

The Royal Agricultural University

Programme Specification:

Postgraduate Certificate Retrofitting, Regeneration and Sustainability in Historic Buildings

Academic year 2026/27

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2026/27]

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 they take 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 module can be found in the Module specifications.

When printed this programme specification becomes an uncontrolled document. Please visit the RAU's website for the most up to date version of the programme specification:

<https://www.rau.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/postgraduate-courses>

Section 1 – Material Programme Information

Criteria	Detail
Validating body	Royal Agricultural University
Teaching Institution	Royal Agricultural University
Subject Area	Land and Property Management (LPM)
Entry Award(s)	Postgraduate Certificate Retrofitting, Regeneration and Sustainability in Historic Buildings
Final Award and exit route(s)	Postgraduate Certificate Retrofitting, Regeneration and Sustainability in Historic Buildings
Programme title	Postgraduate Certificate Retrofitting, Regeneration and Sustainability in Historic Buildings
Location(s) of study	Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester
Full time study	One Semester
Part-time study	Two Years
Language of study	English
Programme start month	January
Period of validation	September 2024 - August 2029
Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	See below
Type of Accreditation	This degree will not be accredited by a PSRB in the short term although participants will be fully prepared for the membership requirements of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC). Participants will be given a grounding towards the Planning and Development (MRICS) pathway.
Accreditation due for renewal	N/A
UCAS Code	N/A
Quercus Code	RRHB
HECoS Code	100585 – Conservation of Buildings
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and other reference points	This Postgraduate Certificate programme has been designed to meet: The professional standards criteria of the Institute for Historic Building Conservation (2012).
Academic level on Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	Level 7
Approval at AQSC	17 July 2024 (Academic Board)
Version	V1

Criteria	Detail
Entry requirements (this should be the standard University entry requirements unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board, and include UCAS entry profile for UG programmes and IELTS)	An Undergraduate Honours Degree (2:2 or above) from a UK university or overseas equivalent, or a professional qualification and/or experience considered to be equivalent to the above. For information on international qualifications, please, see our country specific pages. For countries not listed please contact admissions@rau.ac.uk .
Non-standard application	We welcome applications from applicants with non-standard qualifications who are able to demonstrate knowledge, experience and skills developed in the workplace or elsewhere and which are relevant to the programme of study. Applicants will need to use their personal statement to provide further details supported by a CV. Please do get in touch with the Programme Leader to discuss on a case-by-case basis.
English language	If English is not your first language, you will need to reach the requirements outlined in our English language requirements for the level of study. For postgraduate taught programmes this is IELTS Academic min. overall 6.5 with no element below 5.5(or equivalent). English language tests usually have a validity of 2 years from the date the test is taken.
Interviews	Interviews may be required for non-standard applications.

Section 2 - Programme Structure

The structure of all University awards complies with the University's [Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes](#) which includes information about the:

- Rules for progression between the stages of a programme;
- Consequences of failure for referrals, compensation and exist awards;
- Calculation and classification of awards.

The programme will be delivered as a form of block teaching built around two intensive teaching days per week for full-time students and one teaching day a week for part-time students over two years.

The Postgraduate Certificate programme consists of two x 30 credit taught modules.

For those taking the Postgraduate Certificate programme full-time, two modules are taken over one semester.

For those taking the Postgraduate Certificate programme part-time over two-years, participants will take one 30 credit modules per year in the January semester.

Postgraduate Certificate Retrofitting, Regeneration and Sustainability in Historic Buildings (60 credits)

The accumulation of 60 credits at level 7, through the assessment of programme elements as detailed below:

Level 7

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Elective	Semester
7C009	Practical Conservation, Retrofitting and Sustainability	7	30	Core	2
7C010	Regeneration & Placemaking in the Historical Environment	7	30	Core	2
	Total Credits: Postgraduate Certificate Retrofitting, Regeneration and Sustainability in Historic Buildings		60		

Section 3 – Programme Overview and Programme Aims

This programme is designed to equip learners to pursue careers in historic built environment conservation, regeneration and retrofitting. It focuses on developing essential skills, methods and approaches to the repair and retrofit of historic buildings as well as inculcating the initiative, adaptability, decision-making and self-direction required for wider regeneration work. There is an emphasis on personal and professional development throughout the programme.

