



**IFLA ASIA-PACIFIC**  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

**VERSION 2.0**

**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS**

# **Education Policy and Standards + Accreditation Procedure**

**FOR IFLA ASIA PACIFIC REGION**

This document outlines the global benchmark standard for the formal accreditation of landscape architecture programmes in the IFLA Asia Pacific Region, from July 2018.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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***This version is to be used, where appropriate, for programme accreditation reviews in the IFLA APR from July 2018.***

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# **PART A: IFLA APR EDUCATION POLICY AND STANDARDS 2018**

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 IFLA APR Education Policy and Standards and Accreditation Procedure**

The Asia Pacific Region of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA APR) is committed to the provision of quality tertiary education as the essential pathway into the profession of Landscape Architecture.

This document outlines the requirements for professional recognition of tertiary Landscape Architecture programmes in the IFLA APR, based upon the IFLA/UNESCO Charter for Landscape Architectural Education and the IFLA Guidance Document for Recognition or Accreditation. Part A of this document, Education Policy and Standards, sets out the IFLA APR's education aims and specific standards for accredited programmes in Landscape Architecture. Part B, the IFLA APR Accreditation Procedures outlines the region's expectations for the Accreditation Panel reviews and visits.

The IFLA APR working with the profession and accredited programme providers of the member Nations, regularly updates these education standards to ensure that they maintain professional expectations and currency, while allowing for flexible and innovative approaches to the delivery of landscape education to enrich the diversity and breadth of the profession in our region. Those programmes which have been accredited by the IFLA APR will be able to use the IFLA APR logo and the IFLA logo on their marketing material to show that they have met the standards required for an internationally recognised programme of landscape architecture.

This document is intended to serve as a guide for landscape architectural schools within the IFLA APR to benchmark their programmes and if appropriate to apply for accredited status. It will assist in the creation of a network of landscape architectural education opportunities to advance the quality of landscape design and planning in our region and world-wide.

### **1.2 The Policy Context**

This document provides a framework for the IFLA APR to advocate for and evaluate the quality of Landscape Architecture education in tertiary programmes in our region through the definition and verification of required standards and core competencies.

The IFLA APR, through its accreditation process, aims to advance measurable levels of knowledge, skills and values sufficient for graduates to enter the landscape architecture profession ready to begin a period of internship through their employment. The accreditation process also provides an operating framework to support individual programme initiatives in the advancement and broadening of the profession of landscape architecture.

## **2.0 Landscape architecture in our region**

Our region presents unique challenges with regard to landscape change, reflecting sometimes conflicting demands from communities, economies, and environmental needs, within a framework of engaging fully with sustainability and resilience. Design and planning in our regional landscapes has a long and varied history influenced by cultural differences and resource constraints; landscape

architects must acknowledge this while also considering the future implications of planning, design and management decisions. This makes it essential for education and research conducted in academic Institutions to provide the knowledge and skills required to allow graduates to formulate appropriate solutions for the present and the future, sensitive to the diverse needs of our societies.

The profession of landscape architecture is uniquely positioned to provide strong leadership in creating integrated responses that are sensitive to both place and environmental imperatives within an increasingly multi-disciplinary spectrum of professional inputs.

A diverse and responsive education environment capable of preparing graduates to meet these challenges is essential. In this context, education must be seen as an agent of change and not simply responsive to the needs of practice. A broad education in which the design studio remains the core learning environment will creatively foster critique and debate, problem definition and solving, lateral thinking, and integrated strategic management and implementation.

*'Landscape' means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. (European Landscape Convention)*

*'Landscape architecture' means the profession that applies aesthetic and scientific principles to the design, planning, analysis and management of both natural and built environments. (IFLA/UNESCO Charter for Landscape Architectural Education)*

### **3.0 The global context**

The profession of landscape architecture in our region operates within a global environment; the education of landscape architects must be cognisant of:

- The IFLA/UNESCO Charter for Landscape Architectural Education (July 2012);
- The IFLA Guidance Document for Recognition or Accreditation;
- International standards and the transferability of generic skills and knowledge;
- Reciprocity of academic qualifications and professional standing; and
- The increasing range, nature and speed of communications.

