



# Subject Benchmark Statement

## Landscape Architecture

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## How can I use this document?

This document is a Subject Benchmark Statement for Landscape Architecture that defines what can be expected of a graduate in the subject, in terms of what they might know, do and understand at the end of their studies.

You may want to read this document if you are:

- involved in the design, delivery and review of programmes of study in Landscape Architecture or related subjects
- a prospective student thinking about studying landscape architecture, or a current student of the subject, to find out what may be involved
- an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of a graduate in landscape architecture.

Where higher education providers offer a 'conversion' programme to take non-landscape graduates on a route to professional accreditation, they should reflect on the knowledge, understanding and skills outlined in this Subject Benchmark Statement.

Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this Subject Benchmark Statement can be found in the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA's) glossary.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The QAA glossary is available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary).

## About Subject Benchmark Statements

Subject Benchmark Statements form part of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) which sets out the Expectations that all providers of UK higher education reviewed by QAA are required to meet.<sup>2</sup> They are a component of Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, which includes the Expectation that higher education providers 'consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements' in order to secure threshold academic standards.<sup>3</sup>

Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas, and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their programme of study.

Subject Benchmark Statements are used as reference points in the design, delivery and review of academic programmes. They provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with the programme but are not intended to represent a national curriculum in a subject or to prescribe set approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Instead, they allow for flexibility and innovation in programme design within a framework agreed by the subject community. Further guidance about programme design, development and approval, learning and teaching, assessment of students, and programme monitoring and review is available in Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality of the Quality Code in the following Chapters:<sup>4</sup>

- *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval*
- *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*
- *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*
- *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review.*

For some subject areas, higher education providers may need to consider other reference points in addition to the Subject Benchmark Statement in designing, delivering and reviewing programmes. These may include requirements set out by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, national occupational standards and industry or employer expectations. In such cases, the Subject Benchmark Statement may provide additional guidance around academic standards not covered by these requirements.<sup>5</sup> The relationship between academic and professional or regulatory requirements is made clear within individual statements, but it is the responsibility of individual higher education providers to decide how they use this information. The responsibility for academic standards remains with the higher education provider who awards the degree.

Subject Benchmark Statements are written and maintained by subject specialists drawn from and acting on behalf of the subject community. The process is facilitated by QAA. In order to ensure the continuing currency of Subject Benchmark Statements, QAA initiates regular reviews of their content, five years after first publication, and every seven years subsequently.

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<sup>2</sup> The Quality Code, available at [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code), aligns with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, available at: [www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ESG\\_endorsed-with-changed-foreword.pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ESG_endorsed-with-changed-foreword.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a).

<sup>4</sup> Individual chapters are available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b).

<sup>5</sup> See further Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a).

## **Relationship to legislation**

Higher education providers are responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them, for example by funding bodies. The Quality Code does not interpret legislation nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements. Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the Subject Benchmark Statement where appropriate. Higher education providers are responsible for how they use these resources.<sup>6</sup>

## **Equality and diversity**

The Quality Code embeds consideration of equality and diversity matters throughout. Promoting equality involves treating everyone with equal dignity and worth, while also raising aspirations and supporting achievement for people with diverse requirements, entitlements and backgrounds. An inclusive environment for learning anticipates the varied requirements of learners, and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities. Higher education providers, staff and students all have a role in, and a responsibility for, promoting equality.

Equality of opportunity involves enabling access for people who have differing individual requirements as well as eliminating arbitrary and unnecessary barriers to learning. In addition, disabled students and non-disabled students are offered learning opportunities that are equally accessible to them, by means of inclusive design wherever possible and by means of reasonable individual adjustments wherever necessary.

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<sup>6</sup> See further the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education: General Introduction*, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=181](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=181).

## About this Subject Benchmark Statement

This Subject Benchmark Statement refers to bachelor's degrees with honours and master's degrees in Landscape Architecture.<sup>7</sup>

This version of the Statement forms its third edition, following initial publication of the Subject Benchmark Statement in 2000 and review and revision in 2007.<sup>8</sup>

### Note on alignment with higher education sector coding systems

Programmes of study which use this Subject Benchmark Statement as a reference point are generally classified under the following codes in the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS).<sup>9</sup>

**Programmes which refer to this Benchmark Statement, both in the design and operation of the programmes, sit within the grouping K300:**

**Within K300 Landscape design:**

- K300 (Landscape and garden design)
- K310 (Landscape architecture)
- K320 (Landscape studies)
- K330 (Landscape design)
- K340 (Garden design)
- K390 (Landscape and garden design not elsewhere classified).