It is particularly suitable for learners with qualifications and/or experience in the development, building, heritage or built environment sector who wish to move into regeneration and the historic building sector, or for those already working within the field who wish to specialise or extend their role.

The course has two main strands:

The first focuses on the practicalities surrounding the conservation and retrofitting of historic buildings. This includes the ethical considerations around identifying conservation-appropriate methods, materials, designs and finishes. It also explores the options – and challenges – associated with sensitively improving the performance and sustainability of historic and traditional buildings, including the identification of inappropriate previous interventions. This includes understanding and correctly interpreting building pathology and using this data to inform decision around materials and interventions as well as monitoring and evaluating the results.

The second focuses on the potential of historic buildings to contribute to wider regeneration of an area. Here we concentrate on putting buildings to work in the community, moving away from thinking of buildings as their footprint of the building and towards a viable future use. We examine the economics of regeneration, including the role of partnerships with

heritage organisations, local groups and business to draw on and generate local momentum and investment.

The overarching goal of the programme is to equip students with the tools they will require to manage or undertake retrofitting and/or regeneration projects, to improve the environment, social and economic sustainability of our historic buildings and wider areas.

To that end, the programme will:

- Offer an innovative, dynamic and research-informed programme built around contemporary issues, challenges and developments in historic building conservation and management in the light of rapid social, economic and environmental change.
- Provide a robust ethical, theoretical and practical framework for exploring and managing projects in historic buildings.
- Enable participants to apply knowledge creatively to the analysis of complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of understanding.
- Develop an in-depth, inquiry-led, understanding of a “toolbox” of skills including:
 - Understanding of Building Context and Significance
 - Identification of Problems with Historic Buildings
 - Practical Conservation Skills
 - Heritage Management, Planning and Law
 - Community Engagement and Partnership Development

By the end of the programme students will have completed two impressive pieces of project-led work demonstrating a high level of originality and professional integrity which will enable them to embark on a career in the built heritage sector.

Section 4 – Programme Sustainability

This programme is aligned to UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 which aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. It also contributes towards several other SDG goals. It does this by training buildings and development practitioners in the identification of sustainable future uses for historic and traditional buildings and the sustainable design of retrofitting solutions for the same. The will ensure that historic and traditional buildings:

- perform as efficiently as possible in terms of energy and other resource use (SDG7, SDG12 & SDG13);
- retain historically captures carbon and reduce the need for the production of new materials (SDG12);
- be more resilient to the impacts of a more severe climate (SDG13);
- provide viable future uses for historic buildings (SDG8);
- explore and support the development of new, climate positive materials (SDG9 & SDG12);
- save money and contribute towards an economically viable future (SDG8);
- help communities to become more resilient (SDG10);
- reduce fuel poverty (SDG1 & SDG10) and produce efficient water use (SDG12);
- provide better standards of housing and workplace environments, which increases the wellbeing of users (SDG3).

Section 5 – Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes employ those of the OfS Sector Standards, QAA Master's degree specification and the QAA Archaeology specification. They use established skill group descriptors which relate to national standards from the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to demonstrate the following Learning Outcomes (LOs):

Knowledge and Understanding

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Historic Building Materials Understand the appearance, properties, performance, challenges and benefits of historic and traditional building materials	7C009
2.	Environmental and Social Context Contextualise the inter-relationship between building form and the physical, economic and social environment	7C010
3.	Investigating Buildings Understand the methods and techniques used to investigate, building pathology in historic and traditional buildings and how to apply them.	7C009
4.	Regeneration Practice Identify the interplay of material, economic and social issues within historic buildings and areas and devise appropriate approaches to regeneration.	7C010 & 7C009
5.	The Heritage Ecosystem Recognise the professional, ethical, economic, social, political and policy environment of historic building retrofitting, sustainability and regeneration.	7C010

