



Welsh School of Architecture

Master of Design Administration



Welsh School of Architecture

Cardiff University

Bute Building, King Edward VII Avenue

Cardiff

CF10 3NB

UK

Telephone: +44 (0)29 2087 4430

Email: archi-reception@cardiff.ac.uk

www.cardiff.ac.uk/architecture

linkedin.com/edu/welsh-school-of-architecture-cardiff-university-156027

twitter.com/WSofArchi

facebook.com/welshschoolofarchitecture

instagram.com/WSofArchi

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We hope that the diversity and richness of the WSA experience is reflected in the illustrations in this brochure and we would like to thank and acknowledge the very wide range of contributors for providing the pictures.

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Master of Design Administration

Introduction

The Master of Design Administration, or MDA, is a new degree that focuses on the administration and management of the design process in the procurement of buildings.

Although new, the MDA has been developed from an existing degree that has been running very successfully for over twelve years. It receives excellent feedback, and has been commended by the RIBA over successive visits. We have taken the best elements of the existing degree and combined them with several new features, to create an exciting and unique programme.

The MDA comprises six taught modules, followed by a dissertation. The taught modules cover a wide range of topics. For example, they explore how the legislative and economic context impacts on design and project feasibility. They look at the engagement and management of design teams, both within firms, or where design is provided by an integrated supply chain. Traditional procurement, where the design process is separate from the construction process, is contrasted with routes where the design is developed in parallel with construction. Examples of the latter are collaborative and alliancing models, often coupled with building information management and novel insurance arrangements. Choosing the appropriate procurement routes, management methods and communications systems is key to ensuring the design is delivered successfully.

The MDA is intended to fulfil the growing need for experts in design administration and management, working within consultancies, or in contracting or specialist contractor firms, or in client bodies. The particular blend of topics offered, and the title MDA, are unique so far as we are aware. The programme is directed by Professor Sarah Lupton, who is a well known expert in this field, having written over 20 books including the leading text 'Design Liability in the Construction Industry' and a series on standard forms of construction contract, which are widely used throughout the UK and internationally.

The Welsh School of Architecture is ranked 39th in the 2017 QS World Rankings and is consistently placed in the top 5 schools of architecture in UK league tables compiled by the Times, Guardian and Comprehensive University Guides. It has delivered specialist Masters and PhD programmes for more than 30 years and has a particularly strong track record of researching, writing and teaching in the subject area of the MDA.

Comments from feedback:

"it really is a fantastically run course and we have all very much appreciated both the depth and breadth of the material and the care taken in its delivery"

"small group sizes and high standards of teaching staff;"

"Thoroughly enjoyed the breadth of essays and discussions amongst the cohort and the level of feedback was very good;"

"Workshop and interactive stuff very useful and a change from just listening;"

"I felt like I was learning things on the course that were of direct benefit to my work. It's easy to get involved in your studies when you know you're going to use it every day."

"Coming to Cardiff for a week enables you to get more fully rounded understanding and knowledge of a topic, which means that you can go back to your practice and apply what you've learnt straight away. We do a lot of group work, but we also socialise. I would say that the course has helped me to get the job I'm in now."

Who is this programme for?

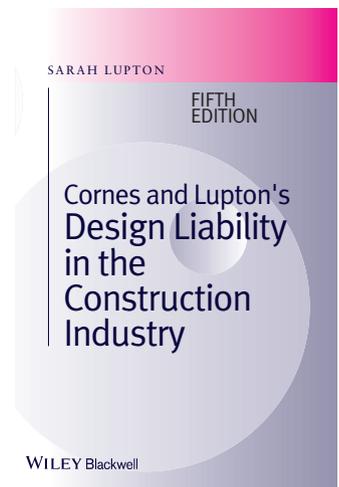
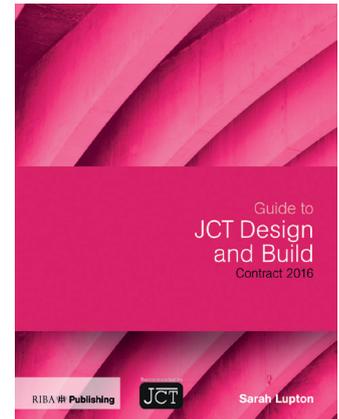
The MDA is intended for those who have a degree in a design, construction or building management field, for example architects, engineers, contractors and client representatives. All those registered on the course would normally be in employment, with several years experience, but may be looking for promotion to a more senior design management position, or perhaps to set up their own firm. Many graduates from the existing degree have gone on to become partners or directors of a firm within a relatively short time.

