

**Architectural Association  
School of Architecture**

**PROGRAMME GUIDE**

**FOUNDATION**

**2017/2018**

**FOUNDATION**

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**This guide is to be read in conjunction with the current edition of the  
AA School Academic Regulations**

## SECTION 1: THE SCHOOL

### ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

#### WELCOME

It is with enormous pride and great delight that I warmly welcome all new and returning students, staff, members and guests to the AA. It is a particularly special privilege to be interim director for 2017–18, as the first woman to take up the role, in the very year that we celebrate AA XX 100 – the one hundredth anniversary of women being admitted as students. I walked through the front door at no 36 as a 1st year student exactly 30 years ago, little knowing how radically my world would be transformed. The people and ideas I encountered here never cease to be extraordinary, my understanding of what architecture *is* continuously expanding to imagine what architecture *could* be.

Learning at the AA, then and now, means: to design, to think, to invent, to speak, to write, to make, to test, to fail, to question, to stretch a definition, to argue and to change one's mind. It also means striking up a friendship with modernism – not with a style or movement, but with the idea in its broadest, most global sense, meaning that the quality of thought and expression engendered in every student, in every room, and with every kind of audience is centred on how to invent, to experiment, to move forward: to think the unthinkable. Each and every year students, tutors and visitors to our School and to the many Visiting Schools around the world work on challenging and re-tuning the parameters of both what it means to learn about architecture and what architecture itself might be, seeking new relevancies, new relationships and new sites.

It is in this spirit that a number of new tutors from the UK and elsewhere in Europe will bring new agendas to both the Intermediate and Diploma School in 2017–18; work will continue on the major building project in the basement at Bedford Square for our new and expanded Digital Prototyping Lab; graduate students will break ground on Wakeford Hall, a stunning new building incorporating a library and lecture space in the woodland at Hooke Park in Dorset. It is also 30 years since Mark Cousins began his Friday lecture series at the AA, and he will deliver the final series this year, to then begin work on writing up his spoken words for publication. But perhaps most crucial for the AA this year are two parallel activities that serve to underpin all of our endeavours: the pursuing of our application for Taught Degree Awarding Powers, alongside the search for a new AA Director. It is an amazing moment for the AA to come together to ask what it is, and what it wants to be next. We are all privileged to be here, now, to be a part of that conversation – a celebration of looking forward.

#### Our School

The AA is a famously independent architectural school. We are self-governed, self-motivated and self-funded. We have a broad commitment to bringing issues of contemporary architecture, cities and the environment to a large public audience, and we remain focused on the highest standards possible for the education of young architects. As a school we are famous not only for our students, teachers and graduates – the essential part of our legacy – but also for the many ways our courses and activities have contributed to improving the conditions of modern architectural learning, practice and knowledge.

The AA School sits outside the UK state funding of higher education; we are supported by the fees our students contribute to the life of the association. Our flexible, self-directed curricula, combined with our institutional independence and our truly global organisation, afford us a rare degree of awareness, ambition and confidence – all necessary qualities for any school confronting the sweeping social, technological and cultural changes in our world today. By constantly challenging ourselves, we remain confident in our abilities to discover, communicate and disseminate new architectural ideas and projects in ways few other venues – offices, schools or cultural centres – could ever match.

#### Our Students

2017–18, the AA's 170th year, offers an ambitious array of new and returning undergraduate units, established and experimental graduate programmes and public activities. The school has around 750 full-time students and 250 tutors, supported by an additional 80 administrative staff. Sixty per cent of our full-time students study in our RIBA/ARB-validated Undergraduate School. Organised around the AA's renowned 'unit system' of study – year-long unit studios led by unit masters, tutors and collaborators – students

in the Undergraduate School work towards RIBA qualifications in architecture. The remaining 40 per cent are enrolled in one of the AA's 11 Graduate School programmes, pursuing graduate MA, MSc, MFA or MArch degrees. A smaller number study in our most advanced MPhil or PhD programmes.

Globally, the AA Visiting School will again bring together hundreds of part-time students to global schools, design workshops and special architectural events across five continents.

