I'm writing to you about your application to study the BA Architecture (K100) in the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield. As you know, the University will be adjusting how it delivers its courses in the autumn to accommodate the social distancing measures required to combat the coronavirus pandemic. The current plans involve a blend of face-to-face teaching in small groups in Sheffield, where social distancing can be maintained, supported by digital delivery. In this email, I'll explain what this will mean for your studies on the BA Architecture.

Course content

There's no change to the overall learning outcomes of the course. You'll still obtain a thorough understanding of Architecture and a wide range of discipline-specific and transferable skills.

The core modules are all the same, but the timings of some individual components may change.

Teaching

As you know, the majority of our teaching comprises lectures, seminars and practicals, and we'll still be using these formats in 2020-21. Teaching will be spread across the usual two semesters and will start the week commencing Monday 28 September.

It's not possible to social distance in a crowded lecture theatre, so we'll be delivering all our lectures online. Lectures are primarily presentations by one of our subject experts, and online delivery suits the format well. We've made recorded lectures available online for several years, but in 2020-21 we'll be delivering them live as well, with an opportunity for students to submit comments and questions in real time.

For our design tutorials, we'll be using a combination of face-to-face and digital teaching, and you'll have regular, timetabled sessions of each form. The face-to-face sessions will take place in small groups, so that we can use our large design studios and still maintain social distancing. Our face-to-face teaching has always taken place across the University's campus, and this won't change in 2020-21. The digital sessions will use a variety of online platforms which allow for collaborative learning and sharing of visual information. This virtual studio environment has been successfully employed during the previous semester, and allows tutors and students to draw collaboratively in real time while discussing design work.

Our academic staff will be available as usual for tutorials and other one-to-one meetings, and will still hold their regular office hours. It may not be possible for these sessions to take place in person, but if not you'll be able to make an audio or video call.

Location of teaching

We hope to be able to return to our studios in the Arts Tower for some parts of our course delivery, and especially our small group teaching. This depends on government guidance and whether arrangements can be made to enable the building to be used safely. This is
currently being reviewed. Should that not be possible we will be using alternative spaces across the University’s campus.

**Learning resources**

Most of our learning resources are already available online, and this includes all the core reading for our Level 1 modules. Our physical libraries will be open as soon as it’s safe to do so, and our librarians are committed to providing as full a service as possible, taking into account social distancing requirements and all the latest government advice.

**Assessment**

Modules will be assessed as normal. Submission and assessment of written assignments will take place electronically. Reviews of studio design work will take place online in small groups attended by students and tutors. The format allows for the same level of discussion and feedback as traditional face-to-face design reviews.

**Accreditation**

Our BA courses are still fully accredited by the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

**Costs**

The tuition fee for the course will stay the same, and we don't expect students will incur additional costs as a result of the changes we're making. You'll be able to participate in all the online activities using a regular laptop or tablet connected to the internet, although you will need a microphone and camera to contribute fully in virtual discussions. If you are concerned that you might not be able to afford equipment or have a broadband connection to study remotely, please contact the University's Financial Support Team (financialhelp@sheffield.ac.uk). The University can provide laptops on loan or a grant depending on your circumstances.

I hope this email has given you an idea of what to expect when you join us in the autumn. As you'll be aware, this pandemic is a fast-moving and unpredictable phenomenon, and we might need to make further changes as the situation develops and the University responds to updates in public health guidance. Please be assured that we'll be approaching the next year as a single departmental family of staff and students together, and we're committed to ensuring that you're supported, and that you still receive a world-class university education here at Sheffield.

If you have any questions or concerns, please get in touch with our Architecture Learning and Teaching team at ar-tlooffice@sheffield.ac.uk.

**Further information**
Please keep looking out for emails from the University and checking our frequently asked questions, which are updated regularly with all the latest developments. We also have some on demand content from our online applicant open days which you might find useful.

I hope you enjoy what’s left of the summer and stay safe.

Best wishes

Professor Karim Hadjri
Head of Department
School of Architecture