**Additionally programmes in the following JACS coded areas cross-reference this Subject Benchmark Statement:**

- D444 (Land management for recreation)
- D448 (Sustainable agricultural & landscape development)
- D500 (Forestry & arboriculture)
- H220 (Environmental engineering)
- H223 (Environmental impact assessment)
- K100 (Architecture)
- K110 (Architectural design theory)
- K130 (Architectural technology)
- K190 (Architecture with urban planning)
- K400 (Planning (urban, rural & regional))
- K410 (Regional planning)
- K420 (Urban & rural planning)
- K421 (Urban planning)
- K422 (Rural planning)
- K430 (Planning studies)
- K440 (Urban studies)
- K450 (Housing)

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<sup>7</sup> Bachelor's degrees are at level 6 in *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and level 10 in *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland*, as published in *The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies*, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/qualifications](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/qualifications).

<sup>8</sup> Further information is available in the *Recognition scheme for Subject Benchmark Statements*, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=190](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=190).

<sup>9</sup> Further information about JACS is available at: [www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1776/649](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1776/649).

K460 (Transport planning)  
K490 (Planning (urban, rural & regional) not elsewhere classified)  
K900 (Others in architecture, building & planning)  
K990 (Architecture, building & planning not elsewhere classified)  
K000 (Architecture, building & planning)  
N231 (Land management)  
V700 (Heritage studies)  
V730 (Natural heritage)  
V731 (Coastal heritage management)  
V740 (Visitor management including interpretation)  
W290 (Design studies not elsewhere classified).

**Other Subject Benchmark Statements that may be useful to reference include:**

Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Sciences  
Architecture  
Architectural Technology  
Construction, Property and Surveying  
Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies  
Housing Studies  
Town and Country Planning.

**Summary of changes from the previous Subject Benchmark Statement**

The review group included the Head of Education and Membership for the Landscape Institute (LI), a number of practitioners, representatives from a range of higher education providers and employers. Initial comments were also sought from a recent graduate and from the project lead in the government's Built Environment Professional Education project, advising on how to make inclusive design an important part of education and training for built environment professionals.

This Statement has been revised and updated to include:

- a clearer professional context in relation to the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) and the Landscape Institute (LI)
- a clearer context in relation to professional accreditation
- the principles of inclusive design and the processes needed to achieve an inclusive environment
- typical and excellent standards
- standards for master's level study
- a simplified and generic list of knowledge, understanding and skills in Section 3
- a corresponding expansion to the standards in Section 5.

# 1 Introduction

1.1 This Subject Benchmark Statement aims to clarify the scope and standards of degree programmes in Landscape Architecture in the UK.

1.2 Landscape architecture is distinguished by its position at the interfaces between art and design, and the physical, natural, environmental and social sciences. It is a subject that focuses on intervention in both natural and built landscapes through the activities of planning, design, management, and the art and science that underpins all these activities.

1.3 Landscape architecture is concerned with the planning, design, management and conservation of landscapes of all types, both urban and rural, and at all scales from the smallest open space to whole regions. It also considers the manifestations of complex interactions between humans and natural processes seeking resilient and sustainable landscapes in addressing some of the key challenges of our times, such as: rapid urbanisation, climate change, flood alleviation and disaster recovery, as well as the evaluation of the impacts of development and proposals for the mitigation of such impacts.

1.4 Landscape architecture is both a well-established professional activity and an academic subject. As an academic subject it is underpinned by research and scholarship in a wide range of areas that draw on the arts and humanities, the physical, natural, environmental and social sciences. Research and scholarship generally inform teaching and learning, seeking to understand what landscape means, how it is formed over time, what factors continue to shape it, how it is used by people and what measures can be taken to conserve, restore and manage existing landscapes, and to create sustainable and inclusive landscapes for the future.