Within this context landscape architectural education needs to recognise the wider global community, as well as meeting the educational needs of those intending to practice locally. It needs to equip graduates to become leaders in dealing with issues of sustainability, resilience, social, ethical and environmental auditing at all scales, as well as maintaining or developing concepts of National identity within a global framework.

Landscape architecture education must also be responsive to the need for education to address a contemporary, relevant and forward-looking view of the discipline of landscape architecture.

### **4.0 The education policy**

Within the above framework this Education Policy aims to define standards which build upon global requirements (the IFLA/UNESCO Charter) with regional performance indicators, considered appropriate for those seeking to enter and practice the profession of landscape architecture.

The following requirements are defined in the IFLA/UNESCO Charter for Landscape Architectural Education (2012), or in the IFLA Guidance Document for Recognition or Accreditation (2008), or build

upon those documents, to establish a foundation of landscape education to enable recognition as an accredited programme:

- The Institution offering the programme must be authorised to offer degrees by the appropriate National Government Ministry.
- The programme degree name is to include the term "Landscape Architecture"; other degree names may be used for related specialties such as "Landscape Planning".
- The landscape architectural curriculum should include the areas listed under Section 5, Educational Standards. Additional knowledge and skills may be required at a National level.
- Individual studio project work with direct teacher/student dialogue must form a minimum of 50% of the teaching and learning process.
- First professional degrees in landscape architecture may be offered at the undergraduate or the graduate levels. An undergraduate degree is generally not less than four years of full-time study within a recognised tertiary Institution. A graduate degree will normally require a minimum of two years of full time study; entrance into graduate programmes will require an appropriate undergraduate degree or bridging programme.
- Adequate studios, facilities for research, advanced studies, information and data exchange including digital technologies should be provided.
- Continuous interaction between practice and teaching of landscape architecture must be encouraged and protected.
- Research should be regarded as an inherent activity of academic staff in landscape architectural programmes. Peer-review is encouraged to evaluate landscape architectural research and publication.
- Institutions are advised to create internal audit systems for self-evaluation and peer-review conducted at regular intervals. Academics from other schools and practicing landscape architects should be included in any review panel.
- The IFLA APR requires that the level of staffing stated in the programme documents and accreditation submission and subsequent agreements must be maintained at all times for the period of accreditation. The programme director ideally holds an academic appointment in landscape architecture and has the responsibility to exercise academic leadership and management of the programme.
- The IFLA APR reserves the right to withdraw accreditation should there be a significant reduction in resourcing, including staffing, to an accredited programme.
- The IFLA APR Hon. Secretary will maintain a register of National accreditation systems that substantially meet the principles set out in these guidelines.

## **5.0 The standards**

### **5.1 Defining the Accreditation Standards**

Each of the Standards describes one of the essential conditions that a programme must meet to obtain and maintain accreditation, based on the IFLA global education requirements. A programme must provide adequate evidence that each standard has been met in order to obtain and maintain accreditation. Each standard has performance criteria that define the components needed to satisfy the related competency.

To be accredited, a programme must provide evidence that:

- Criteria have been met, or;
- Substantial progress towards meeting the criteria has been made and there is an agreed action plan and time line to ensure that the criteria are met before any students graduate from the programme or;

- Alternative criteria that are acceptable to the IFLA APR have been used to meet the standard.

## 5.2 Key Terminology

**Programme Head/Director:** The academic responsible for management and academic leadership of the programme.

**Programme:** The collection of courses forming a degree or combination of degrees meeting the accreditation standards.

**Curriculum:** The planned and documented list of material delivered in the programme through core courses, as well as restricted choice courses and appropriate elective course choices.

**Course:** A discrete package of instruction, or a unit, within an academic programme.

**Course outline:** The written description supplied to students which includes at least the course prescription, aims, learning outcomes (defined as knowledge, skills and values), assessment requirements, mandatory requirements, policies, topics and timetable information.

**Graduate profile:** A graduate profile compiles the attributes that a graduate of the programme will possess, expressed as knowledge, skills and values and mapped against core courses.

