

1 Year Post-Graduate Diploma Level Course
in
RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPE DESIGN

COURSE HANDBOOK

A guide for prospective and current students

Rev. Sept 2015

Postgraduate level course in Residential Landscape Design

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the OCGD Prospectus and the college's Terms and Conditions of Enrolment (see web site)

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1. Foreword

The Oxford College of Garden Design (OCGD) is an independent organisation with the modules for the course having been previously credit rated by Oxford Brookes University. It offers students a 1-2 Year (taught over 2 semesters) program leading to the College's own Diploma in Residential Landscape Design

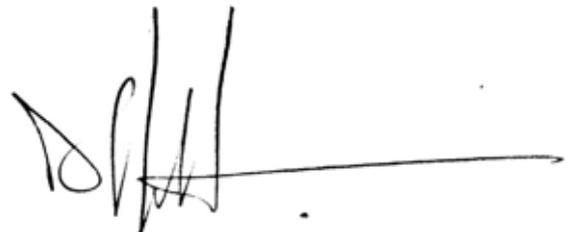
Acceptance onto this Postgraduate program will depend upon previous qualifications and work experience.

Up to 20 students each year are offered places on this intensive course with the aim of equipping them for private practice and further study.

The Course is taught online and is non-residential. The seminars, tutorials, project presentations and visits are condensed into approximately 2 days a week, but home study requirements make this a full time course requiring a minimum of 25 hours per week. Or 15 hours per week if completed over a 2 year period.

There has been an upsurge in public awareness of the domestic garden, as a valuable extension to the home. This course emphasises the importance of spatial design rather than horticulture. The rest of this Handbook sets out in detail the way the course is run, its objectives and its syllabus. I am happy to discuss queries from prospective students concerning the course, career prospects and aptitude.

The garden designer, Fletcher Steele (1885 –1971) once said that “the chief vice of gardens is to be merely pretty”. If you agree with this statement you have found the right course.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping letters and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Duncan Heather
Principal, OCGD

2. Overview of the Course

2.1 The Course Aims are to:-

- challenge traditional approaches to garden design
- emphasise the importance of a structured approach when considering external architectural space
- provide a wide range of learning situations from academic seminars to peer group design reviews
- equip students with an in-depth knowledge base to enable them to design gardens to the highest standards of the profession
- encourage the development of written, drawn and verbal communication skills in the discipline of garden design

2.2 The Course Learning Outcomes are to:-

- engage the student in a critical awareness of the processes by which outdoor space may be manipulated to fulfill specific requirements of the client's brief.
- give the student a comprehensive understanding of the methodologies required to complete designs to a professional standard
- provide students with the tools with which to evaluate design in the wider profession as well as being able to reflect on and evaluate their own performance as developing garden designers
- prepare students for future practice as garden designers so that they can develop with confidence as both artists and professionals
- equip students with a secure foundation of knowledge on which to build further intellectual development

2.3 Methods of study and learning

The course is based on a notional 600 hours of your effort to complete each semester, including all class/studio contact teaching time and home study. The time required to complete tasks will vary according to your personal organization, ability and application.

During each semester a formal seminar program is presented on Thursday and Friday's. This is followed by tutorials, studio work and student presentations. Student designs are presented in front of internal staff, peer groups or visiting tutors. Visiting lecturers come from a wide range of artistic and technical disciplines and will help to broaden the creative input.

Studio projects and tutorials form the heart of the course. For each of the three major design projects students will work with real clients and sites.

Assignments carried out at home typically involve writing essays and reports, design work and preparing material in support of projects.

All work carried out during the course will culminate in the end of year exhibition, where the students' work will be displayed. The display material will subsequently form the core of their portfolios, acting as a sales aid in their new career.

3. Course structure

The Course is modular in format but students are required to complete all parts successfully in order to qualify for the Diploma.

The curriculum is divided into 8 modules which are timetabled over the 2 semesters. The detailed syllabus is described in sections 20 and 21 of this Handbook.