### **The AA Unit System**

All learning in the AA School is project- and portfolio-driven. Students learn architecture and address the broad spectrum of associated professional and political issues by embedding these realities within the scope of a single, resolved design portfolio. The AA's famed 'unit system' of teaching and learning includes collective assessment and enquiry across all parts of the school. In addition to the innovative team- and group-based studio work of the Graduate School, individual undergraduate student projects and portfolios are assessed at the end of each academic year by a panel of unit tutors, who collectively assess, discuss and debate the strengths, weaknesses and results of each and every project and portfolio within the school.

### **Our Buildings, Rooms and Resources**

The AA first moved to Bedford Square in 1917, and has grown up not only alongside the modern profession of architecture in the UK, but as one of the world's key promoters and protagonists of modern architecture. From the middle of the twentieth century – after a brief period during the Second World War when the school decamped from London to the safety of the English countryside – the modern school of 500 or more students spread itself across various streets and squares throughout Bloomsbury, taking space as it became available, affordable and necessary. It is only during the past seven years that this dispersed pattern of school inhabitation has been replaced by a sustained focus to bring together all parts of the school back in our historic home, Bedford Square. This project has more than doubled the overall floor area of the school and provided the means to offer every enrolled student a dedicated studio workspace, alongside a host of new display, presentation, workshop and computing rooms, learning resources and urgently needed school facilities.

Today the AA retains the many unusual, idiosyncratic qualities of the kinds of 'found' event spaces that generations of students and teachers have embraced as the essential character of our school. Its stately Georgian rooms, appropriated and transformed into L-shaped lecture halls, members' rooms, a central bar and other shared social spaces, represent a domestic, non-institutional architecture, unusual for a school.

The AA is unique in its model of governance, with the entire school community being responsible for electing and regularly advising the director. The AA School community consists of more than 1,000 individuals and includes all currently enrolled full-time students, all contracted academic and administrative staff and the 18 members of the AA Council, elected annually as company directors and charity trustees of AA, Inc. The Director of the school works with students and teachers across the entire school community every year, helping to maintain the high quality and standards that are the hallmarks of an AA education. The school community includes an academic board as well as the student forum, and the Director's Office

is supported by a senior management team that leads day-to-day operations across the association. The school is remarkably open and accessible to students wishing to gain access or additional support throughout the year: it is open on weekends, and the Director's Office, like other senior staff offices, maintains an open-door policy on Tuesdays and Fridays. Students and staff are welcome to stop by to discuss new initiatives, current issues and any other matters that arise during the year.

Samantha Hardingham AA Interim Director

## 1. 1 THIS GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to provide information regarding the way in which the School and its programmes are organised. Familiarising yourself with this document will provide you with insight for the reasons we do the things we do.