## 2 The professional and educational context, accreditation and career prospects

2.1 Landscape is defined by the European Landscape Convention (ELC): 'Landscape' means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.'<sup>10</sup>

2.2 As part of the ELC, contracting parties (governments) undertake to implement specific measures at national level, including:

- *'training for specialists in landscape appraisal and operations;*
- *multidisciplinary training programmes in landscape policy, protection, management and planning, for professionals in the private and public sectors and for associations concerned;*
- *school and university courses which, in the relevant subject areas, address the values attaching to landscapes and the issues raised by their protection, management and planning.'*<sup>11</sup>

2.3 The subject is represented by two professional bodies; at international level by the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) and at national level in the UK by the Landscape Institute (LI).

### International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA)

2.4 IFLA is an international federation representing landscape architects across the world. While IFLA does not accredit programmes, it supports the advancement of professional education worldwide and sets the broad standards under which individual countries produce their guidance and requirements for accreditation.

2.5 The IFLA/UNESCO Charter for Landscape Architectural Education defines Landscape Architecture as:

'The profession that applies aesthetic and scientific principles to the design, planning, analysis and management of both natural and built environments.'<sup>12</sup>

### The Landscape Institute and Professional Accreditation (LI)

2.6 The Landscape Institute is the professional body for those working in Landscape Architecture in the UK, including landscape designers, landscape planners, landscape managers, landscape ecologists and urban designers.

2.7 The LI accredits programmes in Landscape Architecture, and through accreditation they manage entry to the profession via the 'Pathway to Chartership' (P2C); in support of that they produce guidance<sup>13</sup> and criteria<sup>14</sup> for the accreditation of higher education programmes, providing *'a reference point for education in the profession, ensuring the LI's education systems are fit for purpose, and prepare individuals for their first steps in building a successful career'*.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> European Landscape Convention CETS No:176 article 1: Definitions (adopted 2000, came into force 2004, UK signed and ratified 2006) [www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/search-on-treaties/-/conventions/treaty/176](http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/search-on-treaties/-/conventions/treaty/176)

<sup>11</sup> ibid Article 6 Training and Education.

<sup>12</sup> IFLA/UNESCO Charter For Landscape Architectural Education (final draft: July 2012) pg1 Glossary of Terms, available at: [www.iflaonline.org/education-and-academic-affairs/education-standards](http://www.iflaonline.org/education-and-academic-affairs/education-standards).

<sup>13</sup> Procedures and guidelines for the accreditation of higher education programmes (LI: 2012), available at: [www.landscapeinstitute.org/education/accredited\\_courses.php](http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/education/accredited_courses.php).

<sup>14</sup> Criteria for the accreditation of higher education programmes (LI: 2012), available at: [www.landscapeinstitute.org/education/accredited\\_courses.php](http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/education/accredited_courses.php).

<sup>15</sup> Landscape Architecture: elements and areas of practice: An educational Framework (LI2012), available at: [www.landscapeinstitute.org/education/accredited\\_courses.php](http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/education/accredited_courses.php).

2.8 Each programme will determine its own individual identity and focus within the broad spectrum of subject matter embraced by landscape architecture. While accredited programmes are designed to prepare students specifically for entry to one of the Institute's stated 'areas of practice',<sup>16</sup> they also seek to develop an appreciation of the full breadth of landscape architecture. So, for example, a landscape planning or a design programme will ensure an appreciation of landscape management and landscape science; while a landscape management or a landscape science programme will ensure appreciation of landscape design. Many programmes are designed to cover more than one aspect of landscape architecture, combining, for example, landscape design and planning; landscape planning and management or landscape management and science.

2.9 Students come to landscape architecture education from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some may arrive with a greater interest and capability in the creative arts, while others may have a background in natural sciences. The wide-ranging nature of the subject demands flexibility and an ability to work across disciplinary boundaries. This, perhaps more than anything else, characterises successful students in this field.

2.10 While many students enter programmes as a route into the landscape architecture profession, a bachelor's degree with honours in the subject also equips graduates with a wide range of transferable knowledge and generic skills, enabling them to work in a number of other environmental areas and professions.