Design projects are based on real sites and clients. Additionally a written assignment will be

completed in home study time. The three major design projects increase in scale progressively from a small courtyard garden to a 1 acre site.

The seminar programme is designed to support the project work. In the first semester students will be instructed in urban design methodology and philosophy, landscape history, construction methods and specification. In the second semester they will explore design in a rural environment, planting and professional practice.

A schedule of the Coursework, which is to be handed in for assessment, is provided in Section 20 of this Handbook.

The technical, business and legal content and the language of instruction is English. Students who intend to practice overseas will need to consider the implications of local climate, law and building practice in the Country in which they plan to work.

3.1 Assessment of student work

For the information of students; the following credit levels explain the equivalent academic levels to which they are being taught as previously credit rated by Oxford Brookes University

Semester 1

Introduction to Form Composition	(10 Credits @ level 3)
Evolution of the Modern Landscape	(10 credits @ level M)
Design Detail and Creative planning	(10 credits @ level M)
Urban Spatial Development	(30 credits @ level M)

Semester 2

Soft landscape Form and Colour	(20 credits @ level M)
Rural Spatial Development	(30 credits @ level M)
Business & Professional Practice	(10 credits @ level M)

Course work will be assessed continually and individual feedback given on completion of each piece of work. Students will receive a written report on completion of a module subject to work being submitted on time. However, the External Examiner will have the final decision on marking and all assessments will be provisional until confirmed by them.

A detailed explanation of pass marks, deadlines and rules covering incomplete work is given in the Course Regulations in Section 11-13 of this Handbook.

4. Course administration

The course is run from its administrative office at :-

Greystone
Colmore Lane,
Kingwood Common,
Oxon. RG9 2NA
Phone (44)-0-1491-628950
e-mail: ocgd@ocgd.org

College Principal: Duncan Heather
Course secretary: Mrs. Pam Hutchings

4.1 Fees and course expenses

The current Course fee is published in the prospectus

Students should budget a minimum of £1500 to cover materials, books, plan printing and photography. Additional costs of travel to site visits should also be allowed.

You are advised that the book list is suggested reading and is not mandatory. The £1500 will allow for some books to be purchased but not all those detailed in reading lists.

It is regretted that no fees can be refunded for whatever reason including non-attendance once the course has commenced.

In the event that overseas students are unable to obtain a student visa or are refused entry into the country, all money will be returned including any deposit made.

5. Student support and career opportunities.

5.1 Student support, representation and feedback

On arrival students will be assigned to a study group and a tutor who will be available to discuss any study problems.

The college acknowledges that the curriculum is intensive and students are encouraged to discuss their progress with senior staff of the college throughout the year. Students can refer to the staff for help in developing their own skills, or advice in approaching particular tasks on the curriculum. The Principal will be happy to provide advice on any aspect of the course or to suggest staff whose skills may be particularly appropriate to the situation. The senior staff have a track record in being able to respond with helpful suggestions and advice.

5.2 Racial Policy

We welcome potential students from all religions and ethnic backgrounds.

6. Library Facilities

The college has an online resource library which is continually updated as well as access to the John Brookes Library of garden plans which is a unique resource to the college. Students may withdraw books from this resource for their own use. Students are also encouraged to build up their own library of reference books as an essential aid to their career as garden designers. Advice on useful texts is available with each module.

7. Membership of related organizations

The Society of Garden Designers and BALI are the two bodies representing the professional interests of Garden Designers in the UK and the APLD in the USA. Students of the OCGD are eligible to be enrolled as student members. Membership gives students access to a postal loan library, a Journal and a Newsletter with information on regional conferences and seminars.

8. Other entitlements and progression to further studies

On successful completion of the course OCGD graduates become eligible for 12 months business set-up assistance from the college

9. Career patterns

Garden designers usually work as individuals or in association with one or two colleagues. Few established offices offer work experience to new entrants to the profession although this is now changing. Any job vacancies arising will be made available to students in the second semester. However, it is assumed that at the end of the course most OCGD graduates will set up and run their own design practice.