**Competence/Criteria:** Each criterion requires evidence to validate an acceptable level of performance. Such performance is to be demonstrated by a combination of one or more of the following:

- Student work outcomes;
- Documentation of the course contribution to the programme graduate profile;
- A summary of the outcomes of any internal reviews;
- Interviews with students, lecturers, Head of Programme and administrator by the Accreditation Panel;
- Interviews with recent graduates and employers
- Documentation of other evidence-based indicators.

## 5.3 Accreditation Standards

### **Standard 1: Programme Mission and Objectives**

The programme has a clearly defined mission statement, supported by appropriate goals and objectives which reflect the purpose and values of the programme and which indicates the strategies that will enable progress towards the attainment of those goals. The programme literature, website, and other public information accurately and clearly reflects the programme's goals, objectives and status.

#### *Performance Criteria*

C-1 The programme goals and objectives are clearly stated and are consistent with the goals and policies of this document, the IFLA Charter and the IFLA APR Education Policy, Standards and Accreditation Procedure;

C-2 The published curriculum details a sequence and emphasis in its individual courses that relate to the programme goals and objectives and the programme graduate profile; and

C-3 Educational goals and objectives and the curriculum provide for and encourage relationships and linkages with other related disciplines, landscape architectural practices, and other relevant sectors.

### **Standard 2: Governance and Administration**

**2A Authority and Resources:** The Institution has the authority and resources to achieve the programme's educational goals and objectives.

#### *Performance Criteria*



- C-4 Where the programme is a stand-alone Landscape Architecture programme, or part of a larger design or planning school, it is structured as a discrete professional programme with access to, and adequate control of, necessary resources noted in Standard six;
- C-5 The leadership and management of accredited programmes and pathways is vested in those holding relevant landscape architecture qualifications who are preferably Registered Landscape Architects or the National equivalent; and
- C-6 The programme is adequately resourced to meet its goals and objectives, provide for academic staff development, support for academic research and provide student support.

**2B Academic Staff:** Sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified and experienced academic staff are employed to provide a high level of expertise across all aspects of the teaching and management of the programme, including active engagement with the profession. The IFLA APR affirms that research and publications are integral activities of an accredited Landscape Architecture programme. The IFLA APR requires Landscape Architecture staff to have a balance of current practice, teaching and research experience, which may be achieved across the teaching staff by full-time, part time or contracting staff. The qualifications and experience of academic staff are appropriate to their instructional roles.

*Performance Criteria*

- C-7 The programme should employ at least three full-time equivalent academic faculty who hold degrees in landscape architecture and in addition must employ at least one academic staff member on a permanent or long-term contract basis per year of full-time programme, or ensure that at least 50% of the face-to-face teaching hours in the programme are carried out by permanent or long-term contracted academic staff;
- C-8 If the Institution has programmes at undergraduate and graduate levels, at least six academic full-time equivalent staff members are recommended, of whom a minimum of four have degrees in landscape architecture with an active programme of scholarship and research;
- C-9 Staff have an appropriate mix of tertiary qualifications and/or professional experience in the same or closely related fields as the courses for which they have primary responsibility;
- C-10 The teacher: student ratio in studios and tutorials is not greater than 1:20;
- C-11 There is a demonstrated commitment to involve practicing professionals with appropriate expertise in the programme;
- C-12 Academic staff ensure that they continually update their expertise through research and/or a CPD programme; and
- C-13 Adequate administrative and technical staff are available to support the programme.

**Standard Three: Professional Curriculum**

The curriculum includes the core knowledge, skills, values and applications of Landscape Architecture, with a structure designed to allow for progression, integration, and independent learning with a minimum level of 50% of the programme conducted as studio work.

*Performance Criteria*

- C-14 The curriculum addresses the programme's goals and objectives;
- C-15 The knowledge, skills, and values of the curriculum are systematically arranged through courses and course combinations, to ensure that all graduates achieve at least the expected minimum standards within the discipline areas of Landscape Architecture;
- C-16 The programme encourages complementary student and staff exchanges between universities and other organisations internationally;
- C-17 Programmes actively encourage or arrange for students to gain significant practical experience, mentorship, internship and/or practicum work during the programme through placements in offices (private and public sector) and/or in practical aspects of the industry; and

C-18 Students have regular opportunities to engage in multi-disciplinary or cross-disciplinary studies.