2.11 Undertaking a programme of study accredited by the LI is the quickest way for a graduate to gain Licentiate Membership and embark on the Pathway to Chartership (P2C), the route to becoming a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute.<sup>17</sup>

2.12 The LI require students to achieve Licentiate membership to commence their P2C and progress to full professional recognition. In most cases, this will require at least a Postgraduate Diploma from an accredited programme. This normally means a three-year bachelor's degree and a one-year PGDiploma or master's - in total a four-year programme of study. In some programmes, these elements may be integrated, in others they may be marketed and recruited to as separate awards.

2.13 Programmes in landscape management and landscape science, may only require a three-year bachelor's degree or a one-year master's to register for Licentiate membership.

2.14 Some higher education providers offer a 'conversion' route in landscape architecture for those wishing to enter with a bachelor's degree in an unrelated subject. Such conversion routes are normally two-year programmes comprising a one-year conversion stage followed by the PGDiploma or master's degree.

2.15 Currently the existing conversion routes are focused on landscape design, though the breadth of the subject area and the increasing opportunities in urban design and landscape planning may lead to the introduction of one year conversion awards in these areas.

2.16 Decisions on eligibility for professional accreditation, including the length of programmes and any associated qualification period for eligibility for Licentiate membership of the LI and subsequent progression to Chartership, will be managed by the LI and are not within the remit of this Statement.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Available at: [www.landscapeinstitute.org/education/pathway.php](http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/education/pathway.php).

2.17 The LI website offers a summary of programmes with professional accreditation, which includes an indication of the minimum duration for accreditation purposes and the academic level of each qualification.<sup>18</sup>

2.18 Meeting the standards described in this Statement does not automatically mean that programmes will be eligible for professional accreditation. Those designing programmes and wishing to pursue accreditation are advised to consult with the LI as well as using this Statement.

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<sup>18</sup> [Available at: www.bealandscapearchitect.com/courses.](http://www.bealandscapearchitect.com/courses)

### 3 Knowledge, understanding and skills

3.1 Landscape architecture employs a wide range of knowledge, understanding and skills, applied in a complex iterative process involving research, reflection, analysis and the synthesis of subject-based knowledge, to resolve problems defined by specific projects. There is a common core of knowledge and understanding and both generic and subject-specific skills which apply to all programmes in Landscape Architecture. Within the framework of this common core, programmes are free to define a range of more specific learning outcomes for their particular programme.

#### Core areas common to all Landscape Architecture programmes

3.2 For individual bachelor's degree programmes, the content will depend on whether the objective is to produce a graduate who is a 'general practitioner' or a 'subject specialist', that is, a graduate who is skilled in a broad or a narrow range of subjects. The balance between breadth and depth of a graduate's knowledge will thus be similarly variable. Despite the diversity, the subject areas under the umbrella of Landscape Architecture share a number of generic but important characteristics which programmes address, these are:

3.3 Knowledge and understanding of:

- i the global, regional and local contexts of the profession
- ii the social, cultural, economic and environmental context of the profession
- iii the professional, legal and ethical contexts in which landscape architecture is practised, with a particular emphasis on the role of the chartered practitioner operating within the professional code of conduct
- iv the physical and natural processes and anthropogenic impacts that shape the landscape and bring about change over time
- v the historic and contemporary context of the profession
- vi the management, use and conservation of resources
- vii sustainability and environmental impact in both the short and the long term
- viii the inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary interface between the different areas of the profession, and between landscape architecture and other professions
- ix the range of users and uses of different types of landscape and the interactions between them, including potential tensions
- x the principles of inclusive design and the processes needed to achieve an inclusive environment
- xi the identification and specification of the various palettes of materials used in the profession
- xii a range of techniques where appropriate to the subject and scale of work, such as site survey and analysis, landscape assessment, environmental audit, community participation and consultation
- xiii where appropriate to the programme, socio-economic, legislative and planning frameworks\*, environmental impact assessment\* and landscape and visual impact assessment\*
- xiv appropriate research methods, frameworks and theories
- xv the visualisation of proposals for the design and/or management of landscape related projects, including two dimensional, three dimensional and temporal contexts
- xvi the role and impact of intellectual property (IP) within creative design environments
- xvii the ability to present proposals to a range of professional and lay audiences
- xviii a professional approach to study, continuing professional development and lifelong learning.

\* the breadth and depth of knowledge required in these elements will vary, subject to the focus of the programme.

