



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES ARCHITECTES PAYSAGISTES

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT for RECOGNITION or ACCREDITATION

Professional Education Programmes in Landscape Architecture

(approved by IFLA World Council, June 28.2008)

Preamble

The International Federation of Landscape Architects through its Charter for Landscape Architectural Education (2005) supports the advancement of professional education worldwide. The Charter sets out principles, objectives and criteria for professional educational programmes in landscape architecture [see appendix A]. This document sets out IFLA guidance on procedures for the recognition and accreditation of such programmes.

Definition

Accreditation is a non-governmental, voluntary system of monitoring and review of tertiary education, in which programmes and/or institutions are benchmarked against specified requirements for the education of professionals. There is typically a high degree of self evaluation and self regulation, which is overseen by an accrediting body or organization that represents the profession that is served by the educational programme.

IFLA Objectives for Accreditation

IFLA has developed this *Guidance Document for Recognition or Accreditation* to provide information and guidance in two areas:

1. To provide guidance for countries and regions that are developing or already have formal systems for accreditation or recognition. These systems exist in North America, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and many other parts of the world. It is desirable for regions or countries to have systems for professional programme accreditation that are specific to the needs and educational approaches for that area, but with increasing international movement and global activity of the profession it is also helpful if accreditation systems and the programmes they recognize have some common features and comparable standards worldwide. This document provides guidance on the generic features regarded as important by IFLA
2. To provide a framework for countries and regions that do not have a system for accreditation or recognition. This situation may arise due to the historic lack of programmes in landscape architecture, limited resources, or the lack of expertise to establish a fully autonomous system. This guide is intended to provide a basis for the formulation of future systems.

IFLA recognizes that formal accreditation processes require a framework of principles for the recognition of educational programmes and establishment of minimum standards. These guidelines are based on the following principles:

1. Landscape architecture is a distinct profession requiring education at a university level that addresses a recognized body of knowledge at a high standard.
2. Diversity of educational programmes is encouraged.
3. Self-evaluation and self-analysis of programmes and curriculum is promoted.
4. Local needs and institutional educational objectives will be recognized in the process.
5. Regional and national accreditation systems for landscape architecture are encouraged

6. Accrediting agencies shall be independent from the programme and institution being accredited.

Standards

The following criteria are recommended for a programme to achieve recognition as being professionally accredited or recognized:

1. The programme degree description is to include the term "Landscape Architecture". Other degree names may be used for related specialties such as "Landscape Planning".
2. The institution offering the programme must be accredited to offer degrees by the governmental institutional accrediting body of its region or nation.
3. A first-professional undergraduate degree should be of at least four full-time academic years in duration.
4. A graduate first-professional degree is a master's equivalent to a minimum of two years of full-time study at the graduate level, in addition to the completion of a prescribed undergraduate course of study or other degree.
5. There is a designated programme leader who holds a qualification in landscape architecture.
6. The programme staffing should include a least three FTE [full time equivalent] academic faculty who hold degrees in landscape architecture. If the institution has two first-professional degree programmes (undergraduate and graduate levels), at least six academic FTEs are recommended, of whom a minimum of four have degrees in landscape architecture with an active programme of scholarship and research.
7. The educational programme(s) should cover the knowledge areas (Section II.3) and other requirements outlined in the IFLA Charter on Landscape Architectural Education and as prescribed by the country or region in question. See appendix A.

Evaluation

When accrediting an educational programme, the following categories will be evaluated:

1. The stated objectives of the programme and evidence of their achievement.
2. Academic curriculum as related to the IFLA/UNESCO Charter and the relevant standards developed for that country or region.
3. Student performance and graduation statistics.
4. Graduate profile and employment experiences.
5. Faculty qualifications, experience and evidence of scholarship.
6. Governance and administration, including institutional structure and quality of management processes.
7. Facilities and resources.
8. Relationship to the institution and the community.

Procedures in countries or regions where no system is available

In the absence of a readily identified system, the process for accreditation is as follows:

1. An educational institution seeking accreditation for its programme{s} may apply to the IFLA Education Committee for advice.