#### **Standard Four: Education Outcomes**

A programme shall offer students education opportunities sufficient to enable an understanding or appreciation of the range of competencies expected of a professional landscape architect. Particular emphasis in relation to the Core Performance Criteria listed below is required, so that students have a good understanding, a basic understanding, or an appreciation of the core competencies. This core may be supplemented by specialist fields such as urban design, urban ecology, landscape planning, cultural landscape conservation and management, indigenous design, or resilience to the effects of climate change. Such diversity in landscape architecture programmes is encouraged, so that specialist disciplinary knowledge becomes available to the profession, provided that a coherent core of landscape architecture knowledge and skills is maintained.

*Graduates will have the following knowledge, skills and values:*

C-19 History and theory

- A good understanding of landscape architectural theory from both an international perspective and from the perspective of the respective Nation's environmental and cultural setting;
- A good understanding of the relationships between natural and cultural landscapes and systems, and their conservation and management;
- A good understanding of the principles and practice of landscape planning, both strategic and statutory; and
- An appreciation of the diversity of social and cultural perspectives of the environment and their implications on design and planning in the respective Nation.

C-20: Natural and cultural systems

- A basic understanding of natural sciences including but not limited to, botany, horticulture, ecology and earth sciences;
- A basic understanding of the values of historic landscapes and their conservation and management;
- A basic understanding of the role of ecosystem services in land management;
- An appreciation of approaches to developing planning, management and design solutions to transform socio-ecological systems, including climate change adaptation and mitigation; and
- An appreciation of the value of developing and implementing landscape management policies and procedures necessary to sustain healthy and resilient landscape systems.

C-21: Plant material and plant communities

- A good understanding of plant communities and plant material, including design with plants, planting plans and schedules, maintenance plans and an appreciation of a range of revegetation strategies in the relevant region;
- A good understanding of approaches to plant identification, plant characteristics, implementation and environmental requirements, and plant husbandry;
- A basic understanding of the values and benefits of Eco sourcing indigenous plant material for propagation; and
- A basic understanding of plant production systems, including trees, shrubs and turf grasses.

C-22: Landscape analysis and design

- Landscape and site analysis and appraisal skills;

- Design skills including but not limited to: creativity, problem solving and aesthetic literacy relevant to landscape planning, management, design and urban design based on a diverse range of projects and scales, grounded at least in part in the cultural and environmental issues and character of the relevant Nation;
- A good understanding of critical thinking and evaluation of a range of landscapes and environments; and
- A good understanding of sustainable design and resilience, and the landscape relationship to climate change, water and energy consumption.

C-23: Landscape planning, assessment and management

- A good understanding of how to approach the planning and management of a wide range of landscapes including those with an urban, rural, or coastal character, within a local and a regional context;
- A good understanding of the professional and ethical requirements in giving professional evidence in a legal setting as an expert witness;
- An ability to prepare landscape evidence using clear written communication skills;
- A basic understanding of the regulatory framework that governs the profession of landscape architecture in the relevant Nation, in particular for landscape planning; and
- A basic understanding of the differences between visual effects assessment, landscape character assessment and landscape evaluation.

C-24: Technical skills in detailed design, construction management and implementation

- A good understanding of hard materials, their uses and performance in different environments including their life cycle value, carbon footprint and life expectancy;
- A good understanding of design detailing, and an appreciation of the significance of associated construction methods and technical specifications;
- A good understanding of site engineering, including grading, level changes, manipulation of surfaces to facilitate storm water values, drainage and a basic understanding of the performance of both natural water courses and storm water systems; and
- A basic understanding of the language and terms used in contracts, standards and processes to enable the implementation of landscape projects, including but not limited to contract documentation, specifications, preliminary cost estimates, contract procedures, tender processes and contract administration.

C-25: Communication and research

- The ability to think critically and use perceptive analytical skills to present a coherent argument;
- Clear communication and report writing skills, including a range of analogue and digital visual communication skills and verbal presentation skills;
- A basic understanding of research skills and techniques;
- An appreciation of the importance of integrating into projects other professionals and community values through collaboration skills, communication skills and processes of community consultation, facilitation and engagement; and
- An appreciation of how to engage appropriately and effectively with clients and communities.