Teaching Methods

The MDA is offered on a full-time or part-time basis. It's delivered through blended learning, which is a mixture of distance learning and Cardiff based short courses, using methods that have proved very successful on the existing degree. The distance learning element comprises a series of set tasks, supported by on-line seminars and tutorials and regular written feedback. The short courses are a wonderful opportunity for the students to meet each other and those that teach on the programme.

A key feature of the MDA is the small size of the cohort, which enables extensive use of interactive workshops and master classes, group working and peer review. The MDA uses a variety of assessment methods such as feasibility studies, reports and case studies, as well as a dissertation, but without any class tests.

The MDA is delivered by a team of invited expert academics and professionals. The Programme Director takes a very hands-on approach, and is closely involved in the organisation of the course, and with teaching.





Modules

Industry context

Enables the student to develop a critical understanding of the context for the design of building projects within the UK, including factors which control the UK construction industry and the procurement and management of professional services and construction projects. It explores the key constraints and enablers for development projects, in particular those that would affect their design, including government policy, legislative instruments such as planning law and building control, and related guidance. It also examines incentives such as funding strategy and fiscal measures. A key focus in the examination of the context is the role of designers and design in the construction industry. The module provides the student with the knowledge and skill necessary to advise a client on the feasibility of a development proposal.

Construction contracts

Examines in detail the more commonly used standard forms of construction contract, including traditional and design-build forms appropriate for small and large projects. It considers methods for their administration, including where the design is provided by consultants, specialists, or contractors, or by a mixture of these. It will discuss problems that frequently occur and the causes and resolution of contractual claims, focussing throughout on issues related to design, quality management, and the management of risk.

Professional services

Examines issues relating to providing professional services, in particular design services, and to managing the provision of design services in relation to both large and small projects. It explores the role of the various construction professions, the means of assessing and agreeing terms of engagement for a building project, and outlines how the services may be integrated as part of a multi-disciplinary procurement team. The module covers traditional and cutting edge business models for both small and large firms. The module also examines the marketing, planning, and resourcing of professional services, employment and staff-related issues, and the management of firms providing professional services.

