

**Architectural Association
School of Architecture**



AA PROGRAMME HANDBOOK

AA Autumn Semester Programme 2026

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SECTION 1: THE SCHOOL ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

1.1 THIS HANDBOOK / WHERE WE ARE

The purpose of this Programme Handbook is to provide information regarding how the Semester Programme and its courses are organised. It also introduces terms and definitions, common principles of content and assessment, the way that the programmes are structured, how each Course is credited, and regulated, and what you will be expected to do.

Our principal buildings, where most of the academic programmes are based, are at 32-39 Bedford Square, 4 and 16 Morwell Street and 1 and 1A Montague Street in Bloomsbury, Central London. The Design and Make Programme is located in AA's Hooke Park, in Dorset.

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SECTION 2: COURSE COMPONENTS

ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

2.1 PROGRAMME HEAD AND MASTER TUTOR

Programme Head(s): Ingrid Moye and Christoph Zeller (Zeller & Moye)

Zeller & Moye was founded by Christoph Zeller and Ingrid Moye as an architectural studio that operates with an interdisciplinary and global approach, with bases in Mexico City and Berlin. The studio established a unique working method of extensive experimentation for the development of a project in order to articulate meaningful proposals for the contemporary world. Zeller & Moye has designed a wide range of projects at all scales from furniture design to large cultural buildings in different parts of the world. Christoph Zeller and Ingrid Moye worked several years for international practices SANAA and Herzog & de Meuron, leading numerous projects such as the 'Tate Modern Project' and the 'Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2012'. Christoph Zeller and Ingrid Moye have taught at the AA Visiting Schools Berlin and Mexico, a master class in urban studies at the UIA Mexico City and have been jury members, lecturers and guest critics at various universities.

2.2 SYNOPSIS

The AA Visiting School Semester Programme is a full-time, studio-based course open to undergraduate and graduate students, architects, and other creative individuals from around the world who wish to further their knowledge, practice and skills in architecture. The programme is integrated with the AA's undergraduate History and Theory Studies and Communication and Media Studies courses, designed to allow transferable study credits.

The research tests a design methodology that promotes contextual design processes. It explores a dialogue between urban and architectural scales and between analytical mapping and strategic thinking. Students investigate how urban learnings inspire architectural projects that have a positive urban impact therefore shaping sustainable and resilient cities. The aim is to design multi-scalar proposals, enabling architectural propositions to respond to a larger narrative relating to the programmatic and socio-economic capacities of the city and its infrastructure.

The method is to give them pairs of binary topics -tangible and intangible elements- to capture the static and dynamic character of the place and to understand the city as a set of layers. The use of virtual data and onsite recordings to learn from the city aims to create unique cartographic mappings of the place, creating maps that operate between documentation and creation.

Students explore their own aesthetic style and are invited to use advanced software programmes. New forms of visualization offer new ways to think about the design of future cities. This is part of their discovery aims to shape a critical mind towards their design production. The process of design becomes their portfolio referred to as the Project Narrative.

A unit trip is organized in relation to the main unit brief, allowing students to experience live project sites for themselves and engage in dialogues with local professionals. The group trip focuses on architecture, landscapes and workspaces with the potential to inspire and inform the theme of the brief.

2.3 DESIGN STUDIO BRIEF

Glass has always been found in nature. Its state of aggregation is solid and liquid at the same time. The technology of glassmaking is an ancient one with the earliest record of man-made glass about 4,000 years ago, by craftspeople in Mesopotamia.

Solid cast glass is the primal type of glass, a hot liquid poured by hand into a mould. Not present as a construction material today cast glass suggests undiscovered potentials for the use in contemporary architecture.

Glass as a three-dimensional mass makes the material turn into an object of physical presence. The glass casting process provides the material with a characterful appearance as if water was frozen in time, with

enclosed air bubbles and streaks, and a varied texture to its surface. Cast glass can come in a wide range of consistencies, from viscous to murky, from coloured to crystal clear as it is commonly used in contemporary buildings. Furthermore, this artisanal form of producing glass offers the possibility of re-casting it endless times, making it a sustainable material with an eternal circle of life.

2.4 LEARNING METHODS

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 creative design through site visits and workshops, including visits to various buildings, cities, landscapes, and exhibitions. Students learn to research, analyse, synthesise and propose 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.

As a first step students will research on the material, on built precedents, and the outlined program. In parallel visits to the Crystal Houses by MVRDV in Amsterdam and the architectural glass lab TU Delft give technical insight and inspiration.

In a next step the students will individually explore designs for cast-glass modules that will be assembled in the form of walls, floors, a façade, a staircase, and even as furniture. Physical models and first prototypes at the scale 1:1 will be prepared with substitute materials. Parallel to this, as step three, glass samples at a smaller scale will be produced at the lab, to test technical aspects from the specific material compositions. Based on the design experiments of steps two and three, step four comprises the development of building designs for a specific location. The designs will get developed and represented through drawings and physical models in varying scales.

As a final step the students' designs for glass modules will get cast at the scale 1:1 in the workshop, where students will be present and experience the casting process.