The College offers its graduates free, on-going support for as long as it is required after they have successfully completed the course. This can involve students visiting former lecturers if they require help or advice on their own projects.

In addition to on-going student support, the College arranges occasional guest speakers and social evenings for past students.

10. Staff and External Examiners

External Examiners: Vincent Marley

Duties and powers of the external Examiner are detailed below.

Staff CV's are available in the prospectus

11. College Regulations

Conditions for Admission

- All applicants will be required to complete an application form and may be asked to attend an interview to discuss their academic and career objectives and to assess their eligibility.

Students can be asked to provide two letters of reference, one of which could be from an academic referee.

Normally entrants to the course should possess the following qualifications:-

- a) Applicants seeking to enroll for the Postgraduate Diploma level course may be required to produce evidence of their first degree or relevant professional qualification
- b) Students from overseas must be able to speak and write in English and we set a minimum requirement for entry. (IELTS 6.0, TOEFL 5.5 Cambridge Certificate Grade C).

11.2 Dispensation from Normal Conditions for Admission

Applicants over the age of 25 who can show that they have equivalent qualifications or relevant experience, or both, and can demonstrate that they have appropriate knowledge and capabilities, may be admitted with dispensation from the normal admission requirements.

From past experience OCGD finds that students without formal qualifications are most likely to succeed if they already have some design experience. Students who lack such experience and who do not have a degree may get more benefit from the course if they first take some elective units from the Open College of the Arts or equivalent organisation. Potential students are welcome to present a portfolio of work in support of their application.

11.3 Offer and acceptance of a place

To accept an offer of a place on the Course, a non-refundable deposit is required within 14 days of the offer; with the balance of fees due no later than 4 weeks prior to the course start date. Where the Course for the current academic year is full, prospective students may be offered a place on a waiting list or be offered a reserved place on the following year's course.

12. Conditions for the award of a Diploma

To qualify for the OCGD award of the Postgraduate Level Diploma in Garden Design candidates must complete all modules within 14 months of first registering or within such extended deadline as may be set under Regulations 14.3 and achieve a minimum of 50% in every piece of assessed work and the examinations.

The Diploma will be awarded at three levels, Pass, Merit or Distinction. The criteria for each of these three grades are given for all submitted work. The marks associated with each grade are given below:-

Fail	>50
Pass	50 – 64
Merit	65 –79
Distinction	80 –100

In awarding the Diploma, the overall mark for the course is calculated using marks awarded for each module, weighted according to the weighting of each module.

Students who fail to complete the course but complete individual modules will be sent a letter confirming their performance in each module passed.

13. Assessment of work

13.1 Timetable for submission of Assessment

A timetable with deadlines for the submission of work for assessment is given below. Work not submitted by the deadline may not be assessed (see *Intermission, Referral and Failure* below). Work which is submitted late may not be assessed by the external examiners until the following year, resulting in delayed graduation.

13.2 Intermission

In the case of illness or personal difficulties, a student may be permitted, subject of the approval of the Principal and the External Examiner, to extend the deadline for submission of specific project work or to suspend registration for a determined period not exceeding 12 months.

The Principal may require documentary evidence of the student's problem before approving an extended deadline or suspending a student's registration.

13.3 Referral

A student who fails to achieve a provisional pass in, or fails to submit any work for assessment within the published deadline, will be required to submit or resubmit the work in question by a date agreed with their Tutor. Such work will be marked or remarked as appropriate but will not be awarded a mark higher than 50% and written feedback sheets will only be issued at the discretion of the Tutor.

13.4 Failure

Students who persistently fail to submit work by the approved/extended deadline, fail to achieve 50% in more than 2 pieces of work or are absent from more than 15% of studio and seminar time will be notified by letter and will be required to attend an interview to assess the student's progress. The outcome of that interview with the student will be notified in writing and may result in the suspension of the student's registration, referral or exclusion from the Course. The outcome will be agreed with the External Examiner.

