



Design Think Tank

Module Descriptor

Module Code: LSA7DTP
Version: V2.00
Status: Final
Date: 03/09/2025

Summary Module Details

Module details

Module Title: Design Think Tank

Module Leader: Nicola Antaki

Module Mode: Full time face to face

Semester/Term: 2

Level: 7

Credits: 20

Learning Hours: 200

Contact & Study Hours

Directed Study Time: 57 hrs (28.5%)

Self-directed Study Time: 143 hrs (71.5%)

Assessment Type

Design Think Tank: 70%

Group Presentation: 30%

Module Summary

The LSA Design Think Tank (DTT) module generates creative design propositions informed by rigorous research aimed at addressing tangible built environment issues in London.

Each year the LSA selects a shortlist of DTT topics to be studied from a long list of suggestions made by the LSA Practice Network. The study topics suggested are ones that require urgent consideration, innovative thinking and design proposals that will generate significant social and environmental progress and beneficial urban change.

Students elect to work on one of the shortlisted study topics in collaborative groups of between six and eight led by senior staff from the practice that suggested the DTT study topic. LSA Faculty work with the DTT leaders to guide students through the research and design process.

The DTT studies are published in summary in Citizen Magazine and each group prepares a comprehensive report setting out the research and design propositions

Design Think Tank

for distribution to political leaders, administrators, business leaders and opinion formers in London and beyond.

Taken on which Programmes

MArch Designing Architecture (C)

Core (C) or Elective (E)

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

- The module seeks to equip students with the skills to explore the spatial consequences of a changing world and empower them to consider the future role of the architect in that context.
- It aims to enhance a student's ability to identify, evaluate and pursue innovative and projective research topics, and gain experience and show professional judgement in synthesising complex forms of information into design proposals.
- The module seeks to develop in students the ability to work collaboratively and the skills to communicate visually and verbally with a wide variety of audiences.
- It aims to instil a methodological rigour in the students' design research skillset, equipping them with methods to research on people, place, culture or technology.

Module Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module students are expected, within the context of an agreed architectural research agenda, to be able to:

- LO1. Create architectural design proposals of a scale, complexity and type appropriate to the Design Think Tank, represented using a range of media, and in response to a research-generated brief

Design Think Tank

- LO2. Demonstrate relevant knowledge of the histories and theories of architecture and the related arts, technologies and human sciences and ways in which they have influenced the spatial, social and technological qualities of architecture
- LO3. Analyse past and current precedents of function, typology, organisation and technological strategy to prepare the programme and brief for design projects
- LO4. Design proposals that meet building users' requirements, UK legislation, performance standards and health and safety requirements
- LO5. Solve problems, form professional judgements and make proactive and appropriate decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances
- LO6. Identify a set of research methods for their design practice. Students should understand and be conversant on methods across five LSA areas and practised at least two

Indicative Module Content

There are three strands to the Design Think Tank: Research, Design and Disseminate. These are strands rather than steps because you must work on all of them simultaneously, harnessing the power and drive of a team of architects. The different strands have staggered milestones but work on each of them begins with the start of the module and continues through submission.

Research

The research strand has a milestone at the end of Term 1 with the Research Brief Workshop. Every DTT is required to have produced a Research Brief which:

- Clearly scopes out their research topic with a set of specific research questions.
- Sets out the methods to be used in the course of answering those research questions: are they people focused methods? or perhaps place focused methods? Design research methods will be part of every DTT's toolbox.
- Showcases initial research and findings to gather feedback and develop and complete over the Christmas break.

Design Think Tank

Design

The design strand has a milestone at the beginning of Term 2, with a Design Brief Workshop. Every DTT is required to have produced a Design Brief which:

- Reflects on the findings of the research carried out so far.
- Based on research outcomes, proposes a design response that builds on the Practice Brief and addresses the challenges identified through research.
- Outlines the architectural tools most adequate / relevant to develop the brief.
- Outlines the scope of any further research to assist / be carried out in parallel to the design strand.

Disseminate

The disseminate strand has its milestone at the end of the module when work is presented at the DTT Symposium to a panel of guest critics for a final round of feedback. Strategies for dissemination, however, must be planned throughout the module. The format of the submission has been tailored to assist dissemination and accessibility to different audiences and formats:

- Three AI competition boards
- Illustrated design report, including a reflection statement on site, methods and outcome, with a limit of 50 pages and 3,000 words
- A pamphlet that synthesises the students' design and research for distribution to professional and academic partners.

Overview of Summative Assessment

Module learning outcomes	Assessment	Word count or equivalent	Weighting
LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6	Assessment 1 Design Think Tank Publication	N/A	70%
LO2, LO3, LO5, LO6	Assessment 2 Group presentation	N/A	30%

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:

- An introductory briefing;
- Group workshops;
- Group tutorials led by a practice leader with LSA tutors;
- Formal presentations of work to an expert panel at symposia;
- First hand research through self-directed consultation with relevant experts, stakeholders or user groups.