2.5 CREDITS AND HOURS

The Studio Course (Visiting School Semester Programme Design Unit) is graded in accordance with the fulfilment of the course requirements and marked as follows:

- High Pass with Distinction- 80% and above High Pass- 70%-79%
- Pass- 55%-69%
- Low Pass- 50%-54%
- Complete to Pass - 49%
- Fail- 48% and below

The AA offers Undergrad Core Study Units to our students taking part in the Semester Programme, the number of Units taken by the student is dependent on the number of hours and/or credit requirements of the home institution of the student.

The Undergrad Core Studies Modules are marked as follows:

- H&T (History & Theory Studies) indication of **FAIL/PASS**
- CMS (Communication and Media Studies) indication of **FAIL/PASS**
- ETS (Environmental & Technical Studies) indication of **FAIL/PASS**

Pass: Demonstrates a good level of achievement overall, meeting all aspects of the assessment criteria required to attain a Pass; context and analysis, process and synthesis, and resolution and communication.

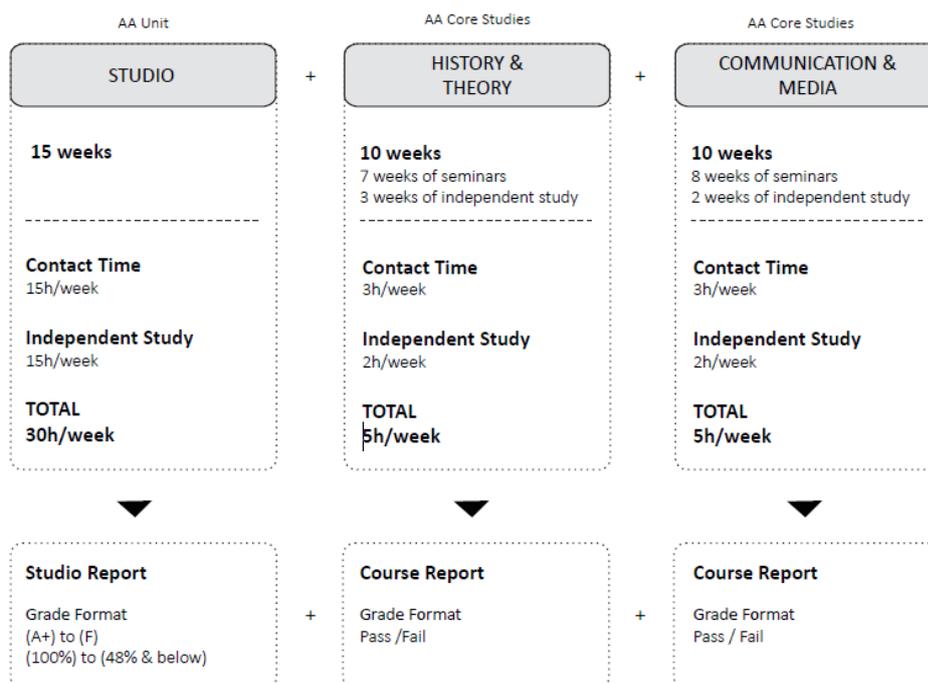
The submission is complete under the requirements of the brief set. Coherence of thought is evidenced throughout the work, with an appreciation of the topic and an appropriate level of critical reflection and insight. Developmental and final work is documented clearly in a suitably presented submission.

Fail: Unsatisfactory level of achievement overall, which fails to meet all aspects of the assessment criteria required to attain a Pass; context and analysis, process and synthesis, and resolution and communication. The submission is incomplete under the requirements of the brief set. The work is assessed as being incoherent, demonstrating little appreciation of the topic, development or effort. The submission is insufficient in quantity and demonstrates a lack of engagement. An appropriate level of critical reflection and insight is not evidenced. Developmental and final work is not documented to an appropriate level of clarity or presented to a suitable standard. This assessment is also the automatic result of failure to meet minimum attendance requirements. If a Fail assessment is made, the panel offer the student an opportunity to repeat the Foundation Course (to a maximum of 1 further attempt).

Grades are indicative only to assist in the determination of credits or fulfilment of course requirements set by the home school, and subject to their approval. The AA does not otherwise follow a marking system for its undergraduate courses.

Students are advised to communicate what information is required to be provided in the Transcript to facilitate the transfer of their credits and/or hours completed and can take part in 2 or 3 Core Studies Units.

2.6 SEMESTER PROGRAMME STRUCTURE



Core Studies Evaluating and Improving Quality/Quality Indicators

AA Academic Committee / Academic Board	Annual Monitoring Periodic Review every 5 years
QAA Subject Review	Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

		Studio Unit	History & Theory	Media Studies	
Studio Unit Cycle A	Introduction Week				
	Week 1				
	Week 2				
	Week 3				
	Week 4				
Studio Unit Cycle B	Week 5				
	Week 6				
	Week 7				
	Week 8				
	Week 9				
Studio Unit Cycle C	Week 10				
	Week 11				
	Week 12				
	Week 13				
	Week 14				
	Week 15				
	Credits	At the home Institution's discretion	10	10	20+
	Hours	450	50	50	550

2.7 AIMS

- To train professionals in design methodologies that operate at urban and architectural scales.
- To teach professionals to read and analyse urban processes and dynamic qualities of the urban realm.
- To explore and test advanced technology in the creation of urban cartography.
- To develop a critical mind towards the design process.
- To develop a critical mind towards the quality and clarity of representation.
- To be part of a contemporary debate on designing future cities.
- To develop a gradual and incremental long-term research on novel forms of cartographical representations, and design tools that inspire architectural interventions of urban impact.
- To develop theories and techniques of critical thinking that engage with the contemporary challenges of designing cities.