Exclusion from the Course will only be decided where it is considered that the student does not have a reasonable chance of achieving the standard necessary for the award of the Diploma. In the event of exclusion no remission of fees is possible.

14. Academic quality control and discipline

14.1 Duties and powers of the External Examiner

The main duty of the External Examiner is to moderate the assessment of student work. The provisional marks awarded to each piece of student work are subject to confirmation by the External Examiner who will first discuss his decision with the Principal.

The External Examiner may require each student to attend a *viva voce* interview.

The External Examiner will Report to the Principal on the delivery of the Curriculum and the maintenance of the overall academic standard of the Course.

15 Complaints

15.1 Student Complaint Procedure

OCGD is committed to monitoring its services in order to enhance their quality. Feedback and comments are welcomed and contribute in the drive for excellence.

15.2 Informal Procedure

If students wish to make a complaint it can usually be quickly resolved if the student discusses their concerns with the Principal or the person directly involved. The nature and substance of complaints which are pursued will remain confidential to those directly involved. Whether a complaint is upheld or not, the student has a right to raise it. The student has a right to a clear statement as to whether a complaint is accepted as justified, what action is to follow and what further steps are open to the student if not satisfied.

Normally the complainant should first informally approach the person directly concerned. It is the responsibility of the Principle or the person directly involved to try and resolve this complaint informally in the first instance.

15.3 Formal Procedure

If the complainant is not satisfied with the received response, they should submit their complaint in writing either to the Principal or to the External Examiner, either by [Email The Principal](#), [Email The External Examiner](#) or a letter. Students may request the assistance of the Principal [or a member of college staff] in writing their complaint.

Complaints made in writing will be acknowledged by the Principle or External Examiner within 14 days. OCGD aims to respond to formal complaints raised within 60 days, apart from during college holidays. If it is not possible to resolve your complaint in this timescale you will be notified and kept up to date with progress.

Complaints made to either of these two persons must be brought to the attention of the other party. In addition OCGD may seek the advice of further disinterested persons or person in seeking to redress a complaint.

If the complaint concerns either the External Examiner or the Principal, the complaint must be brought to the attention of a third party appointed by the college specifically to deal with complaints of this nature.

This would normally be someone from one of the professional bodies such as the SGD or BALI.

Either the Principal and the External Examiner, or one of these two people, and a third party appointed by the College for this purpose, shall constitute the complaints committee. The cost of appointing a third party will be borne by the complainant. The college will reimburse this fee if the committee shall find the complaint substantiated in whole or in part.

15.4 Outcome of a Formal Complaint

The complaints committee shall find the complaint substantiated in whole or in part or shall dismiss it. If any part of the complaint is found to be substantiated the committee shall recommend specific action by way of remedy. The School undertakes to take remedial action required by the complaints committee if the complaint is upheld.

The committee's decision will only be subject to any further appeal rights in the event that:

- [there is new evidence that was not available during the committee decision period;
- or

- there is evidence to suggest that the complaint was not handled according to OCGD's complaints procedure].

15.5 Limitations of the Complaints Process

The complaints procedure does not cover appeals against decisions of the examiners, or against fellow students. The procedure only applies to acts or omissions which took place at a time when the complainant was a student at OCGD. It does not apply to applicants prior to their enrollment with OCGD or to former students of OCGD whose complaints refer to acts or omissions which took place after their enrollment has ended. **At no time will any financial compensation be offered.**

15.6 Retention of complaints records

OCGD will retain records of complaints for 12 months unless directed otherwise by statutory requirements.

16. Appeals against a decision on grades or marks awarded

Requests for a review on the decisions on a grade shall be received within one month of receiving the result. Any request submitted beyond this time must include reasons and evidence showing why, through no fault of the student, the request could not have been made within the stated time limit.

All appeals shall be made in writing to the Principal and shall include a statement indicating which of the grounds, set out below, the candidate relies on and a statement of the facts that constitute the basis of the request for the review.