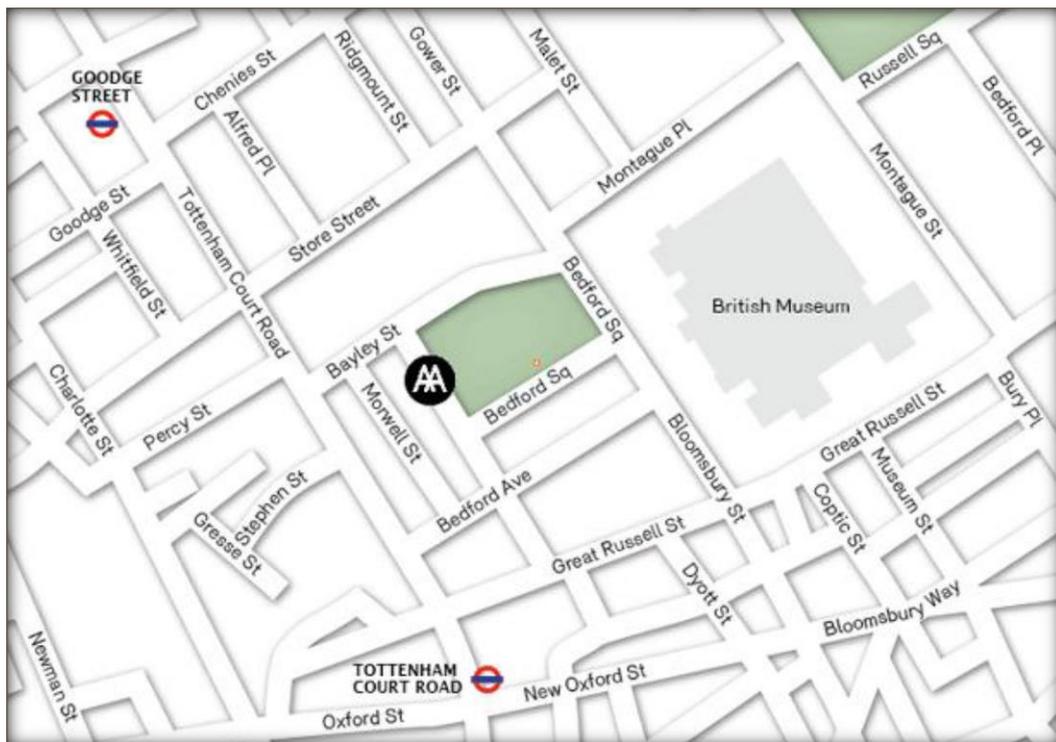
This guide also provides an introduction to terms and definitions, common principles of content and assessment, the way that the programmes are structured, how each unit and course is organised, credited and regulated, and what you, as a student, will be expected to do.

Other documents you will find essential in orienting yourself within the Undergraduate School include the following:

- The AA School Academic Regulations 2017-2018

## WHERE WE ARE

Our principal buildings are at 34-36 Bedford Square Bloomsbury central London. We occupy additional premises at 32, 33, 37, 38 and 39 Bedford Square, and 4 and 16 Morwell Street. Additional teaching and learning centres are located in the AA's Hooke Park, in Dorset.



### Address

AA School of Architecture  
36 Bedford Square  
London WC1B 3ES

### Telephone:

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7887 4000

### Contact Details

	Role	Location	Telephone
Samantha Hardingham	Interim Director	36 Bedford Square	+44 (0)20 7887 4026
Belinda Flaherty	Registrar	36 Bedford Square	+44 (0)20 7887 4092
Rachel Sim	Undergraduate Coordinator	36 Bedford Square	+44 (0)20 7887 4009

## 1.2 ACADEMIC ORGANISATION & MANAGEMENT

### Overall Academic Organisation

The AA School is an independent school of architecture governed by the Architectural Association (Inc.) The AA Undergraduate School offers a five-year course in architecture prescribed by the Architects Registration Board and validated by the Royal Institute of British Architects. The AA School of Architecture consists of approximately 750 full-time equivalent students, who study in the Foundation, Undergraduate and Graduate Schools.

The AA School is made of four distinct parts:

- **The Foundation Programme**, for one-year, for students contemplating a career in architecture and design
- **The Undergraduate School**, a five-year ARB/RIBA validated course which is recognised within Europe under Article 46 of the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC). AA Intermediate Examination provides, after three years' full time study, exemption from ARB/RIBA Part 1 and after five years' full time study the AA Final Examination provides exemption from ARB/RIBA Part 2. The AA Professional Practice and Practical Experience Examination, a further one-year ARB/RIBA validated course leading to graduation providing exemption from ARB/RIBA Part 3 and to UK professional qualification as an architect. This course is open to graduates who have successfully obtained their Part 1 and Part 2 qualifications or their equivalents. A minimum period of 24 months appropriate professional experience is a requirement at Part 3, at least 12 months of which must have been undertaken after obtaining Part 2.
- **The Graduate School**, comprising 11 distinct programmes of advanced studies. The AA is an Approved Institution and an Affiliated Research Centre of the Open University. All taught graduate degree programmes are validated by the Open University. The OU is the awarding body for research degrees at the AA. There are full-time Masters programmes offering degrees, including a 12-month Master of Arts and a Master of Science, a 16-month Master of Architecture, an 18 month Master of Fine Arts and a 20-month taught Master of Philosophy. The AA Doctor of Philosophy programme combines advanced research with a broader educational agenda.
- **The AA Visiting School (AAVS)** is held on five continents in dozens of cities, territories and remote regions. The diverse courses that make up our AAVS programme provide teaching and learning opportunities for students, professionals and other international participants to engage with AA tutors and other experts on a number of the world's urgent challenges, in not only architecture but in the wider context of culture and the environment. The short-course offerings in the Visiting School are open to visiting students enrolled at schools throughout the world, currently enrolled AA students, recent graduates, architects and other creative individuals and professionals who wish to further their knowledge, practice and skills in architecture.

