Architecture Placements at the University of Bath

The BSc Architecture at Bath is unique in integrating two periods of placement (professional practice) within the four-year degree. This distinctive approach to professional practice provides a more integrated and holistic education than the traditional three-year programme with one year placement at the end.

One of the special features of studying architecture at Bath is the strong relationship between study and practice. Our BSc gives students the opportunity to apply their university learning in a practical context at an early stage. It also enables them to produce more mature designs as they bring their professional experience to bear on projects in the latter half of their studies.

Students universally find that their experience in practice makes them more attractive to potential employers upon graduation.

When do I go on placement?

The Practice Placement in Architecture is undertaken in Semester 2 of the 2nd and 3rd years of study.

How long is the placement?

The placement period must be no less than three months in duration, but can be longer if you wish. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) requirement, as an integral part of your architectural training, is that you have a single three-month continuous period of experience.

Does the Department find the placement for me?

The student is responsible for finding and securing their own placement in a practice/organisation. Placements are normally in the UK/EU but can be taken anywhere in the world with prior approval of the University. The Department provides support to do this through timetabled employability sessions and guidance on how to create a Curriculum Vitae and Design Portfolio. Students are also given access to an up-to-date Practice database, giving the names and addresses of all the practices in the UK, Europe and overseas who have taken Bath undergraduates in recent years.

What if I can’t find a placement?

If you are unable to find a placement and have proof that you have diligently made applications, then our Professional Studies Advisor will agree an approved Alternative Assignment to complete the academic requirement for the unit. This is unusual and most students secure a placement. However we do encourage all students to find a placement where possible.
Can I work ‘freelance’?

No. This is not recommended as you need to work under the direct supervision of a registered architect for your placement status to be recognised by the RIBA.

How is my placement recorded and monitored?

For each placement you will submit a RIBA PEDR (Professional Experience and Development Record), which contributes towards the 24 months of professional experience you must gain for the RIBA. Each PEDR sheet accounts for a three-month period of professional experience, and needs to be properly completed and retained.

Students on placement within the UK will be visited in their practice by an academic from the department. In addition to this, a series of placement ‘surgeries’ are arranged in Bath, London and other regions, where necessary, to discuss general progress and any issues that have arisen.

How are placement units assessed?

The placement unit is assessed through submission of a signed PEDR record due by mid-August of the programme year. It is assessed on a pass/fail basis and not formally graded.

George Pickering at Rick Mather Architects, London

“At Rick Mather Architects they focus on the importance and integrity of good, design-led architecture. The practice is known for understated modernism, and this has helped me develop a more considered and comprehensive approach to architecture.

“Working at a mid-size practice, I gained experience across a diverse spectrum of projects. I was involved in various stages of the design projects, including work on existing historically significant buildings. Rick Mather Architects take a cohesive team approach, where everyone’s input is valued, and I admire the thought they put into the decision making process. I was able to interact with consultants with different levels of experience, and gained a lot from understanding their approaches and ideas.

I benefitted from a wide range of activities during my placement including project presentations, visits to existing buildings, attending a Design Review Panel and a planning hearing.

“This placement has developed my understanding and progressed my own ideas about architecture, and it will be very influential in my final year work.”

Jakub Ryng at Allies and Morrison, London

“Working at Allies and Morrison has been the highlight of my architectural education so far. Their design ethos is in line with Bath’s rational and holistic approach to architecture, which provided me with opportunities to employ the methods learned at University on real-life projects.

“Through working on a project from start to finish, I gained a cross-sectional view of the design process as it goes through the various stages. Participation in client and design team meetings helped develop my confidence and build communication skills, while little projects on the side gave me opportunities to show off my drawing and rendering techniques.

“Following my placement I am coming back to the University with a wide range of newly-acquired skills, and more importantly, I have identified areas with room for improvement. It is this balanced and complementary mix of academic and practical work that makes the Bath system so special and helps us gain a competitive edge over students from other universities.”
“The professional placements scheme provides an interchange between the University of Bath and our practice, which is really productive both for the students and for us.”

Bob Allies, MA DipArch RIBA
Partner, Allies and Morrison Architects, London

“As an employer, it makes such a difference to have students who have worked in practice before. There are so many subtleties about working in practice that you pick up through experience. This, along with the inevitable quality of work produced by Bath students, makes the University of Bath the place to go to when needing additional help in practice. We currently employ two undergraduate students and they add so much to the life of our office, bringing excellent skills and incredible value!”

Matt Vaudin
Partner, Stonewood Design

“We are very grateful to have the University of Bath as our ‘local’ school. Not only do we enjoy helping to maintain the strong educational tradition by teaching there but we in turn benefit from employing students who graduate from the school. We enjoy the rigorous and thoughtful approach that Bath offers, and find that their technical and intellectual abilities place them in a position where they can compete with any other school in the country.”

Peter Clegg
Senior Partner, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

Key Contact

Dyfed Griffiths
Professional Studies Advisor
d.griffiths@bath.ac.uk
+44 (0)1225 383185