

UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:

BA (HONS) GARDEN DESIGN

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20]

*This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each unit can be found in the Unit Descriptors.*

## Section A – Material Course Information

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| Validating Body  | University for the Creative Arts <sup>1</sup>  |   |   |
| Teaching Body  | OCA - Open College of Arts                     |   |   |
| Final Award Title and Type   | BA (Hons)                                      |   |   |
| Course Title   | Garden Design                                  |   |   |
| Course Location and Length   | Campus:<br>OCA / Open and<br>Flexible Learning | Length:<br>Maximum time allowed<br>to complete the<br>programme is 12 years |   |
| Mode of Study  | Full-time                                      |   | Part-time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Period of Validation   | 2019/20 to 2023/24                             |   |   |
| Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body   | n/a  |   |   |
| Type of Accreditation  | n/a  |   |   |
| Accreditation due for renewal  | n/a  |   |   |
| <p>Entry criteria and requirements<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Level 1 Garden Design is open access, so no prior qualifications are required. In order to progress to Level 2, students must have gained 120 credits at Level 1, through study or by Accreditation of Prior Learning. In addition to prior qualifications and learning accreditation, OCA specifies three general requirements for students to be admitted to its degree programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English language competency;</li> <li>• access to a desktop computer or laptop with internet access;</li> <li>• the ability to easily manage a range of basic functions through ICT (information and communications technology)</li> </ul> <p>Full details on each of these requirements can be found in the OCA Student Regulations in the section Admission Requirements</p> <p>Students will be required, as part of a programme of study, to develop further IT skills in specific applications. Therefore, it is recommended that students also have access to Photoshop and InDesign, which are available at pay-monthly reduced rates with student ID. Free alternatives to these are available. Computer-aided design software, such as VectorWorks, AutoCAD and Sketchup, is freely available to students. It will be possible to complete the course making minimal use of computer-aided design, but it is highly recommended to use these programmes which make the design process easier and more efficient. In order to operate design software effectively, it is necessary to have a computer (mac or Windows) with an i5 or i7 processor with 8GB of RAM memory and a graphics card capable of displaying resolutions at 1366x768 or higher. Programmes will run most smoothly if you have an i7 dual or quad processor running 16GB of RAM memory and</p> |  |   |   |

<sup>1</sup> Regulated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

<sup>2</sup> This should be the standard University Criteria unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board and include UCAS entry profile for undergraduate courses.

graphics card capable of displaying resolutions of 1920×1080 or higher. Follow links for specific hardware recommendations for [Photoshop](#) and [AutoCAD](#).

#### Maximum period of registration

The maximum period of registration for the course is 12 years at the slowest mode of study. Students may take up to two years to complete a single 40 credit unit, however, they must complete the entire course within the 12-year period.

#### Internet access and IT skills\*

The primary mode of communication on OCA courses is online; therefore, it is important that all students must have readily available internet access and the basic IT skills outlined in the student regulations.

#### Specific requirements

In addition to meeting the admission requirements for all courses, students should ensure they understand the nature of the challenges and requirements of the course they are enrolling on, as outlined on the OCA website.

#### Disabled students

Applications from students with disabilities are considered using the same criteria and principles as all other applicants. All students with a disability are encouraged to indicate this on their application form in order that advice can be offered on the facilities and services available. Prospective students with a disability will be encouraged to discuss their requirements with the Learner Support Team