Intellectual, Professional, Key skills

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Leadership (a) Identify appropriate leadership styles for different situations: to enable/mentor, enhance/coach and motivate others in order to improve performance (of self and others) (b) Recognise and address ethical dilemmas and to apply ethical values to situations and choices.	7C009 & 7C010
2.	Personal Effectiveness Demonstrate critical self-awareness, self-reflection and self-management; time management; sensitivity to diversity in people and different situations, and the ability to continue to learn through self-managed study, reflection on practice and experience.	7C009 & 7C010
3.	Interpersonal Skills (Teamwork) Demonstrate effective performance within teams and the ability to recognise and utilise individuals' contributions in group processes and to negotiate and persuade or influence others; team selection, delegation, development and management.	7C009 & 7C010
4.	Communication Carry out effective two-way communication: listening, effective oral and written communication of complex ideas and arguments, using a range of media, including the preparation of reports/documents appropriate to the audience.	7C009 & 7C010
5.	Digital Skills (a) effective comprehension and professional use of IT including email and internet, databases, spreadsheets and word processing. (b) Understanding of digital recording, analysis interpretation and presentation. (c) Ability to apply digital skills to information gathering and problem solving across several areas.	7C009 & 7C010
6.	Critical and Creative Thinking Think critically and be creative: To manage the creative processes in self and others; The capability to organise thoughts, identify assumptions and evaluate statements in terms of evidence, detect false logic or reasoning, identify implicit values, define terms adequately and generalise creatively but appropriately.	7C009 & 7C010
7.	Problem Solving and Decision Making Solve complex problems and make decisions: establish criteria using appropriate decision-making techniques, apply them to create and evaluate options and then implement and review decisions.	7C009 & 7C010
8.	Research Design and Implementation Identify problems, and design and conduct research either individually or as part of a team.	7C009 & 7C010
9.	Synthesis, Analysis and Evaluation Locate, synthesise, analyse and evaluate data and information from a wide range of sources to support and evidence solutions to problems.	7C009 & 7C010
10.	Numeracy and Statistical Literacy Apply quantitative skills including methods for the handling and analysis of large numerical data sets. Understanding of the application of statistical tools to research questions.	7C009 & 7C010

Programme specific skills

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Undertake assessments of Building Pathology Use tools and a plan of research to understand a building's performance	7C009
2.	Make recommendations Communicate effectively with building owners and users about building performance and pathology and make considered recommendations for the remediation of problems.	7C009
3.	Placemaking analysis Be able to use multiple lines of evidence to understand and characterise options for regeneration schemes.	7C010
4.	Regeneration Management Be able to carry out and author a regeneration plan, supporting your assessments, strategies and suggestions decisions with research.	7C010
5.	Re-use and Redevelopment Advise on the re-use and redevelopment of historic buildings.	7C009
6.	Conservation Project Management Employ project management to plan and manage conservation projects to professional standards	7C010

Section 6 – Approach to Learning and Teaching delivery

Learning and Teaching Strategy

The conservation and management of historic buildings requires practitioners to have knowledge across a range of historical and applied disciplines from architectural history, sustainability and legal frameworks. Like other areas of applied heritage, it has the attributes and requirements of a professional practice that makes it amenable to being taught in a reflective setting, with opportunities for practical fieldwork and fieldtrips.

This programme has specifically been designed to meet the needs of postgraduate learners many of whom may be combining study with work and/or caring or other responsibilities. Teaching is designed to be fully flexible, to allow full participation for both part-time and full-time students.

Here at the RAU, we are always looking for ways to better support our students. We recognise that a number of our students may be working or have caring responsibilities alongside studying which can sometimes make it difficult to attend every teaching session in person. As such we have the ability for you to join lectures and seminars through an alternative digital format in prior discussion with your programme leader. Please note that for international students on a student visa, you are expected to attend your classes in

person. Remote delivery is not a UKVI-authorised mode of attendance for the taught element of your course and therefore non-attendance would affect your student visa.

Please note that this type of study participation is only available to registered UK-based students and for Postgraduate Study.

We strongly recommend students attend field trips and other practical or hands-on sessions in person. Your programme or module leader will be happy to discuss this with you beforehand.

