University of Sheffield

Programme Specification

This specification provides a summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

The content of our courses is reviewed annually to make sure it's up-to-date and relevant. Individual modules are occasionally updated or withdrawn. This is in response to discoveries through our world-leading research; funding changes; professional accreditation requirements; student or employer feedback; outcomes of reviews; and variations in staff or student numbers. In the event of any change we will inform students and take reasonable steps to minimise disruption.

Programme Details

1. Programme title	Landscape Architecture		
2. Award type	Bachelor of Arts		
3. Programme details	**FHEQ Level:** 6	**Mode of Study:** Full time Full time	**Duration:** 3 years 4 years (Foundation)
4. Faculty	Faculty of Social Sciences		
5. School	**Owning:** School of Architecture and Landscape		
6. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Landscape Institute (LI)		
7. HECoS code *Select between one and three codes from the HECoS vocabulary.*	**Code:** 100124 **Percentage:** 100	**Code:** **Percentage:**	**Code:** **Percentage:**
Programme code (internal use)	ALAU004 (Full time) ALAU006 (Foundation)		

9. Programme aims

The programme aims to:	
A1	To provide a programme of study which is relevant to professional practice and which meets professional accreditation requirements.
A2	To provide a broad environmental education by enabling students to study Landscape Architecture and to develop specialist knowledge and skills in Landscape Planning or Landscape Ecology.
A3	To provide a curriculum that: ● Develops students' knowledge, understanding and skills in landscape design and, in particular, emphasises holistic design; creativity and imagination; the progressive development of design skills; sensitivity to the needs of people and communities; and awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability. ● Introduces students to the breadth of Landscape Architecture, including landscape design, planning and management. ● Develops students' knowledge and skills in landscape planning together with an awareness of its relationship with wider planning contexts. ● Helps students to develop skills and abilities in both creative thinking and visual communication and in Independent research, analysis and written/verbal communication.
A4	To provide opportunities for students to obtain experience of professional practice, by contact with practitioners on the programme, and involvement in projects that simulate professional work.
A5	To encourage progressive development of a range of knowledge and skills relevant to both the undergraduate degree programme and the later, Masters in Landscape Architecture (MLA), stage of the professionally accredited programme.
A6	To encourage active learning through practical projects involving both independent study and the achievement of collective goals through teamwork.
A7	To incorporate a diversity of assessment methods designed to test a wide range of competencies and skills.

10. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding (K) On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:	
K1	Knowledge and understanding of the physical and natural systems and processes that shape the landscape and the way that they can influence its planning, design and management.
K2	Knowledge and understanding of the range of social, economic and cultural influences which contribute to the evolution of urban and rural landscapes and of the social dimensions of planning, designing and managing landscapes for people and the environment.
K3	Awareness and basic understanding of the scope and interdisciplinary nature of the profession of Landscape Architecture and of the different specialist areas within it, its interface with other professions, including Town and Regional Planning and Ecology, and the values and ethics relevant to practice as a landscape professional.

K4	Knowledge and understanding of landscape theories, histories and methods, including design approaches and practices and the philosophies that underpin them.
K5	Knowledge and understanding of the nature, characteristics and performance of the inorganic and organic elements and processes employed in the creation of landscapes and of their implications for future maintenance and management.
K6	Knowledge and understanding of the principles and practice of landscape planning, design and management, and/or landscape ecology and ecological design, and their role in landscape practice, depending on options chosen.
Skills and other attributes (S) *When considering the skills and attributes developed in this programme, please refer to the Sheffield Graduate attributes (SGAs). SGAs can be found here* On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:	
S1	An ability to create design, planning and/or ecology proposals for different kinds of landscapes at different scales in an innovative and integrated manner, which is responsive to people, place, and nature.
S2	An ability to manipulate landscape elements through design, including exploration and critical evaluation of alternative ideas.
S3	An ability to employ a range of visual, verbal and written media, including digital and non-digital communication methods, to both develop and express landscape architectural ideas.
S4	An ability to appreciate the different qualities of design solutions and to both give and receive design criticism.
S5	An ability to carry out in practice a range of relevant techniques including site survey and analysis, social surveys, basic ecological surveys, preparing briefs, assessing the environmental effects of development, assessing the character of landscapes, and analysing relevant planning policies.
S6	An ability to make strategic proposals about landscapes at a large scale and to devise strategic and physical masterplans for new developments.

11. Learning and teaching methods *(this should include a summary of methods used throughout the programme, including any unique features and should be written with a student focus as this information will display to current students and applicants i.e. prospectus)*

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

The programme uses a wide range of teaching and learning methods to achieve these learning outcomes.