C-26: Professional Ethics

- A basic understanding of the policies, procedures and code of professional conduct which informs the practice of Landscape Architecture in the relevant Nation;
- An appreciation of the role of the IFLA code of ethics;
- An appreciation of the importance of exercising professional judgement within an ethical framework, including but not limited to acting responsibly in planning, design,

management and policy decisions that affect the health and wellbeing of natural systems and human communities; and

- A basic understanding of gender and equity issues, and their ethical context.

C-27: Professional Practice

- A basic understanding of the roles of allied professional disciplines and specialist fields of knowledge;
- An appreciation of the diversity of the practice of landscape architecture including landscape planning, management, policy creation and design at a range of scales;
- An appreciation of the legislative framework of the relevant National professional environment within a regional context; and
- An appreciation of the range of business and managerial skills required to practice landscape architecture, including business practice, entrepreneurial skills, marketing, and project management.

C-28: Extending the core curriculum

- Opportunities for elective courses in related areas of practice which could include urban ecology, landscape ecology, spatial planning, urban design or environmental management, for example.

**Standard Five: Professional Outcomes**

Students are prepared, through their educational programmes and other academic and professional opportunities, to pursue a career in landscape architecture upon graduation.

*Performance Criteria*

C-29: The programme provides for annual reviews of student projects involving juries that include practicing Registered Landscape Architects or the National equivalent;

C-30: Students will be aware of professional opportunities, National registration requirements, postgraduate study options, and continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities and requirements;

C-31: Students are actively encouraged to participate in related professional and community activities, such as National institute events, community activities, associated professional societies or special interest groups, and international design competitions; and

C-32: Final year student work demonstrates the competencies required for entry level positions in the profession of Landscape Architecture.

**Standard Six: Facilities, Equipment and Information Resources**

Landscape Architecture programmes must be supported by resources and facilities to ensure effective delivery. The IFLA APR values the shared learning experiences that occur in studio environments. As studio-based teaching is at the core of Landscape Architecture education, students must have access to adequate and suitable studio space. Programmes are to ensure that students also have adequate access to Information Technology facilities including industry-relevant software and support services. Students are to be exposed to and encouraged to explore current and emerging information technologies.

*Performance Criteria*

C-33: Students have access to study and meeting rooms, and project work facilities, where studio, teaching, and study spaces are suitably furnished and equipped, and students and staff have the correct and safe use of necessary equipment integrated in the curriculum;

C-34: Students have adequate resources/teaching/support for industry-relevant hardware and software and to electronic or other technical equipment. All hardware, software and equipment is maintained and updated on a regular basis to maintain its industry relevance;

- C-35: Students have adequate storage space in line with course requirements, particularly for model making and other project work;
- C-36: A library collection and information resources, both physical and digital, must be provided to support the programme and be accessible to students. Adequate training in the use of both physical and digital information resources must be provided; and
- C-37: The library collection is sufficiently current, adequate in coverage and diverse in its forms including books, journals, maps and other print media, digital and photographic media to support the programme. On-line access is provided to library resources.

## **Standard Seven: Outreach**

### ***7A Engagement with Professional Institutes and Associations***

The programme has established effective working relationships with the National organisation, and other relevant associations and institutes, to provide learning opportunities for students, scholarly development for faculty, and professional guidance.

#### *Performance Criteria*

- C-38: The programme establishes appropriate professional links, where relevant, with National professional association and other professional institutes and associations;
- C-39: The programme regularly liaises throughout the year with the appropriate National organisation and on an annual basis with an advisory panel or other professional contacts with the intention to keep informed about developments or changes in the local professional environment;
- C-40: The programme head/director and or senior faculty meet once a year with a commitment to keep informed of the relevant National and international professional and education environments;
- C-41: The programme provides an annual report and accreditation documentation in accordance with the IFLA APR Accreditation Procedures;
- C-42: The programme encourages student involvement with the profession by means of:
- Members of the National profession organisation being invited to participate in the programme's teaching and research activities such as design juries, or other opportunities for direct feedback from practicing professionals to students on their work;
  - Academic staff members actively seeking opportunities for involvement with the profession;
  - The programme encourages the profession to provide students with information about work undertaken in practice to enable student critique and underpin student projects; and
  - The programme provides students with information about members of the profession who achieve awards, professional accolades, or other notable recognition of their contributions to the profession.