2.8 OUTCOMES

Studio Unit:

- Photo Collage Topic
- BOARD: Brief 1 Drawing 1
- BOARD: Brief 1 Drawing 2
- (Optional) Brief 1 Model
- BOARD: Brief 2 Urban Mapping Drawing 1
- BOARD: Brief 2 Urban Mapping Drawing 2
- BOARD: Brief 2 Strategy Drawing
- BOARD: Brief 2 Proposition Context aerial
- BOARD: Brief 2 Proposition Plan/s
- BOARD: Brief 2 Proposition Section/s
- BOARD: Brief 2 Proposition Circulation/Program
- BOARD: Brief 2 Render 1
- BOARD: Brief 2 Render 2 (Optional) Brief 2 Model Manifesto
- Presentation Digital format

Communication & Media Studies

Presentation Digital Format (content dependent on course selection)

History & Theory Studies

Written Report (content dependent on course selection)

2.9 TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

We use a series of tools for fostering learning in different environments: tutorials, pin-ups and juries.

The structure of tutorials is based on the renowned AA unit system, one-to-one tutorial. Here students develop their project in conversation with two to three tutors that have different professional backgrounds. Instant feedback, references, and live sketching help dynamic communication to foster motivation, inspiration, and creativity.

Pin-ups are interactive presentations where students learn from presenting and from given input from one or two external teachers who are invited. Here, students can learn from each other and practice presenting to an audience.

Juries are formal presentations; students defend their process and design outcomes. Four to six external professionals are invited to create a debate between the students and the crits.

Here, they learn from looking critically at their design narrative and the relationship between the academic exploration and the contemporary context.

2.10 LEARNING SUPPORT

The programme is a continuous loop of feedback, discussion and evaluation. For additional support during the course, students are welcome to have additional online reviews when necessary. External feedback during pin-ups and jury sessions, help being exposed to broader feedback and professional backgrounds.

Workshops are introduced depending on the necessities of the students: there is a software workshop at the beginning of the course to support drawing and representation skills, and there is a portfolio workshop towards the end of the course for putting together the design narrative.

The course website is a source of inspiration and orientation for the students. Additional reference projects and work is introduced to the students as benchmarking and inspiration during one-to-one tutorials.

Extensive information and resources are available online to all students for learning support including an extensive online resource of books, software tutorials, digital archives of public lecture series, and weekly published school events lists. Tutors are available to meet their students for tutorials, seminars, and juries every week.

Students have access to all the AA School's facilities at Bedford Square in London and in Hooke Park, Dorset. Introductory sessions are provided by the relevant departments at the beginning of the academic year. On-site resources include model-making workshops for wood and metalworking, digital prototyping, an audio-visual lab, a digital photography studio, a drawing materials shop, a bookshop, a library, a photo library, school archives, the public lecture series, weekly published school events lists, bar and restaurant and the woodland workshop facilities and campus at Hooke Park in Dorset.

The AA's London-based Public Programme is an extensive series of public events dedicated to contemporary architectural culture: exhibitions, members' events, lectures, seminars, conferences, book launches and publications. The evening lectures are available online to view at Hooke Park.

Additional support includes the AA Writing Centre and the AA Wellbeing Service.

2.11 OUTPUTS

- Pin up tutorials for Brief 1
- Group tutorials for Urban Mapping
- Individual tutorials for Project Strategy and Design
- Site Visit unit trip before Urban Mapping
- Pin up presentations at the end of Brief 1 and the end of Urban Mapping
- Workshop with local urban/architect at the end of urban mapping and strategy
- Mid jury after first draft proposal Software workshop when needed
- Portfolio workshop week before the last presentation
- Final Jury

2.12 ASSESSMENT METHODS

A studio report with students' overall performance and project development is shared at the end of the course. Evaluation is done as a group discussion among tutors and considering the commentary of external critics from the final presentation.

- High Pass with Distinction- 80% and above High Pass- 70%-79%
- Pass- 55%-69%
- Low Pass- 50%-54%
- Complete to Pass - 49% Fail- 48% and below

2.13 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- Consistency and participation in the course.
- Consistency and quality of work deliverables.
- Personal growth and development in drawing and technical skills.
- Presentation and communication skills.
- Quality of design outcomes considering the design challenges that the student tackled.
- Conceptual and theoretical quality of the design narrative.
- During the course we evaluate the external feedback from guests to assess the quality and communicative character of drawing skills objectively.
- We incorporate “silent pin-ups” so that students expose their drawings to other students to test if they read what they intend to represent objectively.