Our sessions are built around exercises to support and scaffold the learning process, and to provide valuable opportunities for peer-to-peer learning. Material is taught in workshop format combining formal elements, such as lectures, with more hands-on exploratory or consolidatory exercises, for example discussions, 'live' group research to explore or apply a particular concept, group-crit sessions, supported writing exercises, and problem-based learning.

We know that learners have many and varied motivations and ambitions for taking this programme. We therefore concentrate on drawing out and articulating these with the learner to create a tailored route through the programme, whether that be tailored training opportunities, targeted reading, or support in designing assessment projects that will be relevant to their needs.

This programme recognises that there are many demands on learner's time and that these may fluctuate over the course of the programme. We therefore provide for a flexible spectrum of participation. We ask learners to complete a minimum of 30 credits (one module) per academic year with a maximum time allowance of six years to complete the full 180 credit programme. Should a learner's personal circumstances change, they may switch between full and part time modes of study. They are also able to move between the PG Certificate, PG Diploma, and MSc programmes by the completion of the appropriate number of core credits.

Our building, seminar rooms, lecture theatre, laboratory and toilet facilities are fully accessible. Care is taken to ensure practical sessions and field trips are accessible to as wide a range of students as possible and module leaders are always happy to discuss ways of improving access to learning.

Section 7 – Approach to Assessment

The full Postgraduate Certificate programme comprises two modules.

Both taught modules are assessed by course work. The intention of the course work assessments is to replicate the range of analyses, syntheses, reports and products which may reasonably be expected from an individual working professionally in the retrofitting, regeneration and sustainability sector. Assessments are focussed around professional outputs that are typically produced by trained historic building specialists. This could, for example, include a regeneration plan, viability study, buildings pathology report, retrofitting scheme, or sustainability intervention. There is plenty of flexibility around the format assessments can take and module leaders will work individually with students to help them develop research projects, methods and approaches that will not only meet the assessment criteria but will also help them achieve their wider aims for the programme. It is possible to

work on a live brief for an employer.

Alongside tutorials and discussions, formative, in-class exercises will be used to scaffold and develop the learner's writing skills. Learners may take part in group-crits on their work in progress, sessions on understanding and incorporating feedback/feed-forward, and in-class supported-writing exercises. These will provide valuable formative feedback and allow peer-to-peer learning to take place. Postgraduate Certificate students, are most welcome to audit the first eight weeks of the 4700 Dissertation module in order to strengthen their long-format writing and research skills.

This programme is very much designed as a stepping-stone into the historic built environment sector. Learners are therefore encouraged to treat the assessments as opportunities for portfolio- and network-building. To this end, learners are encouraged and supported to negotiate 'live' projects with building owners and users, community groups or heritage organisations. This will ensure that there is real world input into the development of their assessed work and the work produced will be useful and impactful, public- and/or sector-facing outputs.

Overall, the programme is taught and assessed through:

	Learning and Teaching			Assessment		
	Directed	Independent	Placement	Exam	Practical	Coursework
Year 1	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Section 8 – Course work grading and feedback

Assessment is an integral part of the learning experience of students. All University programmes are assessed by a range of assessment activities, each developed to provide the most appropriate means of demonstrating the student's achievement of a specified learning outcome. An assessment may assess more than one learning outcome.

The University operates standard pass criteria which can be found in the RAU Academic Regulations (paragraphs 116 – 129).

The normal basis for awards will be the overall average score in the final assessment, graded as follows:

Distinction weighted average of	70% and above
Merit weighted average of	60% - 69%
Pass weighted average of	40% - 59%
Fail average	0% - 39%

In addition to assigning a percentage mark to the work, tutors provide written feedback for all assessments which normally includes the strengths and weaknesses of the piece as well as advice about improving the work. Individual feedback is provided within 20-working days of the deadline for submission. All assessment decisions are subject to internal moderation and external scrutiny by the programme's External Examiners. Students must ensure they retain all coursework in case the External Examiner(s) wishes to see it.