### ***7B Engagement with the Community***

The programme pursues relationships with relevant communities, the public and other stakeholders in the landscape.

#### *Performance Criteria*

- C-43: The programme encourages students and staff to participate in community activities at different levels and scales which showcase or contribute to aspects of Landscape Architecture.

## **PART B: IFLA APR ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE 2018**

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## **PART B: IFLA APR ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE 2018**

### **1.0 Overview of Accreditation**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Professional Accreditation of landscape architecture education programmes in the IFLA APR is a non-Government, voluntary system of self-regulation. It is founded on the concept of self-evaluation by the programme provider as a quality assurance process to measure performance and outcomes against stated educational objectives. The role of the IFLA APR is to provide an independent assessment of that evaluation.

#### **1.2 IFLA APR Stakeholders**

Professional Accreditation is the outcome of an evaluation of a programme against the education standards and core competencies that are defined in Part A of this document. The IFLA APR oversees professional accreditation of landscape architecture education programmes in our region in accordance with IFLA guidelines.

The purpose of professional accreditation is to serve the needs of four key stakeholders:

- The community, which is entitled to have confidence in the employment of landscape architects who have adequate knowledge of the theory and practice of landscape architecture;
- The students and graduates, who are entitled to assurance that their programme has been independently reviewed and found to meet professional and higher education standards and competencies based on the IFLA Charter to enable easier mobility and global activity within the profession;
- The tertiary Institution, for which the process provides a consultative peer review and stimulus to continually improve their programmes to meet emerging and future needs; and
- The profession, which is entitled to have confidence in the level of general and technical knowledge and skills of graduates seeking to engage in the profession of landscape architecture.

Programme accreditation is granted when the IFLA APR Council concludes, after an Education Committee review of the Accreditation Panel report on a particular programme of landscape architecture, that the educational and professional standards either have been met or that they will be substantially met within a defined timeframe.

#### **1.3 Programme Provider Responsibilities**

Professional accreditation by the IFLA APR is a voluntary process initiated by the education provider offering the programme. It is intended for those programmes where either a National accreditation system is not yet in place, or where Government or Institutional policy requires programmes to be reviewed against an international benchmark standard. The IFLA APR Council would normally require in the initial disclosure statement (see Appendix 2) a written declaration from the National organisation to the effect that they were aware of an impending request for IFLA APR accreditation, and that they do not have an objection to the request for an accreditation review being considered by the IFLA APR Council. If the National organisation does object, the grounds for that objection should be clearly indicated.

Any tertiary Institution considering the introduction of a new programme in landscape architecture intended for professional accreditation should establish early liaison with the IFLA APR during the

programme's development. Existing programmes will normally follow a five-yearly cycle of formal accreditation reviews.

It is the responsibility of the programme provider to:

- Invite the IFLA APR to evaluate a proposed programme for provisional professional accreditation, evaluate an existing programme for an initial review, or respond to advice that a continuing programme is due for an accreditation visit;
- Provide the IFLA APR with an initial disclosure statement, detailed in Appendix 2;
- Provide the IFLA APR with a self-review document to demonstrate that the programme meets its educational objectives and delivers the Education Policy and Standards defined in Part A of this document, including a competency matrix and a graduate profile; and
- Give the IFLA APR all reasonable physical access to students, staff and facilities required to independently verify the documentary evidence provided.