UCAS entry profile: n/a

| Overall methods of assessment <sup>3</sup>                | Written exams:  | Practical exams: | Coursework: |
|---|---|------------------|-------------|
| Stage 1   | 0.0%  | 0.0%             | 100%        |
| Stage 2   | 0.0%  | 0.0%             | 100%        |
| Stage 3   | 0.0%  | 0.0%             | 100%        |
| Overall Learning & Teaching hours <sup>4</sup>            | Scheduled:  | Independent:     | Placement:  |
| Stage 1   | 12.5%   | 87.5%            | 0.0%        |
|   | 150 hours   | 1050 hours       | 0 hours     |
| Stage 2   | 12.5%   | 87.5%            | 0.0%        |
|   | 150 hours   | 1050 hours       | 0 hours     |
| Stage 3   | 9.2%  | 90.8%            | 0.0%        |
|   | 110 hours   | 1090 hours       | 0 hours     |
| General level of staff delivering the course <sup>5</sup> | The OCA's current policy is to recruit tutors who have at least an MA level professional practice in a relevant discipline or field and HE level teaching experience. All tutors are encouraged to work towards Professional Recognition by the Higher Education Academy. This is a requirement for Programme Leaders and Unit Leaders. All tutors are expected to be |                  |             |

<sup>3</sup> As generated by the unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

<sup>4</sup> As generated by the unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data. Expressed as a percentage of total learning hours per stage.

<sup>5</sup> Include general information about the experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the course, for example Professor, Course Leader, Senior Lecturer.

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | professionally active and engaged with contemporary developments in their field. |
| Language of Study   | English  |
| Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement:<br>QAA Subject Benchmarks in Landscape Architecture and Art & Design |  |
| Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)  |  |

#### The course structure

The structure of all OCA undergraduate awards awarded by the University complies with the OCA Academic Regulatory Framework. The OCA Academic Regulatory Framework includes information about the:

- Rules for progression between the stages of a course
- Consequences of failure for reassessment and exit awards
- Calculation and classification of awards.

| Unit codes and titles  | Level    | Credit value | Elective/ Core | Most popular student choice of optional elective units or elective options in core units? |
|--|----------|--------------|----------------|---|
| Year/Stage 1   |          |              |                |   |
| GD4PAP – Garden Design 1: Garden Design Past and Present (OGAD4153)                              | 1 (HE 4) | 40           | Core           | n/a   |
| GD4FCV – Garden Design 1: Finding Your Creative Voice (OGAD4154)                                 | 1 (HE 4) | 40           | Core           | n/a   |
| GD4BDL – Garden Design 1: Bringing Your Design to Life – From Concept to Presentation (OGAD4155) | 1 (HE 4) | 40           | Core           | n/a   |
| Year/Stage 2   |          |              |                |   |
| GD5SBG – Garden Design 2: Sustainable and Biodiverse Gardens (OGAD5146)                          | 2 (HE 5) | 40           | Core           | n/a   |
| GD5GHS– Garden Design 2: Gardens for a Healthy,  | 2 (HE 5) | 40           | Core           | n/a   |

|  |          |    |      |     |
|--|----------|----|------|-----|
| Happy Society<br>(OGAD5147)  |          |    |      |     |
| GD5LSG – Garden Design 2: Large-scale Gardens and Engaging with Other Disciplines (OGAD5148) | 2 (HE 5) | 40 | Core | n/a |
|  |          |    |      |     |
| Year/Stage 3   |          |    |      |     |
| GD6CRR – Garden Design 3: Critical Research (OGAD6154)                                       | 3 (HE 6) | 40 | Core | n/a |
| GD6FMP – Garden Design 3: Final Major Project (OGAD6155)                                     | 3 (HE 6) | 40 | Core | n/a |
| GD6SYP – Garden Design 3: Sustaining Your Practice (OGAD6156)                                | 3 (HE 6) | 40 | Core | n/a |

#### Section B - Course Overview

The BA (Hons) Garden Design is an undergraduate degree that builds upon previous study (such as A levels, diploma or foundation courses) and work experience to provide a wide range of transferable academic and professional skills, as well as thorough knowledge and understanding of the subject of garden design. This includes learning the principles and theories of spatial design, while developing the creative and practical skills necessary to pursue a successful career as a designer. It encourages students to propose new and innovative designs and allow the freedom to develop their own individual design identities, using techniques in both digital software & hand rendering/physical creation.