2. IFLA provides information upon available systems within that country or region that could conduct the process.
3. If no system is available in that country or region, other relevant systems will be suggested for investigation, and potential accrediting agencies identified.
4. The institution prepares a written self-evaluation report on the programme and submits to the body identified as suitable for conducting the review.
5. The body appoints a visiting team of assessors, who carry out a visit to the programme.
6. The visiting team prepares a report on findings, which is submitted as a draft to the institution seeking accreditation, who in turn reviews the report for factual errors, and provide their comments to the body.
7. The body considers the response, and determines the outcome of accreditation.
8. The accrediting body advises the programme director and the institution administration of its decision, and informs IFLA of the outcome

IFLA involvement of this type is only anticipated when no professional system is available in a given country or region. It is not intended as an alternative to already established systems

Accreditation status

There are normally two categories of accreditation that may be given:

Provisional Accreditation- This is granted following the initial visit, in situations where the overall standards are generally suitable for professional accreditation, but where certain requirements are deficient. If this occurs, the institution is advised in the visiting team report. Provisional accreditation can only be held for a limited period, during which the institution is expected to address the substantive shortfalls identified in the initial visit. Evidence of this must be supplied to the accrediting body before full accreditation can be conferred.

Full Accreditation- This is granted when the visiting team is fully satisfied following the visit that the programme meets all specified requirements. Full Accreditation is normally granted for a specified term [typically five years]. Following that time, the programme may reapply for renewal if a local accreditation system is not available at that time. The body will determine if a follow-up inspection visit is required.

Financial arrangements

The costs of accreditation are shared between the accrediting body and the programme seeking accreditation. Financial responsibilities are as follows:

1. The body will provide administrative support and maintain a roster of potential visiting team members.
2. All members of the visiting team will volunteer their time as a service to the profession.
3. All expenses of the visit, including travel, lodging and meals will be borne by the programme/institution requesting accreditation. The institution will arrange for the lodging and meals during the visit and reimburse Visiting Team members for travel costs. All travel will be at economy class at the lowest available cost.

IFLA register of accrediting systems

The IFLA Education Committee will maintain a register of accreditation systems that substantially meet the principles set out in these guidelines, and of bodies that are potentially capable of undertaking an accreditation visit. This register will be reviewed annually by the committee.

APPENDIX A



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
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IFLA/UNESCO CHARTER FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

We, the landscape architects, concerned with the future development of our landscapes in a fast changing world, believe that everything, influencing the way in which the outdoor environment is created, used, and maintained is fundamental to sustainable development and human well-being. We, being responsible for the improvement of the education of future landscape architects to enable them to work for a sustainable environment within the context of our natural and cultural heritage, declare:

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Our modern world presents complex challenges with respect to ecological, social and functional degradation of human settlements and regional landscapes. This makes it essential for education and research conducted in academic institutions to formulate new solutions for the present and the future.

1. The ideals of landscape architecture including providing for the quality of the natural and built environments, the way landscape relates to buildings and infrastructure, and respect for our natural environmental and cultural heritage are matters of public concern.
2. It is in the public interest to ensure that landscape architects are able to understand and to give practical expression to the needs of individuals, communities and the private sector regarding spatial planning, design organization, construction of landscapes, as well as, conservation and enhancement of the built heritage, the protection of the natural balance and rational land use planning for the utilization of available resources.
3. Methods of education and training for landscape architects are varied and that this fact be recognized as a cultural richness which should be preserved.
4. We require a common ground for future action with the aim of achieving an appropriate elevated level by establishing criteria which permit countries, schools and professional organizations to evaluate and improve the education given to the future landscape architects.
5. The increasing mobility of landscape architects between the different countries calls for a mutual recognition or validation of individual diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualification.
6. The mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates or other evidence of formal qualification to practice in the field of landscape architecture has to be founded on objective criteria, guaranteeing that holders of such qualifications have received and maintain the kind of training called for in this Charter.
7. The vision of the future world, cultivated in landscape architectural schools, should include the following goals:
 - a decent quality of life for all the inhabitants
 - an approach to landscape planning and design interventions which respects the social, cultural, physical and aesthetic needs of people
 - an ecologically balanced approach assuring sustainable development of the built environment
 - a public realm landscape which is valued and expressive of local culture.

II. EDUCATION AND OBJECTIVES

Since landscape architecture is an art and science, landscape architectural education should be regarded as the manifestation of the ability to conceptualize, coordinate and execute the idea of environmental design rooted in human tradition and the knowledge of natural systems.