Section 9 – RAU Graduate Framework

At the RAU we have chosen five values to underpin our learning community. These are the values which we will all work by and for which we want the RAU to be known for. We aim for our graduates to be:

Collaborative

We believe in the power of working together. We are stronger as a community of practice - inspiring each other, identifying shared goals, and providing reciprocal support leads to greater success.

Open-minded

We are receptive to new ideas and we value the diversity of experiences and skills. We are committed to listening to everyone across the RAU community.

Resourceful

We adopt creative approaches to achieve our goals while setting higher standards, promoting professionalism and sustainability.

Responsible

Individually and collectively we take accountability for our actions working with integrity to achieve the highest ethical standards.

Inclusive

We acknowledge the fundamental value and dignity of all individuals and are committed to maintaining an environment that seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination and respects diverse traditions, heritages, and experiences.



Section 10 – Progression

This programme is designed to respond to the growing need within the built environment sector for practitioner skilled in retrofitting, sustainability and reuse. This program provides a targeted, Master's-level introduction to the practicalities of adapting and managing historic and traditional buildings for a sustainable and successful future.

In consequence, the course is suited to those working in development, building management, or the wider built environment sector seeking to improve their knowledge of - and practice around – historic buildings. This flexible course is also suitable for those from a heritage background to increase their understanding of the practical aspects of building management and sustainability.

Students are moreover encouraged to work with existing employers or approach heritage organisations to negotiate 'live' projects for their various pieces of assessed work. They could, for example, design a carbon-reducing retrofit plan for a local church, or put together a Historic England bid for the regeneration of a community asset. Real projects such as these help to build the learner's professional network and introduce them to the reality of working with diverse stakeholders. The public- and/or sector-facing nature of these projects also ensures good visibility for the learner's work and helps them to establish their professional reputation in their chosen sector.

The degree will enable graduates to pursue careers in historic building conservation, urban or rural regeneration, retrofitting, etc. and to work in local authorities, heritage organisations, museums and the private sector which require specialists with a buildings and structures focus.

Section 11 – Student support, wellbeing and counselling

The [University](#) is offering a wide range of support to all RAU students, including practical advice and guidance as well as emotional support.

Disability and Neurodivergent support

We support disabled & neurodivergent students and students with long-term health conditions. These disabilities include dyslexia, mental health diagnoses, ADHD, autism, mobility challenges, sensory impairments and many more. Students are encouraged to make contact with Student Services as early as possible by emailing: studentservices@rau.ac.uk. When you tell us about a disability, you will be offered support based on your specific needs, which can include:

- **Alternative exam arrangements** such as extra time, rest breaks, or a smaller room.
- **Access to support workers** such as study skills tutors, specialist mentors, readers and scribes.
- Access to assistive technology (AT), which helps remove barriers to learning, communication and participation. The AT can help students who face difficulties with taking notes, organisation and time management.

Mental Health Support

Student Services has a dedicated team who are here to support you with the emotional challenges that can crop up during university life. They take a wide-ranging approach to mental health support, and the team ensure they are available for informal chats as well as providing in-depth support for students with emerging or existing mental health conditions.

The team also offer mental health support in the form of daily drop-in sessions, weekly group Time to Talk sessions, mental health workshops, awareness and campaign days and 1:1 confidential meetings for when students face challenges to their wellbeing.

Student Services can also refer students for counselling sessions with an external agency if they are required. They can also signpost you to our Student Assistance Programme, providing 24/7 care, support and advice.

Academic Support Tutor Programme

All students have access to the Academic Support Tutor (AST) programme, which provides high-quality academic support for students. ASTs provide timetabled group tutorials and individual support for students who are most at risk. Group tutorials focus on providing high-quality academic support at the appropriate academic level; advice and guidance in relation to the course; and advice about making study choices on the course (in line with the AST Handbook). Individual support focuses on continuation and may be in person or online.

Section 12 – Enhancing the Quality of Learning and Teaching

The programme 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 6 years. This process ensures that the programme engages with the applicable national Subject Benchmarks and references the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

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

- External Examiner Reports
- Key statistics including data on retention and achievement
- Results of the Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Feedback from Student Delegates from programme committees
- Feedback from Student-Staff Liaison committees
- Annual Programme Monitoring