This unique course utilises digital technology to offer both time flexibility through the distance model and opportunities for teamwork and peer learning using chat rooms, collaborative tools and field trips and site projects. It presents exciting opportunities to explore and challenge the boundaries of existing methods of communication using traditional and emerging technologies. The course caters to a wide range of students, as there is a lot of flexibility in how you develop your skills throughout the programme. There are opportunities throughout Levels 2 and 3 to focus on a range of different options, such as professional skills, competency with design software, garden history and conservation, garden photography or sculpture. Therefore, the programme offers opportunities and challenges for students who are primarily focused on starting a career as a professional designer and those who wish to study from a personal or academic interest in the topic.

The programme has a modern perspective and incorporates up-to-date research within the field. It introduces students to the study of design within a societal context, considering garden history, design philosophies, and current interests around sustainability, ecosystems services and appropriate design, i.e. considering a wide range of user groups. This will help students to develop awareness of our relationship to gardens, in order to create significant and meaningful investigations. The programme is designed to be of interest to both those who want to obtain the skills for a career in

garden design, and for those whose primary aim is to learn more about the subject from an academic perspective.

In the beginning, level 1 units focus on delivering a broad base of knowledge in the field. These units lead students through the design process to enable them to engage with and complete each element of a garden design project: the first introduces the key concepts and history of garden design, the second develops the student's individual voice as a designer, and the third covers how to complete a garden design project to a professional standard. Threaded throughout these units is an introduction to planting design and garden botany.

Students will also be introduced to academic processes such as research and use of secondary sources. They will develop their abilities through a series of creative exercises, evaluation, reflection and synthesis of ideas, practical output and contextual studies.

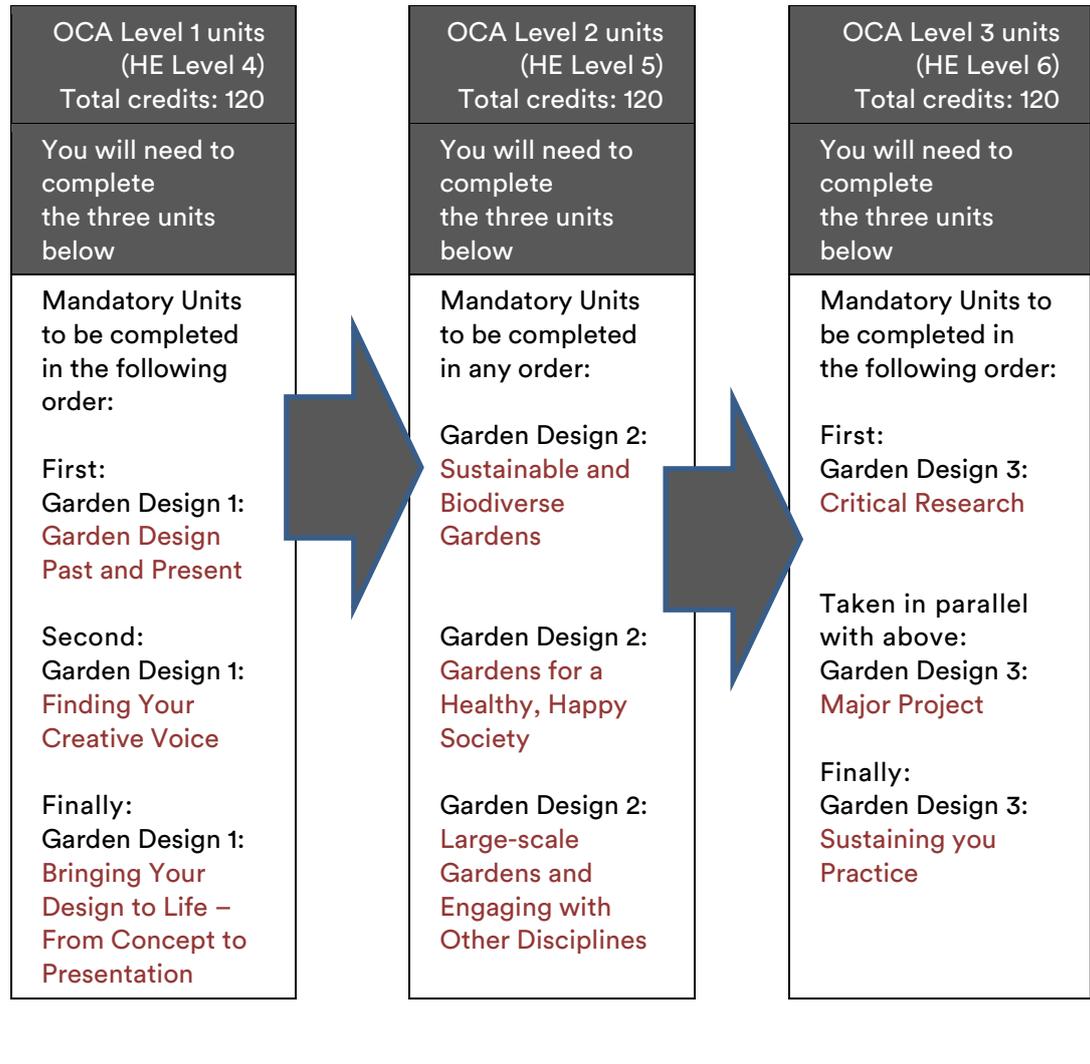
Students will learn by 'doing' and collect practical and problem-solving skills through research, model-making, drawing, self-reflection, and experimentation with materials. Students will be encouraged to develop their own visual identity and start to forge their own design pathway based on their interests. Upon completing level 1, students will have developed theoretical and hands on skills covering all stages required to develop a design from receiving a brief and the initial survey through to tendering for work and the render of a completed design, including construction plan, planting plan and purchase information, all presented as a professional portfolio.