### Academic Management and Governance

The Academic Board is the sovereign academic body charged with responsibility for the academic governance of the AA School and its programmes of study. It is chaired by the Director of the AA School. The Academic Board delegates responsibilities to, and monitors the progress, effectiveness and recommendations of the AA School's academic committees, the Undergraduate Management Committee (UMC), Graduate Management Committee (GMC) and Teaching Committee. The Academic Board demonstrates its accountability to the AA Council by submission of quarterly reports.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is made up of a group of individuals who are each responsible for the operational actions of one of ten areas of the AA School: School Director, School Registrar, Company Secretary, Head of Estates, Chair of Graduate Management Committee, Chair of Undergraduate Management Committee, Head of Visiting School, Director of Finance & Resources, Director of Development & External Engagement, Head of Human Resources. These areas all, in some regard, impact on the academic management and resourcing of the AA School.

### Annual Unit and Course Review and Action

All programmes and courses in the School are subject to internal and external review on a regular basis. This includes review by the School's relevant Academic Committees and Boards, feedback from the External Examiners, student feedback, and annual internal and external monitoring processes by and including the regulatory and professional bodies, ARB and RIBA and the government's regulatory body for Higher Education,

the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency).

## SECTION 2

### 2.0 FOUNDATION PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

FOUNDATION PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION		
PART A: PROGRAMME SUMMARY INFORMATION		
Awarding body	Architectural Association School of Architecture	
Partner institution(s)	N/A	
Location of Study/campus	36 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3ES	
<b>Award and titles</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>Title</b>
Final award	Foundation Diploma – 120 credits	AA Foundation Diploma
Intermediate award	N/A	N/A
	<b>Duration of study (standard)</b>	<b>Maximum registration period</b>
Full-time	1 year	2 years
Sandwich	N/A	N/A
Part Time	N/A	N/A
Distance	N/A	N/A
Start date for programme	September 2017	
<b>Course codes/categories</b>		
UCAS code	N/A	
CATS points for course	N/A	
QAA Subject Benchmark	2010	
<b>Admissions agency</b>		
UCAS	N/A	
Direct to School		
<b>Admissions criteria</b>		
Requirements	Refer AA School Academic Regulations	
Language	Refer AA School Academic Regulations	
<b>Contacts</b>		
Programme Head	Saskia Lewis	
Registrar	Belinda Flaherty	

#### 2.1 Terminology

The terms *knowledge*, *understanding*, *ability* and *skills* are used to indicate the level of achievement required; FHEQ Level 4.

#### 2.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Foundation Programme offers a full-time, one-year studio-based programme for students who wish to pursue architecture and related arts subjects. A hands-on course of creative design, thinking and learning, it is intended for individuals with limited previous experience in creative fields, but with an interest in exploring, and preparing for, a future academic or professional career in architecture or the arts. On the successful completion of the Foundation Programme students are awarded an AA Foundation Diploma. Students in the Foundation Programme are required to produce a final portfolio for assessment and must successfully complete the programme in order to be eligible for progression to First Year at the AA or equivalent course elsewhere. The Foundation Programme is separate from, and does *not* form part of, the Undergraduate School academic programme.

## **Teaching and Learning**

This programme is undertaken in full-time mode only. Students are taught via one-to-one tutorials, workshops, seminars and group discussions that encourage independent intellectual and practical creative development. The focus is to provide an appropriate foundation for creative and research activity in architecture and related areas. Student work is developed in conjunction with discussions on history and theory and applicable skills workshops. The development of a wide range of visual communication skills is emphasised throughout the Foundation Programme. Programme details, teaching schedules, events and staff contact times are described in the Programme Handbook. Timetables and assignments are set by the Programme Head in order to ensure parity. Detailed information on School resources and events is set out in the AA Prospectus and on the AA website.