3.4 Subject specific skills are detailed in Section 5, where they inform threshold, typical and excellent standards for a graduate in the subject area.

## **4 Teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Teaching and learning**

4.1 The methods of, and contexts for, teaching and learning in Landscape Architecture education will depend on where the programme falls in the spectrum of planning, design, management or science. All programmes will employ a range of teaching techniques including, as appropriate: lectures, seminars, workshops, site visits and tutorials, to impart key knowledge and skills. Landscape architecture is, however, particularly characterised by an emphasis on a studio-based, collective learning culture, which forms the context for the application of newly acquired knowledge and skills in a progressive and integrated way through a series of design-based and problem-solving projects of steadily increasing scale and complexity.

4.2 Landscape design, landscape planning and urban design programmes are specifically characterised by a focus on the activity of planning and designing new landscapes through the vehicle of the design project. This normally culminates in a significant final project, simulating the experience of work in the workplace that allows the student to demonstrate the full range of what they have learnt. In landscape planning, this may involve large-scale strategic plans for new development and/or the assessment of the landscape and visual impacts of such change. Programmes often use projects which work from a large 'planning' scale down to a smaller site-specific scale, including detailed design and resolution of technical problems. Such projects generally involve individual tutorials, public and peer group presentations and self-reflective and critical discussions undertaken informally by students working together typified by the 'design studio' environment and approach. This project-based approach mirrors the experience that graduates encounter in the workplace.

4.3 In landscape management the emphasis will be on developing the range of skills required to assess a site's economic, social, cultural and environmental value, identify opportunities and determine appropriate management strategies to maximise its future potential. This will require a technical and scientific knowledge drawing on ecology, horticulture and soil science, and an understanding of management, legal and economic principles. Projects are likely to focus on developing management strategies for the establishment and management of existing, restored or new landscapes.

4.4 Landscape science programmes apply scientific thinking and principles to enable appropriate evaluation and inform the development of appropriate management strategies. Programmes are likely to address a diverse range of projects that provide particular opportunities for scientific investigation, including survey, analysis, monitoring and research.

### **Assessment**

4.5 Formative assessment is a distinctive characteristic of landscape architecture education and an important part of the learning process, most commonly found in design and planning programmes where interim reviews of work before various audiences frequently take place, with feedback through the use of presentations, critiques, tutorials and peer review. Other aspects of assessment of Landscape Architecture programmes are generally carried out through a portfolio of coursework, but might also include examinations, seminar papers, reports, essays and dissertations.

4.6 Each programme takes a strategic approach to assessment so that it reflects the particular focus, content and delivery of that programme and the LI requirements for accreditation, if accreditation is pursued. Assessment strategies offer:

- a wide range of assessment methods, appropriate to the programme focus
- opportunities for students to demonstrate that they have met the threshold standard in all aspects of the Statement.

4.7 Students have the opportunity at the end of their studies to carry out one (or more) extensive individual pieces of self-led project work that will allow them to synthesise their full range of knowledge, understanding and skills. For design and planning students, such a project may be (but not necessarily) largely design and drawing based in format. Alternative formats include traditional written dissertations and other self-led research projects.

## 5 Benchmark standards

5.1 The threshold standard, expected of all honours graduates in programmes covered by this Statement, is set out below in terms of the core areas of knowledge, understanding and skills. Precise learning outcomes will be specific to the individual programme and are a matter for higher education providers to decide.

5.2 The Subject Benchmark Standards for Landscape Architecture may be achieved in a number of ways within each of the separate subject areas and are compatible with the diversity of curricula and different modes of assessment used in Landscape Architecture programmes. The standards are generic rather than specific to particular areas of landscape architecture, and can be applied across a diverse range of programme requirements.

5.3 The following section offers a detailed summary of skills which students, on completion of an honours degree covered by this Statement demonstrate at a threshold standard, with further guidance on the attributes students achieving typical and excellent standards should demonstrate.

5.4 These standards are defined as:

- **threshold standard:** the minimum required to gain an honours degree; graduates at this level demonstrate an acceptable level of ability and skills
- **typical standard:** the level of attainment expected of the majority of honours graduates; such graduates demonstrate definite competence and skills
- **excellent standard:** graduates achieving this standard have a range of competencies and skills at an enhanced level.