Progressing onto level 2, the units 'Sustainable and Biodiverse Gardens', 'Gardens for a Healthy, Happy Society' and 'Design Past and Present' will introduce more specialist topics within garden design and provide a chance to carry out deeper research into issues relevant to sustainability and the wider society, chosen by the student. The units will provide students with the opportunity to apply intermediate-level skills, develop self-direction and project management through a negotiated brief. Students who have already begun to work as professional garden designers will find the content a valuable way to keep up-to-date and deepen their understanding of key practical and theoretical issues while working in practice. Larger-scale sites will also be introduced, giving students the opportunity to design at different spatial resolutions.

Within each of the three level 2 units, students will have choice over which skills and knowledge they want to develop further and will choose from a range of skills-building options. Specialist topics of enquiry are also chosen, meaning that every student's final output for each unit will be determined by their personal research and interests. For example, within 'Gardens for a Healthy, Happy Society', students may choose to design for a specific user group, resulting in final designs based around diverse themes such as play equipment or mindfulness principles.

Finally, level 3 is a mostly self-navigated programme and consists of three units, which are connected through intention, research and output. This final stage of the programme is designed to give students the opportunity to focus on a specific interest in garden design, building on a chosen specialisation from earlier units. This gives an opportunity to evidence advanced level design skills, the ability to apply a mature level of criticality and demonstrate professionalism in a garden design specialism. The final unit 'Sustaining your Practice' develops professional and business skills, and the student engages with the world in a professional design capacity, becoming a confident independent practitioner. The final level will have an emphasis on creativity, professionalism and evaluation.

## The Student Journey



## Section C – Career Opportunities

This course provides the skills and knowledge to work in the field of garden design, for example within a garden design practice or as an independent garden design consultant. Students are supported with their applications to join the Society of Garden Designers.

During the course, we will support you in finding opportunities for career development, such as internships, shadowing and enterprise schemes.

The course also provides the foundation for further studies. Level 3 (HE 6) of the course develops the research and academic writing skills required for masters study.