The acquisition of knowledge and understanding relevant to Landscape Architecture and Landscape Planning is achieved by a combination of **lectures** and seminars/group tutorials. **Seminars/group tutorials** allow lecture material to be explored in more depth and are a particular feature of modules in landscape planning, history and theory and materials of landscape.

In the School of Architecture and Landscape lectures are reinforced by a series of **studio projects**, which are designed to reinforce knowledge and understanding and to integrate this with the development of specific skills in planning, design and management. This is achieved by a process of 'learning by doing'.

Projects usually involve **site visits** to sites in and around Sheffield to carry out site surveys appropriate to the task. Sites might, for example, include an urban park or a city centre space to be redesigned in Sheffield, or an area of countryside outside the city proposed for development, for example as an opencast coal mine or a new area of housing. In addition, **field trips** are an integral part of the programme and allow students to see examples of landscape projects on the ground in a variety of situations. This is an invaluable way of students' learning about the realities of Landscape Architecture, seeing the work of both contemporary and historical designers, and gaining inspiration from experience of what can be achieved. During the course there is a field trip which lasts for approximately one week.

The **design studio** is at the heart of the undergraduate programme. Here students tackle a range of increasingly complex practical projects based on real world problems requiring design solutions. Support and guidance is provided through **individual studio tutorials**, together with **small group tutorials**, and **design reviews**. Reviews are a particular feature of design education and are sessions in which students make a verbal and visual presentation, which explores their approach and the development of their design solution. The presentation takes place within the student group, and involves critical appraisal by, and discussion with, both tutors and other students. Tutorials, reviews and the collaborative nature of the design studio are essential ways in which students receive formative feedback on their work. Design skills are developed initially through relatively simple and clearly focused projects at Level 1, becoming more complex at Level 2 and finally culminating in a major integrated design project at Level 3, which tackles sites with diverse problems and requires further integration of knowledge, understanding and skills acquired throughout the programme.

Landscape Planning knowledge and skills are also developed progressively through a series of projects addressing realistic planning scenarios that both explore different aspects and grow in complexity throughout the three years of the course.

Workshops and practical sessions play an important role in introducing and developing specific skills. They are particularly important in developing skills in the use of computer aided design, geographical information systems, digital image manipulation and graphics packages which are an essential part of Landscape Architecture. They also play an important part in the teaching of design and landscape planning and in development of other transferable skills. Group work skills for example are introduced through an introductory workshop at Level 1, followed up at later stages of the programme.

Independent study is critical to the successful completion of the programme and contributes to all learning outcomes. The transition from secondary to higher education is partly managed through a level one module that develops an understanding of the University learning environment and starts to develop skills in communication and independent study. Independent study has a central role in all the studio projects, even though some modules may also have a group work component. Students work independently, with the help of studio tutorials, to integrate material from lectures and workshops, to develop their own solutions to specific problems, and to work these up into graphic presentations or reports for submission and assessment.

12. Assessment and feedback methods *(this should include the range of types of methods used and should be written with a student focus as this information will display to current students and applicants i.e. prospectus)*

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

The emphasis in the programme is on both formative and summative assessment by means of tutorials and interim reviews and the submission of course work. Students are also required to develop their own portfolio of work, which demonstrates how their knowledge and skills have developed throughout their studies. Individual student reflection on their portfolio will also be used to help frame future learning strategies with personal tutors. The overall aims of the assessment strategy are:

- To provide regular formative assessment through tutorials and interim project reviews, for all studio and design based modules that enable students to reflect on and respond to critical feedback.
- To tailor assessment to the achievement of overall programme aims and objectives as well as module aims and learning objectives.
- To test the progressive development of knowledge and skills from Level to Level.
- To ensure that feedback on assessment is an integral part of student learning.
- To expose students to a diversity of assessment methods, thereby providing opportunities for development of a broad range of abilities.
- To provide clear assessment criteria for individual modules so that students have a clear understanding of what they must do to achieve high standards.

Written examinations play only a small part in the programme but are used to some degree to test subject knowledge on landscape architecture, history and theory (K4). Regular short un-invigilated tests are used to help in specific areas such as plant identification.

Studio Design/Planning projects are a key part of the programme and allow students to demonstrate achievement in relation to their knowledge and understanding of landscape design/planning theory or landscape ecology, process and practice, including manipulation of landscape elements through design, as well as the skills they have developed, both those specific to Landscape Architecture and those transferable to other areas of work. The studio project is also the forum in which knowledge and theory is integrated across a range of modules. Submissions for these projects include drawings and digital representations of design concepts and solutions, design portfolios, design files showing development of ideas and a record of formative feedback, observational journals of construction details and plant material, digital and physical models, virtual simulations and verbal and visual presentations at review sessions.