5.5 The final section sets out a summary of the standards expected of students on master's degrees, at threshold level.

### Threshold standard

5.6 In addition to the generic knowledge and understanding set out in Section 3.3, a graduate in the field of Landscape Architecture achieving a threshold standard will demonstrate:

5.7 **Intellectual skills** - through which they are able to:

- i appreciate and reflect on the ecosystem context of landscape related projects and be able to formulate proposals which include the conservation and equilibrium of that ecosystem
- ii appreciate landscapes from the perspective of various stakeholders and integrate the needs of stakeholders into the proposals
- iii understand and allow for competing and alternative theories and priorities, to inform well evidenced judgements and proposals
- iv understand diverse user needs and address effectively equality and diversity issues
- v formulate and interpret project briefs, identifying appropriate aims and objectives for familiar and unfamiliar problems at a range of scales
- vi identify relevant theory, concepts, principles and techniques to generate appropriate policies, strategies, plans or practical interventions, at a range of spatial and temporal scales
- vii tackle and apply knowledge to familiar and unfamiliar problems at a range of scales
- viii demonstrate creativity and innovation in a sustainable context
- ix plan and execute research, evaluating the outcomes and drawing valid conclusions



- x engage with secondary research sources, including the identification of appropriate supporting academic literature and reference sources in accordance with standard conventions
- xi understand where ethical, legal or data protection issues may arise
- xii understand the role and impact of intellectual property (IP) within creative design environments
- xiii identify appropriate examples of precedent study for analysis
- xiv identify and specify appropriate materials for a range of proposals
- xv understand the structural, performance and sustainability characteristics and the broad financial implications of material specification
- xvi critically analyse information, synthesising the outcomes to develop balanced arguments
- xvii evaluate alternative proposals using appropriate tools and techniques
- xviii demonstrate decision making in complex and unpredictable contexts
- xix apply critical thinking to develop an informed personal position as an aspiring landscape professional.

**5.8 Practical skills** - through which they are able to:

- i devise, plan and undertake desktop, field and studio investigations in a responsible, sensitive and safe manner
- ii understand and comply with rights of access and relevant health and safety requirements
- iii demonstrate a clear and appropriate application of scale and proportion in the design or management of landscapes
- iv in design subject areas, apply a practical and effective understanding of physical model making skills, hand-drawing and other graphic representational skills to present proposals to professional and lay audiences.

**5.9 Analytical and data interpretation skills** - through which they are able to:

- i identify appropriate geomatic information, namely the acquisition, modelling and analysis of spatially referenced data
- ii identify and collate appropriate sources of evidence and make effective sample selection
- iii identify and apply the appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative techniques to the analysis of information
- iv demonstrate appropriate levels of precision in the identification, recording and critical analysis of data in the field, laboratory or collation from secondary sources
- v prepare, process, interpret and present data, using appropriate techniques and software
- vi solve numerical problems using computer-based and other techniques
- vii identify, analyse and present financial information and use it in decision making at a level appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposals.

**5.10 Communication skills** - through which they are able to:

- i understand, select and apply approaches, tools and techniques appropriate to the audience
- ii identify and engage the various and diverse stakeholders at appropriate stages of projects to test and inform research and proposals
- iii communicate accurately, clearly, concisely, confidently and appropriately to a range of audiences in written, verbal and graphical forms, including the use of physical and digital models and other digital and other visual media.

5.11 **Digital literacy skills** - through which they are able to:

- i effectively apply appropriate technology, which may include software and hardware for:
  - a. physical model making including for example 3D printing and CAD/CAM or laser cutting
  - b. digital model making
  - c. visualisation and image manipulation
  - d. Computer Aided Drafting (CAD)
  - e. Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
  - f. Building Information Modelling (BIM)
  - g. Computer-based processing including for example National Building Specification
  - h. data processing including for example Excel and SPSS
- ii identify and apply hardware and software appropriate to the scale of work, to communicate proposals effectively to a range of audiences
- iii use the internet and social media critically, as a means of communication and a source of information.