#### 1.4 IFLA APR Responsibilities

The IFLA APR will maintain an Education Committee to respond to requests made to the Hon. Secretary for provisional or continuing professional accreditation of programmes. The Education Committee's responsibilities will be to report to the IFLA APR Council and:

- Manage liaison between an education provider and the IFLA APR Council;
- Manage the Accreditation Panel which will audit an education provider in the planning stage for the establishment of a new programme for which accreditation is intended;
- Maintain an Accreditation Panel responsible for regular verification of the self-evaluation documentation produced by education providers and to undertake review visits where appropriate;
- Receive and act upon documentation and advice from the education providers and the Accreditation Panel in regard to the granting, confirmation or withdrawal of professional accreditation of a programme;
- Facilitate ongoing liaison and consultation between education providers and the IFLA APR in the interests of advancing education in landscape architecture; and
- Liaise with the IFLA Education and Academic Affairs Committee by regular reporting of the status of accredited programmes or programmes applying for accreditation with a summary which shows whether IFLA requirements have been met so that each programme's status can be included on both IFLA and Regional databases of accredited programmes.

## 2.0 IFLA APR Accreditation Structures

### 2.1 The IFLA APR Council

The IFLA APR Council has ultimate responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Accreditation Procedure. The IFLA APR Education Committee, on behalf of the IFLA APR Council, oversees and manages the IFLA APR Accreditation Procedure, and liaises with the Panel that carries out the Accreditation Procedure.

### 2.2 The Accreditation Panel

At least once in the cycle of each five-year accreditation period, an Accreditation Panel visits the programme. The membership of the panel is to comprise three experienced Registered Landscape Architects, or their National equivalent, being full professional members of their respective National associations. The membership of the panel should, as far as practicable, reflect the following selection criteria:



- Have a diverse range of practice and academic experience and collectively have current or past experience in both public and private practice;
- Ideally, at least one member should be involved in a larger practice or public sector department operating across regional boundaries;
- Ideally one member should hold an academic position or have previous experience of evaluating programmes of higher education;
- Ideally the panel will comprise graduates from more than one programme; and
- Ideally have a gender mix and comprise two members from the Nation of the programme being considered for accreditation with one member as an international representative from within our region.

The Chair of the Accreditation Panel will liaise with the IFLA APR Education Committee. This person will be well informed about the contemporary tertiary education environment in the respective Nation. The Chair will monitor all annual reviews conducted, with the objective of maximising uniformity of evaluation processes and applied performance measures across all accredited programmes; the reviews themselves will be evaluated by the Education Committee. Consistency and continuity of accreditation evaluations is to be ensured by a progressive turnover/replacement of panellists.

Before each visit, the Accreditation Panel members review previous Programme Annual Reports and other sources of information to assess actions and issues. The Accreditation Panel may request clarification and/or further evidence before or during the visit to determine the degree to which the programme is meeting the educational objectives described in Part A of this document. The programme may be asked to provide a written letter of comment about the programme, and about the graduates, by the relevant National association.

The accreditation procedure normally takes place over two days and includes:

- A formal review of a representative range of student work which will typically include examples from each of the years of the programme and across a range of courses to demonstrate assessment procedures and benchmark standards for the full range of achievement levels (i.e. excellent, good, pass, and fail grades);
- An inspection of facilities and resources;
- Interviews with staff and students;
- Interviews with graduates and employers; and
- A meeting with a senior tertiary Institute representative such as a Dean or an Assistant Vice-Chancellor to report on the Institute support for the programme and to provide an Institutional context for the programme.

After the visit, the Accreditation Panel will submit a draft report to the provider to enable them to check the accuracy of information. Once this has been completed, the panel submits its final report to the IFLA APR Education Committee, compiled using an agreed checklist to achieve consistency of information at both a regional and international level. The report to the Committee includes information about, and recommendations in regard to, the new or on-going accreditation status of the programme. The IFLA APR Council determines whether or not to accept a recommendation from the Education Committee based on the Accreditation Panel's report. A copy of the final report is sent to the provider. The IFLA APR Council may, however, initiate other visits from time to time as required to review progress on any matters identified for change in the final report.

This final report also becomes the basis for the education provider's annual report for the next five years.

### 2.3 Conflict of Interest

The IFLA APR's accreditation processes rely heavily on volunteers to serve on the Accreditation Panel, as well as a commitment from programme staff to fulfil the IFLA APR's education and accreditation requirements. The IFLA APR Council relies on the members of the panel to offer independent advice and professional leadership.