## Section D - Course Aims

A1. To widen access to education in garden design through open and flexible learning.

- A2. To provide a stimulating programme based on high quality study program and tutor support.
- A3. To develop students' creative capacities and their ability to synthesise, reflect, respond, apply and simulate findings.
- A4. To ensure that students develop a high-level ability in 2D & 3D skills, both analogue and digital media to successfully communicate designs that are professionally and academically recognised.
- A5. To develop students' critical understanding of the theoretical and conceptual issues central to the practice of garden design and the social, historical and cultural context in which it is practiced.
- A6. To foster high-level ethical and professional standards and an awareness of the responsibilities and developments surrounding garden design.
- A7. To develop self-directed learners capable of applying academic and practical skills in a chosen area of garden design appropriate to employment, further study or life-long learning.
- A8. To provide an environment in which the student has the chance to develop their view of the world and their interaction with it both visually and intellectually.

#### Section E - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

##### Knowledge & Understanding

- LO1. Demonstrate proficiency in a comprehensive range of 2D and 3D design and technical skills (digital and analogue).
- LO2. Have detailed knowledge of spatial design strategies and the ability to critique, reflect and contextualise the strategies of application.
- LO3. Demonstrate an awareness of the wider social and cultural contexts that influence and shape garden design and how we use space.
- LO4. Critically and objectively evaluate own work (and the work of others).

##### Skills

- LO5. Demonstrate a breadth of inventiveness, ideas generation and techniques in the creation of garden designs, exploring and realising a range of different cultural, social and environmental issues.
- LO6. Produce convincing and challenging garden designs that communicate your intention, demonstrating a high level of visual and technical accomplishment whilst adhering to garden design conventions.
- LO7. Use abstract concepts to inform the design process and integrate them using critical research and contextualisation to realise garden designs.
- LO8. Articulate own personal voice and evidence a developed and purposeful visual identity.
- LO9. Engage in appropriate professional practices such as marketing, self- presentation and negotiation skills.
- LO10. Operate in professional contexts that are relevant to your practice, requiring the application of specific interpersonal, professional and business skills within an ethical framework.

#### Section F - Learning, Teaching and Assessment

##### Learning and Teaching Strategy

The Open College of the Arts offers all students the same quality of core learning experience and supports a broad range of student expectations and needs through its open and flexible learning environment. The OCA provides high quality and stimulating learning materials and resources to meet the needs of students learning at a distance and adopts learning strategies that help students develop the skills necessary for autonomous learning.

The core offer consists of:

- learning materials
- one to one feedback and support from a named tutor
- support materials (such as guides on aspects of study)
- access to dialogue with peers via the OCA student website
- learner support for any difficulties with the practicalities of studying
- library resources (such as Oxford Art online and Bridgeman Education Art Library).

In addition to the core aspects of study, students may access the following on an ad hoc basis:

- study visits (e.g. to exhibitions) in different parts of the country
- current creative arts reviews and discussion via the OCA blog
- student led initiatives such as study visits and seminars, supported by the student body, OCASA.

### PDP

Personal and professional development has been linked to all levels of the course through the learning log to help support students to plan, integrate and take responsibility for their personal, career and academic development.

The log is used as a tool for self-reflection to document and reflect on progress, and to reflect on tutor feedback. In dialogue with tutors through formative feedback, students are encouraged to identify strengths and learning needs, and establish learning goals that might improve perceived weaknesses and enhance strengths.

Individual units at level 3 (HE 6) all have outcomes that specifically relate to skills transferable to the workplace, through engagement with client led or self-initiated projects located in external contexts. The learning at levels 1 and 2 (HE 3 and 4) support this engagement through a process of identifying opportunities relevant to students' needs, goals, and ambitions.