## **Method of Assessment**

The Assessment regulations are set out in the AA School Academic Regulations. Formative and summative assessments are through presentation of a portfolio of work. The criteria for assessment is set out in the Design Studio Description and students are given oral feedback at all assessment points and written feedback following the Progress Review in January and final submission of work at the end of the programme.

### **Formative assessment**

Continual formative assessment is provided weekly at tutorials, periodic studio pin-ups and juries. More formal formative assessment is provided through the January Progress Reviews in week 13 (week 1 of Term 2) after which written feedback is provided to assist students in the preparation for their subsequent work.

### **Summative assessment**

Summative assessment takes place at 'Tables' in week 30. Portfolios of final drawings, images and models are presented physically and digitally to a Review Panel of Foundation, First Year and other School tutors to ensure parity of assessment. A pass at the end of the Foundation Course confirms eligibility to be considered for progression to First Year at the AA or equivalent course elsewhere.

### **Re-Assessment**

Should a student not obtain a *Pass* standard, at the final 'Table', they will be informed of the further tasks and submission development to be undertaken for successful completion of the work by an agreed resubmission date. Resubmission cannot exceed two attempts. Should the submission not meet a *Pass* standard on the second re-submitted attempt, the submission will be recorded as a *Fail*.

## **2. 3 Award classification**

The award of the AA Foundation Diploma is classified only as Pass.

## **2. 4 Learning Support**

Refer to AA Academic Regulations.

## **2. 5 Admissions Criteria**

Refer to AA Academic Regulations.

## **2. 6 Regulations**

Refer to AA Academic Regulations.

## **2. 7 Monitoring and improving quality, quality indicators**

Teaching Committee/Academic Board- Annual monitoring and action  
QAA Institutional Review – Periodic

### 3.0 FOUNDATION PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

FOUNDATION DESIGN STUDIO			
Level	Foundation FHEQ Level 4 equivalent	Status	Compulsory
Programme Head	Saskia Lewis	Terms	1, 2, 3
Programme Staff	Umberto Bellardi Ricci Juliet Haysom Silvana Taher	Credits	120
Co-requisite	None	Pre-requisite	None
Barred Combinations	None	Professional Body Requirements	None
Learning Methods	Lectures/seminars/tutorials/ Juries/self-directed learning		

### 3.1 FOUNDATION DESIGN STUDIO DESCRIPTION

#### SYNOPSIS

#### **Precision cuts and Margins of Error - The dynamics of materiality and time – from drawing to making**

We will develop individual ways of articulating our observations, analyses and documentation. Inspired by the strategic images of Thomas Ruff, the graphic influences of the October Revolution, the fluidity of plywood, the analysis of colour through Joseph Albers, the mundane worlds of Thomas Demand and the cut-up compositions of Hannah Höch we will, over the course of this year, explore; inspiration, observation, scale, site, materiality, archiving, scenario and identity.

In the first term we will develop skills through the forensic examination of micro sites, colour within volume and the exploration of a variety of landscapes. We will learn to intellectually delve into research with the identification and compilation of a series of influences and progenitors identified by each individual student. We will run workshops that encourage translation from observation to material interpretation and our projects will range in scale from the intimacy of a spatial fragment to a journey through the city.

During the second term students will use their recently developed skills to articulate their work in greater depth. We encourage haphazard experimentation, thinking through making and the use of a variety of techniques: photography, drawing, painting, model-making, casting, mapping, material studies, form, structure, pattern-cutting, costume, sewing, weaving, textiles, carpentry, performance, lighting and filmmaking.

Term three allows us to negotiate how to record our work within moving image - playfully translating our positions and proposals into narrative coherence and deepening our investigations.

By the end of the year, students will have produced a comprehensive portfolio that illustrates their bespoke journey through the Foundation year both in analogue and digital interpretations.

