



Critical Practice: Placement

Module Descriptor

Module Code:	LSA7CPP
Version:	V1.0
Status:	Final
Date:	23/04/2025

Summary Module Details

Module details

Module Title: Critical Practice: Placement

Module Leader: Ruth Lang

Module Mode: Full time face to face (10-month part-time placement)

Semester/Term: 1, 2 and 3

Level: 7

Credits: 40

Learning Hours: 400

Contact & Study Hours

Directed Study Time: 45.5 hrs (11%)

Self-directed Study Time: 354.5 hrs (88%)

Assessment Type

Critical Practice Manual: 100%

Module Summary

This module is the work-based component of the two inter-related Critical Practice modules. While Critical Practice: Theory asks for students to articulate an ideal of how they would like to practise in the future, the Critical Practice: Placement module grounds their understanding of the opportunities and constraints of the profession through undertaking an examination of how they are currently practising. Using the student's workplace as the principal site of investigation, it studies the relationship between process and product, ideas and outcomes.

Each student will compile a Critical Practice Manual as the key deliverable of the module which will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of their practice experience alongside a detailed analysis of one of the practice's projects. The developmental work is guided by tutors and a weekly conversation with each students' Practice Mentor at their practice placement.

Taken on which Programmes

MArch Designing Architecture (C)

Core (C) or Elective (E)

Critical Practice: Placement

Pre-requisites

All modules on the programme must be completed and passed in the sequence outlined within the programme structure section of the programme specification except where progression has been approved by the Board of Examiners due to mitigating circumstances.

Module Aims

- Taking place within a 10-month part-time placement, this module aims to provide students with the opportunity to critically examine the actual process of creative and commercial decision-making within a practice environment.
- With a particular focus on the forces that shape client-focused/ commissioned work – from cost constraints and regulation to environmental performance – the module aims to enhance a student's ability to process and prioritise complicated and competing demands.
- By supporting discussion about and reflection upon their twin perspectives as active participant and objective observer, it seeks to develop in students a mature awareness of the negotiated nature of contemporary practice and the professional judgement to operate successfully and ethically within it.

Module Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module students are expected, within the context of the host practice and its work, to be able to:

- LO1. Assess the impact of buildings on the environment within the context of sustainable design principles
- LO2. Explain the issues and principles of designing optimum visual, thermal and acoustic building environments
- LO3. Illustrate active and passive systems for the sustainable design of environmental comfort
- LO4. Illustrate strategies for building services and the ability to integrate them in a design project
- LO5. Compare the financial implications of varying building types, constructional systems and specification choices, and the impact of these on architectural design

Critical Practice: Placement

- LO6. Review the cost control mechanisms that operate during the development of a project
- LO7. Demonstrate design strategies to meet the requirements of building users', UK legislation, performance standards and health and safety legislation within cost constraints
- LO8. Relate the role of the architect to the larger design team and construction industry, with reference to current and emerging methods and trends in construction
- LO9. Summarise the professional inter-relationships of individuals and organisations involved in procuring and delivering architectural projects, and how these are defined through contractual and organisational structures
- LO10. Analyse the architect's role within the construction industry, including in the processes of procurement and building production, and under legislation
- LO11. Analyse different organisational structures for operating ethically and successfully in practice, demonstrating knowledge of the management and business aspects of running both an architect's office and architectural projects, within the context of a changing construction industry

Indicative Module Syllabus

Students are employed three days per week in a practice placement and are managed by their Practice Mentor, who oversees their progress. Students will work on commissioned projects, as the practice sees fit, and naturally there will be a wide variety of experiences within the cohort.

A shared perspective is provided outside of the placements, through group seminars, where students share their critical reflections on given topics, guided by the Module Leader and tutor, and further enriched through peer group discussions.

This module assesses a student's critical understanding of their time in practice, evidenced by the production of a Critical Practice Manual. This research-led document could take a number of forms – from thematic essay to diary narrative – but all should include a case study of a project designed by the practice, which is both an area of in-depth study in its own right and the prism through which the student interprets, measures and judges their own experiences in the office.

In order to become mindful not only of the decisions they themselves are making, but also of those being made by others, students will be expected to talk with the key decision-makers on a project (or projects), both within and external to their

Critical Practice: Placement

office. The manual should be evidenced with documentary material from the practice – working drawings, specifications, meeting minutes, even emails.

Overview of Summative Assessment

Module learning outcomes	Assessment	Word count or equivalent	Weighting
LO1-LO11	Assessment 1 Critical Practice Manual	2,500 – 3,000 words	100%

Module Pass Mark (as a weighted average of all assessments): 50%

Key Module Learning Resources

Core Sources and Texts

Indicative bibliographies for each module can be found in Module Booklets.

Module tools

Students will learn through the following range of teaching and events:

- A briefing introducing the key learning principles of the module;
- Seminars and peer presentations of work in progress;
- Carefully selected practice-based events (e.g. key meetings, briefings and site visits);
- Practice-based experience.