Design delivery

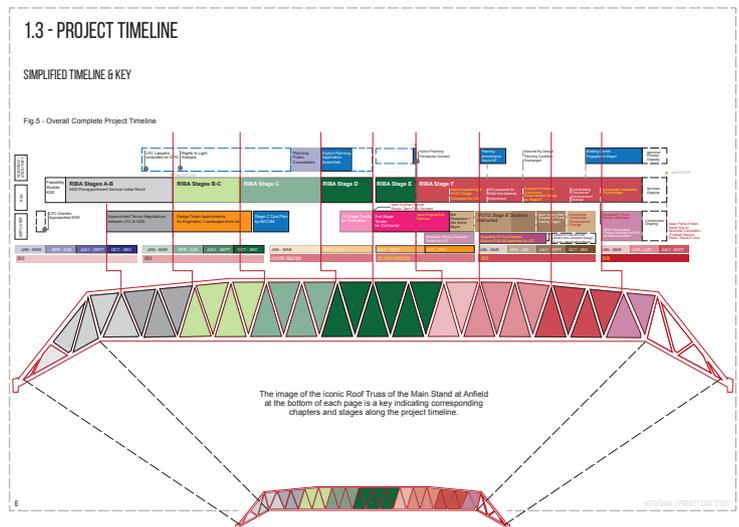
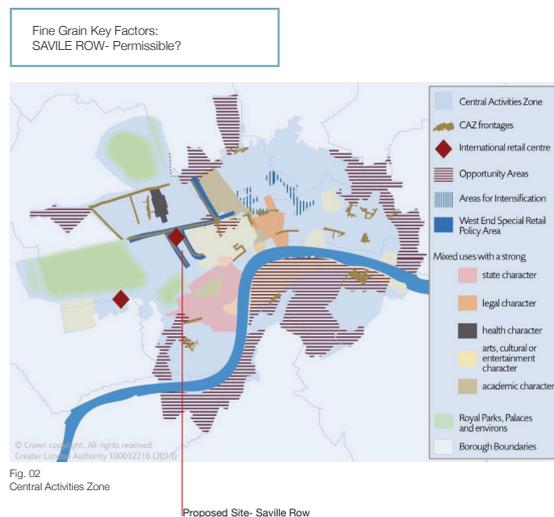
Examines in detail the pre-construction stages in project procurement, in particular the briefing process, i.e. the identification and articulation of client requirements including performance and prescriptive requirements for a design. Procedures for developing the strategic and project briefs, implementing requirements into design development, and carrying forward into tendering documentation are considered. Collaborative working and early supply chain involvement, data management (including BIM), and the implications for communication within and between firms are all explored.

Project delivery

Examines the construction and post-construction stages in project procurement, in particular the management of design development during construction. It covers the selection and administration of more complex standard form contracts, the roles of those involved, and related issues of risk management, liability, and insurance. The module explores procedures at handover and post-handover, including interface between the providers of the facility, and its owner, users and managers. The module also enables the student to assess the merits of a typical claim on a project, and to write an adjudicator's decision relating to that claim.

International procurement

This module examines the construction industry in selected other countries, including the role and regulation of construction professionals, methods of procurement of design services and building projects, and standard forms of contract. It also introduces the student to methods of procurement and managing of large-scale international (i.e. cross-border) construction projects. Students undertake research into an approved selected topic (normally how a topic from one of the other five modules is handled in a selected country or countries, other than the UK).



Dissertation

The dissertation is an excellent way of bringing everything together and offers students an opportunity to research and develop expertise in a specialist area related to the MDA. It is anticipated that in many cases the topic chosen will relate to a current issue or problem of concern to the profession, or will relate to leading professional practice, and that the results of the study will further knowledge and/or understanding in that area. The study may involve the collection and analysis of original data, or placing an original interpretation on existing data.

Programme Director

Sarah Lupton has a personal chair at the Welsh School of Architecture, and is a partner in Lupton Stellakis architects. She is dual qualified as an architect and as a lawyer. She lectures widely on subjects relating to construction law, and is the author of many books, including 'Design Liability in the Construction Industry', a series on standard form building contracts, and 'Which Contract?', and is co-editor (with Manos Stellakis) of a series on legislative controls. She contributes regularly to the International Construction Law Review, and acts as an adjudicator and expert witness in construction disputes. She is Chairman of the CIC Liability Panel and a member of the RIBA President's Advisory Committee on Dispute Resolution.

Programme Staff

Professor Sarah Lupton

MA, Dip Arch, LL.M, FCI Arb, C Arb, RIBA (Programme Director)

Robert Firth

BSc (Hons) BArch (Dist) MSc (Project Management), FRSA, FFB, RIBA (Partner, RDMF Consultancy, Distinguished Visiting Fellow, WSA)

Manos Stellakis

BSc, DipArch, MSc (Econ) RIBA, (Partner, Lupton Stellakis architects; Distinguished Visiting Fellow, WSA)

Programme Contacts

Sarah Lupton (Programme Director)

Email: lupton@cardiff.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0)29 2087 5966

Carys Meredith (Post Graduate Taught Officer)

Email: MeredithC5@cardiff.ac.uk

Tel: +44 29208 79693