Written assignments are used to test both knowledge and understanding and skills, in areas relating to: the physical and natural systems and processes that shape the landscape, the range of social, economic and cultural influences which contribute to the evolution of urban and rural landscapes and the social dimensions of planning, designing and managing landscapes for people, landscape theories and histories, including design approaches and practices and the philosophies that underpin them and Landscape Planning toolkits and the law, policy and governance context for landscape planning. **Project reports** in Landscape Planning or Ecology often involve both group and independent research and help to assess transferable skills in written and graphic communication.

In general the transferable skills that are developed through the programme are not directly assessed but rather are an integral part of the work carried out in completing individual modules. Completion of both design projects and project reports, for example, requires demonstration of: appropriate communication skills, either visual, verbal or written or some combination of these; use of relevant computer software, including desktop publishing, geographical information systems, computer aided design and graphic packages; and personal and time management to meet deadlines for submissions. Other projects may also require group work skills, group presentations supported by digital technologies and/or independent research.

Work completed at Level 1 does not contribute to the degree classification but all modules must be passed to progress to Level 2. All modules at Levels 2 and 3 of the programme contribute to the final degree classification and all modules must be passed to allow progression to the MLA. Grades awarded at Level 3 are weighted by a ratio of 2:1 compared with those awarded at Level 2. It is recognised that design skills in particular are developed cumulatively over three years of study and this weighting allows students to demonstrate the trajectory of their progression from Level 2 to Level 3 and ensures that Level 3 work is heavily weighted in the final degree classification.

APPENDIX: FOUNDATION YEAR CONTENT

9A. Programme aims

The programme aims to:	
A1	Provide students with subject based knowledge and skills of the required standard for a successful undergraduate career at the University of Sheffield.
A2	Develop students' familiarity with different methods of learning, teaching and assessment employed at the University of Sheffield.
A3	Build confidence in students' academic ability and develop understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses.
A4	Increase students' awareness of the opportunities as well as the challenges of studying as an undergraduate student throughout the University year.
A5	Develop students' ability to adapt knowledge and skills in new situations.

10A. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding (K) On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:	
K1	Knowledge and understanding of Academic English of a standard necessary for successful progression to Level 1 HE study.
K2	Knowledge and understanding of mathematics and descriptive statistics of a standard necessary for successful progression to Level 1 HE study.
K3	Subject knowledge and understanding sufficient for successful progression to Level 1 of intended degree.
K4	Knowledge and understanding of the opportunities as well as the demands placed on students by university style methods of learning, teaching and assessment.
K5	Knowledge of personal study strengths and weaknesses.
Skills and other attributes (S) *When considering the skills and attributes developed in this programme, please refer to the Sheffield Graduate attributes (SGAs). SGAs can be found here* On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:	
S1	Relevant skills in the acquisition, evaluation and use of subject-related information in different circumstances.
S2	Essential skills in oral and written communication.
S3	Problem-solving and presentation skills sufficient to develop and sustain a coherent line of argument.
S4	Ability to participate effectively in group work activities, both assessed and non-assessed.

S5	Ability to carry out small-scale independent study and research.
S6	Information literacy skills sufficient for effective study at Level 1.
S7	Reflective learning skills which promote self-awareness and appropriate responses to feedback.

11A. Learning and teaching methods *(this should include a summary of methods used throughout the programme, including any unique features and should be written with a student focus as this information will display to current students and applicants i.e. prospectus)*

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

1. **Lectures and seminars.** Most modules rely largely upon a mixed lecture/seminar format in order to impart essential subject knowledge, build confidence and encourage individual student participation. The latter is achieved through regular question and answer sessions and the use of small-group work to stimulate discussion on particular issues. The balance between tutor- and student-led discussions varies from subject area to subject area (K1-3, S1-4).
2. **Problem solving classes.** These are an integral part of the Mathematical Skills and Data Literacy modules, allowing students to develop their problem solving skills with individual support from tutors where necessary. The work carried out in these classes allows students to apply and practise their theoretical knowledge, as well as their examination technique, in a supportive environment (K2-3, S1, S3, S6).
3. **Independent study.** This is the most important part of the learning process for most Foundation Year students. Students will be expected to complete weekly independent study. All students take a core Extended Project module which specifically develops their independent study and research skills. Within this and the Academic Literacy and Communication Skills module, students are also encouraged to monitor and reflect on their learning and performance (K3-5, S1-7).
4. **Skills and subject-based tutorials.** These are provided as part of the core Extended Project and Academic Literacy and Communication Skills modules. All students are also assigned an academic tutor for the duration of their studies on the Foundation Year with whom they are encouraged to discuss their progress and degree choice (K3-5, S7).
5. **Group work.** Throughout the Foundation Year students are encouraged to work together and support one another both within and outside the classroom – sharing knowledge and experience in a creative way in order to develop support networks during their time on the Foundation Year which they can continue to draw upon in their future degree level studies. The Mathematical Skills and Data Literacy modules incorporate assessed groupwork (K4-5, S4, S7).
6. **On-line activities.** All Foundation Year modules make use of Blackboard courses to develop familiarity with the use and potential of virtual learning environments to enhance and structure learning, and as a tool for effective communication (K1-5, S2, S4, S7).
7. **Revision workshops.** All Foundation Year pathways incorporate an element of summative assessment by formal written examination and will include specific workshops to prepare students for this form of assessment. This is an area of assessment which mature students often find particularly challenging, but is also a key assessment tool used at level one and above on most degree pathways (K4, S2-3, S7).
8. **Lab classes.** Students will participate in Chemistry and Biology lab sessions, developing knowledge of protocols and good practice, undertaking experiments and recording and writing up results (K2-4, S1,4,6).