### Independent Learning

The Art and Design Benchmarks say that: 'Active learning through project-based enquiry has always been a feature of the art and design curriculum in higher education. Through this approach students have been encouraged to develop both the capacity for independent learning and the ability to work with others.' Through the OCA model of open learning units, providing projects and research activities, students learn to study independently, while backed up by tutor support, and learn to work with others by interacting with them, providing and receiving support and exchanging ideas on the OCA forum.

### Communications

Communication between OCA, tutors and students is predominantly via email. In a small

minority of cases, where students do not have internet access, communication is by post and telephone. We are encouraging the use of Skype and Google Hangout for tutorials, as this can enliven the interaction between tutor and student. Peer communication takes place in the student forums, or via comments on the WeareOCA blog or other student blogs, as well as study visits.

### Delivery

Open tuition: Students work from the course materials and send regular assignments to their tutor, normally by email. Tutors then review each assignment and provide written feedback. There are typically 5 assignments for each course, supplemented by projects. Students agree the length of time they will take over each section of the course with their tutor and agree an approximate time when they will submit their assignment. This varies from student to student, but typically the timing of delivery of assignments is between 8 and 12 weeks. Students are also able to contact tutors informally between assignments (subject to reasonable limits). In addition to the formative feedback received from the tutor, students can submit their work for formal (summative) assessment at OCA at one of three assessment events that take place each year and are required to complete each unit within two years.

Tutor reports are copied to the OCA head office and subject to periodic review to ensure standards are being maintained. These reviews are conducted on a rolling programme, with tutor reports reviewed by course leaders and The Director of Teaching and Learning Quality. All new tutors have their reports monitored by both staff for the first six months, and mentoring is provided. Subsequently reports are looked at during each formal assessment event, in conjunction with student work and feedback is given to tutors, where necessary. If any cause for concern about a tutor's reports is raised, the tutor is closely monitored and mentored for a period.

Course materials: The written course materials have been specifically produced for open learning delivery and are designed for individual self-study. They consist of subject-specific learning content and a series of learning projects each culminating in an assignment, the results of which are discussed with the tutor. The course materials contain a balance of practical exercises and large-scale projects and research points.

Study Skills Guides: There are guides on keeping sketchbooks, writing learning logs, study skills, and keeping blogs, among others. All of these are sent to the students at the beginning of the programme and are also available as downloads from the OCA website.

Reading Lists: The BA (Hons) Garden Design programme has a comprehensive study list composed of key texts, journals and websites for each unit. In addition to this, items are added to the study list as new recommendations are received and items published. At higher levels, when students undertake their own projects, reading lists are negotiated with tutors.

Costs of additional materials/resources: As a general rule of thumb, students pay for their work to be sent to OCA, and OCA pay for it to be returned (where applicable). Costs will vary according to the size and nature of the student work, and how much can actually be done electronically. Rates for overseas students will be higher.

Approximate additional materials/resources costs for Garden Design are £400 for Level 1, £500 for Level 2 and £550 for Level 3. These costs include Adobe Suite pay-per month software but are a broad estimate to include materials and books. Costs will vary depending on students' choice of medium and whether books are bought or loaned from the library.

Web forums: OCA has a dedicated website for students with the following features: online resources, discussion forums and portfolios for individual student's work. The student forums represent the main method of communication between students and their peers. Concepts are discussed and knowledge developed through debates that are informally moderated by OCA tutors. Critiques of work, both in development and completed, are sought from peers through the forum. The student portfolios support the forums by providing an area for work to be uploaded to, and linked to, from the forums and their blogs.

Online learning: Each unit has a number of web-based resources designed to broaden student's appreciation of the range of practice and contemporary debate on the discipline. OCA students have access to the V & A image collection and use of the Creative Commons on Flickr as well as access to the Bridgeman Education image library, from which they may download images for comment, or to include in learning logs. Students are encouraged to keep learning blogs if they have access to the internet, so that they can share their reflections and learning online with other students, and discuss these with others on the OCA forum.

