploration of research to develop and express an original view on their chosen topic, creative work and/or design understanding.

Assessment

Indicative Assessment Tasks:

The student is expected to evidence advanced knowledge and research skills in the preparation of either a written or a design and written dissertation project. The ability to develop and handle complex and significant amounts of data, and research strategies, is expected alongside the demonstration of an ethically conducted approach to research.

Students will be expected to critically reflect on the chosen area of study to formulate a question, within or from the consideration of a specialist area related to spatial design. Students must demonstrate a coherent approach to their chosen subject, critically explore and reflect on the relevant data, through both primary and secondary findings, to develop a clear cogent argument.



In the case of a design dissertation students will be expected to demonstrate a sophisticated integration of a theoretical consideration into the practical arena producing a comprehensive and relevant design outcome. Students will be assessed on the design outcome, shown through relevant visual means accompanied by the written element exploring an aspect of the design subject, selected in consultation with the dissertation supervisor.

Students are expected to consider the relevance of their research in terms of advancing academic activity, critically engaging with current professional thought and developments and improving their personal approach to practice.

Assessment number	Learning Outcomes to be met	Type of assessment	Weighting (%)
1	1, 2, 3, 4	Coursework	100

Derogations

Full time Masters programmes shall be completed normally in no more than 18 months by taking 3 trimesters (Part 1 trimester 1: September to January; trimester 2: February to June, then Part 2 trimester 3 September to January). A student who fails to complete the programme at the first attempt shall be required to complete all requirements within the normal registration period, that is, 24 months'.

Learning and Teaching Strategies

This module allows students to develop their own in-depth project based on an individual research theme.

Regular tutorial and seminar support is given throughout the module by the supervising tutors. Students are required to pursue their research largely as self-directed study and independent learning, with supervisors identified in relation to their specialist subjects and specific interests.

The integration of theoretical knowledge with practical application of skills will require the student to negotiate and agree a question/topic for research and analysis and whether the learning outcomes are to be achieved through a written submission or a written submission with a related body of practical work.

Both submission by dissertation and project will be assessed against the same learning outcomes as theory and practice are fused. This proposal and negotiation stage will come under the control of the Course Committee for final approval and ratification.

In depth knowledge and the ability to critical analysis, gained from previous modules, will contribute to the development of the question the dissertation may approach.

Students may amend, vary and change the subject area of their submission whilst in the initial stages of research. They are advised to consult one or more of the MA tutors in relation to any proposed change which must be recorded in a written tutorial record. It is made clear to students that the research undertaken in any given area may lead to a refinement of further investigation that can re-direct the thrust of the investigation.

Indicative Syllabus Outline

The dissertation may be up to 15,000 words on a subject agreed in advance with dedicated tutors and the Course Director and will be described as submission by dissertation. A student negotiating a body of related practical work will be permitted to submit a smaller word count dissertation of minimum 5000 words with a notional learning time given to practice of 400 hours – this will be described as submission by project.

Stage 1: Preparation of Dissertation synopsis, identifying and evaluating a suitable subject area, research methodology, question and an ethical research strategy. (September following completion of the PG Dip Stage).

Stage 2: Academic Committee consideration.

Stage 3 Research phase with tutorial support.

Stage 4: Tutorial period programmes to be defined on individual basis, M level independent study. Engagement with tutor/supervisor, individual arrangement for draft chapters to be considered. (Final Submission; December 15th) .

Stage 5: Marking through January. Stage 6: Exam Board February.

Indicative Bibliography:

Please note the essential reads and other indicative reading are subject to annual review and update. Please *ensure correct referencing format is being followed as per University [referencing guide](#)*.

Essential Reads

Bryman, A: Social Research Methods, 4th Edn Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Borden, I: (2006) The Dissertation, An Architects Student Handbook Architectural Press, London.

Eco, U: (2015) How to Write a Thesis 23rd Edn MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Other indicative reading

Bachelard, G. (2014) The Poetics of Space. Penguin, London.

Berrizbeitia, Anita, and Linda Pollak, (1999) Inside/Outside: Between Architecture and Landscape. Rockport, Beverley MA.

Cosgrove, Denis and Stephen Daniels (eds.) (1984) The Iconography of Landscape. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England.

Evernden, Neil: (1992) The Social Creation of Nature. Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, MD.

Groat, L: (2013) Architectural Research Methods 2nd Edn. John Wiley & Sons, Oxford.



Hollis, E, Fleming, J, et al. (2011) Interior Tools / Interior Tactics: Debates in interiors theory and practice. Libri Publishing, Faringdon, Oxfordshire.

Hunt, John Dixon. (2000) Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia PA.

Kaplan, Rachel, Stephen Kaplan and Robert Ryan. (1998). With People in Mind. Washington D.C.: Island Press.

Potter, S: (2001) Doing Postgraduate Research Sage-Open University, London.

Sparke,P. Brown,P. et al (Eds) (2018) Flow: Interior, Landscape and Architecture in the Era of Liquid Modernity. London, Bloomsbury.

Swaffield, S. R. (2002). Theory in landscape architecture: a Reader. Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania Press.

Turner, Tom. (2014) Landscape Design History and Theory. Gardenvisit.com. (amazon digital)

Wisker, G: (2007) The Postgraduate Research Handbook ,2nd Edn. (Palgrave, Macmillan. London.

Zumthor, P. (2010) Thinking Architecture. 3 rd Edn. Birkhauser, Basel.