5.12 **Interpersonal and teamwork skills** - through which they are able to:

- i contribute effectively to the identification and setting of group aims and objectives and allocations of roles within a group
- ii contribute constructively to group discussions, demonstrating the ability to consider, appreciate, respect and evaluate the views of others
- iii apply knowledge and understanding to address multidisciplinary problems
- iv contribute effectively to the production of group outputs, including reports and presentations
- v demonstrate the ability to lead a group in a range of projects
- vi demonstrate an awareness of the interdisciplinary nature and processes involved in community participation and consultation exercises.

5.13 **Self-management and professional development skills** - through which they are able to:

- i work effectively as an individual, using initiative, self-management, time and task management and personal reflection
- ii identify individual goals and responsibilities
- iii set realistic targets and perform in a manner appropriate to allocated roles and responsibilities
- iv reflect on and evaluate their own performance
- v develop an adaptable and flexible approach to study and work
- vi develop effective time-management and organisational skills, including the planning and execution of workload
- vii demonstrate the competence, behaviour and attitude required in the profession
- viii recognise, respect and work within professional codes of conduct
- ix recognise and respect the moral, ethical, ecological and social issues related to the subject
- x develop and display the generic skills required to acquire new competencies for employability and career progression.

5.14 It is important to recognise that a high proportion of graduates will achieve standards beyond the threshold level.

## **Typical standard**

5.15 A graduate in the field of Landscape Architecture achieving a typical standard will demonstrate:

- i understanding and application of the majority of the knowledge, understanding and skills listed above with appropriate critical discernment
- ii effective and appropriate application and execution of the majority of the knowledge, understanding and skills listed above showing insight, some initiative, creativity and autonomy.

## **Excellent standard**

5.16 A graduate in the field of Landscape Architecture achieving an excellent standard will demonstrate:

- i understanding and application of the majority of the knowledge, understanding and skills listed above with a high level of originality, insight and critical discernment
- ii effective, fluent and appropriate application and execution of the majority of the knowledge, understanding and skills listed above, showing high levels of insight, originality and novel approaches, initiative, creativity, ethical awareness, autonomy and leadership.

## **Master's degrees**

5.17 A master's graduate in the field of Landscape Architecture achieving threshold standards will also demonstrate:

- i a questioning and critical approach
- ii a capacity for critical reflection
- iii a capacity for independent thinking and action
- iv a higher level of originality, insight and critical reflection
- v an ability to synthesise and integrate concepts and ideas and to relate them to practical contexts
- vi a good awareness and understanding of professional working, roles, responsibilities, ethics and values
- vii professionalism in undertaking assignments
- viii an understanding of the application of alternative methods of information retrieval, data collection and analysis.

## **Appendix: Membership of the benchmarking and review groups for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Landscape Architecture**

### **Membership of the review group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Landscape Architecture (2015)**

David Booth (Chair)	University of Gloucestershire
Michelle Bolger	Landscape Institute
Mark Cowell	Birmingham City University
Edward Fox	Manchester Metropolitan University
Chris Sheridan	Landscape Institute
Kenny Fraser	Edinburgh University

#### **Employer representatives**

Christine House	Wardell Armstrong
Dai Lewis	EDP
Steve Plumb	Plumb Associates

#### **Student reader**

Joseph Clancy	University of Gloucestershire
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#### **QAA Officer**

Helen Kealy	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
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### **Membership of the review group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Landscape Architecture (2007)**

Details provided below are as published in the second edition of the Subject Benchmark Statement.

David Booth	University of Gloucestershire
Mark Cowell	University of Central England in Birmingham
Robert Holden	University of Greenwich
John Finlay	The Manchester Metropolitan University
John Stuart-Murray	Edinburgh College of Art
Professor Carys Swanwick (Chair)	University of Sheffield

The group would like to acknowledge the assistance given by Dr Laura Bellingham, Development Officer, QAA, in the final drafting of this Statement.

## **Membership of the original benchmarking group for Landscape Architecture (2000)**

Details below are as published in the original Subject Benchmark Statement for Landscape Architecture.

Professor D Cassidy  
Mr M Cowell (Convenor)

University of Central England in Birmingham  
Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher  
Education

Ms C Delage  
Professor C Swanwick  
Mr A Taylor  
Professor C Ward Thompson

University of Greenwich  
University of Sheffield  
Leeds Metropolitan University  
Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot-Watt University

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