The Foundation Year is taught by subject specialist academic tutors within Lifelong Learning in the School of Education, augmented by Extended Project supervision by an academic in the student's destination school, in teaching spaces across campus which are as far as possible selected for their suitability for appropriate delivery methods.

As well as Blackboard, the Foundation Year makes extensive use of Encore, and numerous digitally mediated activities and interactions, both in and outside of face to face classroom sessions.

12A. Assessment and feedback methods *(this should include the range of types of methods used and should be written with a student focus as this information will display to current students and applicants i.e. prospectus)*

Assessment

The assessment on the Foundation Year is designed to provide experience of all key forms of assessment methods which students are likely to encounter at higher levels of study. Early exposure to these different assessment methods, alongside the opportunities provided through feedback and tutorial discussion to reflect on these experiences, helps build students' confidence in their ability to succeed, and to identify strategies for future success. Assessment on the Foundation Year is informed by Lifelong Learning academics' engagement with and contribution to research and academic literature in this specialist field.

The assessment methods employed are as follows:

1. *Essays, reports and written assignments*. All students will have to complete structured writing using the conventions appropriate to their discipline (e.g. reports, case studies, essays etc). Through this they will develop their skills in critical evaluation using secondary sources analysing information and presenting well-structured and persuasive arguments. They will also develop academic writing skills, including academic integrity and appropriate use of generative AI tools. Students demonstrate achievement of K1-4, S1-3, S5 and S7.

2. *Oral and/or poster presentations*. Individual and group presentations are assessed within the suite of core modules taken by all students. They provide an important opportunity for students to demonstrate to their peers their achievement of all learning outcomes.

3. *Reflexivity exercises*: these exercises can take various forms (e.g. learning journal, feedback action planning, critical reflection on individual extended essay/project) and are an important element of the Academic Literacy and Communication Skills (ALCS) and Extended Project modules. They provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of K1, K3-5, S1-3 and S7.

4. *Unseen examinations*: All students undertake at least one centrally timetabled invigilated unseen examination on the Foundation Year. In preparing for and sitting examinations, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of K1-3, S1-3 and S6.

5. *Extended project*. The core extended project module gives all students the opportunity to develop their independent research and communications skills, whilst further exploring subject matter relevant to their chosen degree programme in more depth. The successful completion of this module enables students to demonstrate achievement of all learning outcomes.

Feedback

Students receive both formative and summative feedback, all of which incorporate 'feed-forward', throughout their Foundation Year. Students are encouraged to become active participants in the feedback process, identifying how to respond to feedback, giving feedback to others, and recognising how to access additional support across the institution.

Summative feedback is usually provided through Turnitin, with a mix of annotations and summary feedback.

Written feedback is provided on coursework and assessments to highlight strengths, identify areas for improvement, and offer guidance for future work.

Formative feedback is provided face to face on developing work through tutorials on the Extended Project module, and through academic tutorials. Individual tutorials are also a timetabled part of ALCS, enabling students to receive personalised formative feedback on the ALCS and other assessments.

Various forms of instant feedback are also used in class through the use of question and answers as well as online tools to check and reinforce learning. The students are encouraged to ask questions and share opinions during sessions to maximise opportunities for feedback. Verbal feedback is also routinely given during lectures, seminars and tutorials enabling students to discuss their progress and receive immediate clarification and support.

Together, these forms of feedback are intended to promote ongoing learning, academic confidence, and the development of subject-specific and transferable skills. We aim to tailor our feedback to our particular student cohort, mindful of their (usually) mature status and/or previous experiences of education.

Version Number:	**Purpose / Change:**	**Cohort affected: (academic year and level)**	**Date change approved:**
1			March 2021
2	Major Amendment	25/26 - Foundation 26/27 - Year 1	October 2025
3	Major Amendment	26/27 - Foundation 27/28 - Year 1	September 2026

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