Formative and diagnostic feedback: Ongoing guidance and formative feedback on assignments is given by the student's tutor and offers clear guidance with regard to future development. A copy of each tutor feedback report given to the student is logged with OCA in order that OCA can monitor tutor quality and performance.

Study Visits: There are a number of optional Study Visits led by OCA tutors throughout the year. These will involve visiting gardens to undertake survey, sketching and analysis, and will give students an opportunity to carry out teamwork to develop their professional skills. The British Association of Landscape Industries will also provide continuing professional development events at regional locations across the UK as part of their membership benefits.

#### Employability:

The OCA is fully aware of the importance of degrees having a relevance to the world of work. However, the context for an employability audit is different for the OCA than it is for a traditional campus based HE provider, with a very broad range of ages of students, motivations to study, and varying personal circumstances. OCA's aim is to instil in its students a creative ethos and the ability to structure creative practice and the motivation to continue their practice. For many students, this will mean that they continue to exhibit and publish their work for others it will mean progression to postgraduate study in the field.

#### Assessment Strategy

Assessment methods: There are no examinations. Assessment is through the review of personal development planning and continual reflection in learning logs or blogs, practical projects, critical reviews and essays. Assessment tasks are linked to the objectives of each unit. As the student progresses through the unit the assessment increasingly encourages autonomous learning and self-evaluation. Tutors provide feedback during the unit, with constructive criticism, and assessment takes place once the student has completed a unit in full. Students are assumed to be planning to enter for assessment unless it is identified at the beginning of the unit that the student does not have this aspiration. The tutor offers support and guidance on the assessment process. The student uses OCA guidelines to prepare a submission, which includes a written or design project, and for most units also a reflective submission (which may take the form of a reflection on material produced throughout the unit, i.e. from sketchbooks and learning logs or blogs) to send to OCA for assessment. This submission may include the

summative assignments of each section of the unit. Assessment takes place three times per year.

#### Assessment criteria

The Garden Design degree has adopted assessment criteria that reflect both the learning outcomes above and the requirements of the Qualifications Assurance Agency for a BA(Hons) in Garden Design. These are similar for each level and cover both the development of knowledge and understanding and skills. At level 1 (HE 4), students are expected to begin to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills, while at levels 2 and 3 (HE 5 and 6), assessment is more challenging as there is a greater emphasis on analysis and critical evaluation. Level 3 also includes a requirement to demonstrate knowledge of professional practice.

Please see individual unit descriptors for the detailed assessment criteria at each level.

#### Section G - Enhancing the Quality of Learning and Teaching

The course is subject to the University's rigorous quality assurance procedures which involve subject specialist and internal peer review of the course at periodic intervals, normally of 5 years. This process ensures that the course engages with the applicable national Subject Benchmarks and references the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

All courses are monitored on an annual basis where consideration is given to:

- External Examiner's Reports
- Key statistics including data on retention and achievement
- Feedback from Student Course Representatives
- Results of Unit Survey\* completed by all students
- Results of Level Survey\*\* completed by each student upon finishing each level
- The OCA discussion forums\*\*\*
- The Student Consultative Committee\*\*\*\*
- Student complaints procedure - Students have the opportunity to informally raise issues;
- We are currently looking at developing VLE straw poll questions (these will be thematic).

\*The Unit Survey - students receive this at completion of a unit by turns students fill out 8-unit surveys throughout their degree studies;

\*\*The Level Survey - The average completion time for an OCA undergraduate student is 6 -7 years, and as such, an individual student will receive the survey every 2 years. Whilst an individual will receive the survey every other year, the survey is sent out annually meaning data is received on a yearly basis, therefore direct comparisons can be made;

\*\*\* The OCA discussion forums within which students raise concerns, and this is completely open access and passively monitored by OCA;

\*\*\*\* The Student Consultative Committee which established in Nov 2014, with expanded membership and terms of reference who are regularly consulted and act as a sounding board for OCA/OCASA;