1. Landscape architecture is an interdisciplinary field that comprises several major components: humanities, social and natural sciences, technology and the creative arts. Landscape architectural education is available at Universities, Polytechnics, Institutes and Academies. The education leading to formal qualifications and permitting professionals to practice in the field of landscape architecture is to be at university level with landscape architecture as the main subject.
2. The basic goal is to develop the landscape architect as a specialist able to resolve potential contradictions between different requirements, while giving form to the society's and the individual's environmental needs.
3. Landscape architectural education involves the acquisition of knowledge within the following broad areas:
 - History of cultural form and an understanding of design as a social art
 - Cultural and natural systems
 - Plant material and horticultural applications
 - Site engineering including materials, methods, technologies, construction documentation and administration, and applications
 - Theory and methodologies in design and planning
 - Landscape design, management, planning and science at all scales and applications
 - Information technology and computer applications
 - Public policy and regulation
 - Communications and public facilitation
 - Ethics and values related to the profession
4. The balanced acquisition of knowledge and skills outlined above requires a long period of maturation; the period of studies in landscape architecture should always be not less than four years of full-time (undergraduate) studies in a university or an equivalent institution, plus two years experience in a landscape architectural practice.
5. First professional degrees in landscape architecture may be offered at the undergraduate or the graduate levels. Entrance into graduate programmes will require an undergraduate university degree in landscape architecture, architecture or other fields accepted by the institution. A graduate degree will normally require a minimum of two years of full time study. This diversity provides for local practice needs, research and/or specialization. Degrees in landscape architecture may also be offered at the PhD level.
6. In order to benefit from the wide variety of teaching methods, exchange programmes for teachers, and students at advanced level, will be desirable. Regional and international student design competitions, awards and exhibitions will be supported by schools and the profession.
7. Issues related to landscape architecture and the environment should be introduced as part of a general education, because an early awareness of environmental design is important to both future landscape architects and members of society at large.
8. Landscape architectural students should be made critically aware of the political and financial motivations behind clients' needs and regulations in order to foster an ethical framework for decision making within the built environment. Young landscape architects should be encouraged to assume the responsibilities as professionals within society.

9. Educational programs should promote landscape architectural design which considers the cost of future maintenance, life-cycle costing and project sustainability.
10. Systems for continuing education must be set up for landscape architects; landscape architectural education should never be considered as a closed process.

III. CRITERIA FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

In order to achieve the above mentioned goals, the following aspects should be taken into account:

1. Educational institutions are advised to create, with the support of the profession, accreditation systems for self-evaluation and peer-review conducted at regular intervals. Included in the review panel should be teachers from other schools, practicing landscape architects and others.
2. Each teaching institution must adjust the number of students according to its teaching capacity. Criteria for the selection of students shall be in relation to the aptitudes required for a successful training in landscape architecture and will be applied by means of an appropriate selection process organized by the schools at the point of entry in the programme.
3. Adequate studios, facilities for research, advanced studies, information and data exchange for new technologies should be provided at schools of landscape architecture. Computer technology and the development of specialized software should be incorporated into appropriate aspects of landscape architectural education.
4. The creation of a network, on a world-wide basis, for the exchange of information, teachers and students, is necessary in order to promote a common understanding and to raise the level of landscape architectural education.
5. Continuous interaction between practice and teaching of landscape architecture must be encouraged and protected.
6. Research should be regarded as an inherent activity of landscape architectural professors. Landscape architectural research may be founded on project work, methodologies, technologies, ecological and social issues, and other relevant topics. Peer-review is to be encouraged to evaluate landscape architectural research and publication.
7. Design project work must be a synthesis of acquired knowledge and skills. The landscape architectural curriculum should include the subjects referred to under the educational objectives of this Charter. Individual studio project work with direct teacher/student dialogue must form a substantial part of the learning period and occupy approximately half of the curriculum.

CONCLUSION

This Charter was created on the initiative of IFLA and UNESCO, with the ability of being applied by any landscape architectural school on the international and national levels. It is our intent that this Charter will assist in the creation of a global network of landscape architectural education within which individual achievements can be shared by all.

This Charter, as a universal document, can help in the understanding that landscape architectural education constitutes both the socio-cultural, ecological and professional challenge of the contemporary world; and requires the guarantee of protection, development and urgent action.

Adopted August 15, 2005



ADDENDA TO GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR RECOGNITION OR ACCREDITATION

WHEN IMPLEMENTED IN THE EUROPEAN REGION

Updated and approved by IFLA Europe GA in June 2017

Standards *(See page 2 of this document)*

Point 3:

Duration of a first professional degree:

Within the European region the Bologna Declaration states that first cycle degrees can be of 180¹ ECTS (i.e. 3 years duration). In the European region 3 year degrees will not be recognised as professional landscape architectural degrees, but as programs of study that are precursors to further landscape architectural education that may lead to a professional qualification.

Evaluation *(See page 3 of this document)*

Within the European region the School complete the IFLA Europe Education checklist and send it to IFLA Europe via the national association. The National Association send a letter of support for the School programme to the IFLA Europe. These two documents are reviewed by the IFLA Europe School Recognition Panel of the Education Committee.

¹ 1 year full time study = 60 ECTS