All requests for an appeal received by the Principal shall be communicated to the External Examiner. The Principal, External Examiner and one senior member of staff shall constitute the Appeals Committee. If, in the opinion of the appeals committee, a request does not fall within one of the permitted grounds, or is wholly without substance or merit, or is unsupported by evidence, they shall reject it summarily and shall inform the student in writing of their reasons for doing so within 14 days of receipt of the full request. Otherwise the Appeals Committee, who may co-opt disinterested parties for impartial advice, will respond to the student within 14 days of receiving the full appeal to the effect that the Examination Committee will be asked to re-consider the grade or mark. The Examination Committee will respond in writing to such a request both to the student concerned and to the Appeals Committee within 14 days.

Requests can only be made on the grounds set out below. Disagreement with academic judgment in assessing the merits of an individual piece of work, or in reaching any assessment decision based on marks, grades and other information relating to a candidate's performance cannot, in itself, constitute grounds for a request for a review. Nor may a student seek a review on the grounds that poor teaching, supervision or guidance affected their performance. In such circumstances a student must submit a complaint under the student complaint procedure.

17 Grounds for Appeals

17.1 Illness

A student may request that an assessment decision is reviewed on the grounds that their performance in a piece of coursework or an examination was adversely affected by illness or other factors previously unknown to the Examiners and include the reasons why they were unable or unwilling to make the relevant facts known to the Examiner, before they took their original decision.

17.2 Flawed Assessments

A candidate may request that an assessment decision is reviewed on the following grounds:-

- a. the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the regulations for the program
- b. the judgment of an examiner or examiners was improperly affected by personal bias

- c. there was material administrative error or some irregularity in the conduct of the assessment

17.3 Appeals Outcomes

17.3.1 In the case of illness

If in the opinion of the Appeals Committee the reasons provided by the candidate do not demonstrate that circumstances beyond the candidate's control prevented them from bringing the relevant facts relating to illness to the Examiner's attention before it took its original decision, they shall reject the request summarily and inform the candidate, in writing, of their reasons for doing so.

If the medical factors set out by the candidate were known to the Examiner and fully taken into account when it reached its original decision, the Appeals Committee shall confirm the original assessment decision. Otherwise the Appeal Committee shall consider what, if any, modification of the assessment decision shall be made in the light of the new evidence and within the regulations applicable to the program. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final.

17.3.2 In the case of flawed assessments

If the Appeals Committee finds that the reasons provided by the candidate do not demonstrate that the assessment procedure was flawed they shall reject the request summarily and inform the candidate, in writing, of their reasons for doing so. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final.

If the Appeals Committee accepts that there is *prima facie* evidence of either irregularity or unreasonableness, they shall inform the appellant of their decision and ask for the original assessment to be reconsidered by the Examiner

The Appeals Committee may recommend an amendment of the procedures that led to the flawed assessment in order to avoid a re-occurrence.

Any proposed change of grade will be referred to the External Examiner for confirmation before being released to the appellant.

The decision of the Examiner in reassessing the marks or grades an appeal upheld by the Appeals Committee, in whole or part, is final.

18. Discipline

The Principal reserves the right to expel any student whose attendance or conduct is considered unsatisfactory. No remission of fees will be made.

The College continually reviews the course with a view to improving it and reserves the right to change published dates, syllabus and venue of the Course without notice.

Students accepted on to the course will be deemed to have agreed to the above terms and conditions.

22. Submission dates for all pieces of work which contribute to assessment for the OCGD diploma

Module Submission	Project Work	Hand in Date
GD100	Timeline	Week 12
GD200	Picture frames Art into Landscape	
GD300	Hard landscape portfolio CAD	Week 20
GD400	Urban design project 1	
	a. All paperwork	Week 8
	b. Computer model	Week 12
	Urban design project 2	
	a. Sketch Plan (Sketch Plan, Bubble Diag, Site analysis Elevations Perspective & or model)	Week 30
	b. Layout Plans (Key Plan, Cascade Drawings, Planting Plan)	Week 30
GD600	Rural design: project 3.	Week 52