## AIMS

- To familiarize the students with basic core skills.
- To support students to develop visual, verbal and written skills in relation to all aspects of design work and develop a constructive self-critique over the course of three terms.
- To support students to understand the synthesis between observation, documentation, analysis and how that leads from experimentation and speculation to proposals within architecture and fine art production.

## OUTLINE CONTENT

- ♦ **Fragment**, form and materiality at 1:1
- ♦ **Colour** theory and study/collection of colour palette of journey through London
- ♦ **Volume**, site and British modernism experienced and interpreted at 1:20
- ♦ **City** witnessed, experienced and documented in groups – portraits of atmosphere – London, Lugo, Naples – compare, contrast, edit and juxtapose – 1:200/1:500/1:1250
- ♦ Development of Portfolio
- ♦ **Narrative** – written text and development of film/moving image – content/context
- ♦ **Body/Prop/Interface**, exploring joints (human and carpentry), examination of the relationship between a garment/prop and a body – deconstruction of existing garment/prop and reconstruction of experiment at 1:1 - nominally inhabitable – experimentation/debate of rural/city and local/global due to site Hooke/London
- ♦ **Animating Ideas**, exploring how to animate aspects of work in moving image
- ♦ **How to develop independent learning and create a portfolio that visually describes your working with material and ideas that represent your interests**
- ♦ **Building** an exhibition
- ♦ **Studio trips** to Italy and Hooke Park

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| LO1 | Ability to identify personal interests and observations and use those interests to motivate and develop design work.   |
| LO2 | Ability to describe observations in both 2D and 3D using a range of tools and media.   |
| LO3 | Ability to work between scales, from the hand-held object to the cityscape   |
| LO4 | Compose a portfolio describing the processes used to investigate lines of enquiry using observations, precedents and experiments to demonstrate critical development |

## TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

Students work in groups and individually with regular interaction with tutors and external collaborators in tutorials, seminars and workshops. Students and tutors constantly engage with other parts of the AA School and with external critics on specific subjects related to design through a series of tailored seminars and collaborations. In addition students experience works through site visits and workshops, including visits to various buildings, cities and exhibitions. Students learn to research, analyse and synthesise at a level appropriate to this stage of academic experience. Students make projects to explore spatial and intellectual ideas and learn to justify and communicate these through a range of media. Feedback is regularly provided in tutorials, seminars, juries and at tabletop reviews where students are required to make visual and verbal presentations of their work.

## LEARNING SUPPORT

Extensive information and physical resources are available to all students for learning support including model-making workshops for wood and metal working, digital prototyping, audio-visual lab, digital photography studio, bookshop, library, photo library, archives, Public Programme series, weekly published School events lists and Hooke Park. Design tutors are timetabled to meet the students for tutorials and seminars every week and juries as scheduled.

## ASSESSMENT

**Assessment will be based on the following:**

- ◆ An understanding of scale with reference to form, representation and occupation
- ◆ Development of visual awareness and ability to document and analyse observations to develop experiments and speculations – to develop the ability to make visual this journey in a portfolio for discussion
- ◆ An understanding of how to use a brief to stimulate a series of investigations and data from which to draw an investigation and develop work
- ◆ A demonstration of the ability to openly discuss and debate developed and developing work with peers, tutors and professionals to challenge preconceptions and open dialogues – visually and verbally

### Assessment Criteria

All learning outcomes must be passed to achieve a pass in the Foundation Programme.

Students are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, ability and skills in the following areas:

#### Design Development

Understanding the parameters of a series of briefs that demonstrate specific functional and contextual requirements leading to visual manifestations increasing in complexity from observation, documentation and analysis to speculative experimental translations.

#### Integration and Synthesis

Effective use of visual, verbal and written skills in the communication of the project and the integration of feedback.

## TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

The student will have an opportunity to practice the following skills:

	Required	Assessed
Communication:		
Verbal	O	O
Visual	O	O
Written	O	
Manage time and work to deadlines	O	O
Critical skills/ability	O	O
Work as part of a team	O	
Research precedents	O	