The panel members are required to have no close ties or alliances with the programme under consideration, or staff, to ensure an objective and open review of the programme. Any connections with the relevant education provider or other direct or indirect connections that could potentially be viewed as a conflict of interest or hindrance to participation must be fully disclosed and discussed with the Education Committee to ensure that there is no possible conflict or perception of conflict. It is acknowledged that programmes may rely upon local practitioners to contribute to individual courses. Those practitioners will have varying degrees of direct or indirect involvement with the programme, and so the IFLA APR acknowledges that these members will approach any roles or responsibilities as part of an accreditation visit in line with their professional ethical responsibilities as described in the relevant Nation's Code of Conduct.

#### 2.4 Review of panel membership nominations

The education provider shall be provided with the names of those nominated to form the Accreditation Panel before such membership is confirmed. The education provider shall have the right without prejudice to veto the nomination of former employees, without a requirement to justify that decision. A former employee of an education provider may not be a member of the review panel for the education provider if the review covers the period during which the former employee was working for that education provider.

### 3.0 Annual Report

Each year the Head of Programme submits a report to the IFLA APR Council via the Hon. Secretary who provides a copy for the chair of the Education Committee and requests an evaluation of the report from the Education Committee. This Annual Report is the central instrument of self-evaluation for continued professional accreditation purposes and should provide information on the programme using the supplied checklist in Appendix 2. The report should include an indication of future directions and any planned changes to the vision, objectives or content of the programme. The report is submitted to the Hon. Secretary by the end of February each year, reporting on the previous 12 months of the programme.

Most education providers will have Institutional mechanisms for regular review, monitoring and improvement of the performance of its programmes. Wherever practicable, these mechanisms should be utilised, rather than duplicated, in reporting on accreditation matters. These annual reports are confidential to each school, the IFLA APR Council and the Education Committee, and will not be distributed further, even in summary form, without the express permission of the school concerned. All programmes will receive notification from the Hon. Secretary acknowledging receipt of their annual report.

The IFLA APR Education Committee will provide feedback to the IFLA APR Council on the Annual Report. Any initiatives suggested by the school will be considered by the IFLA APR Council, which will advise (in writing) the Council's assessment of the implications of such initiatives on the continued achievement of accreditation requirements. Failure by an accredited programme to provide an annual report may result in reduction of the programme's accredited status to conditional accreditation (see below) and, if not supplied within three months from the date of such notice, in withdrawal of accreditation.

## 4.0 Accreditation

### 4.1 The Accreditation Process

Following the Accreditation Panel visit and receipt of recommendations, the IFLA APR Council will determine the on-going accreditation status of the programme and inform the Head of Programme of their determination within six weeks of the accreditation visit. Accreditation status for the programme will normally be granted for five years, until the next review by an Accreditation Panel, unless the annual report identifies extraordinary changes to the programme that would entail an earlier review. The prerogative remains with the Council to raise any serious issues or concerns directly with the programme at any time.

Following the notification of such issues the process is as follows:

- The Council would request the Chair of the Accreditation Panel to seek more information and make recommendations on any further actions; and
- If required, the Council may initiate a further Accreditation Panel visit to seek solutions and/or to make a recommendation on the on-going accreditation of the programme in question.

### 4.2 Conditional Accreditation

The IFLA APR may issue a warning to a programme that currently has full accreditation status that they are 'on notice' due to extraordinary circumstances such as non-compliance with agreed procedures or on-going evidence that indicates education objectives are not being met. In such cases the programme will be determined to have Conditional Accreditation with conditions that include a time limit for the stated causes for concern to be substantially reviewed and addressed.

The Council will require documentation that the stated conditions have been met before reinstating professional accreditation. Failure to comply with stated conditions may lead to withdrawal of professional accreditation of the programme.

### 4.3 Appeals

An education provider may appeal the adverse outcome of an accreditation review that results in refusal to accredit or withdrawal of accreditation or the imposition of conditions relating to accreditation. An appeal must be in writing stating fully the grounds on which the appeal is made and signed by the Dean or Head of Programme. Lodgement of an appeal should be made to the Hon. Secretary within four working weeks of formal notification of the IFLA APR Council's resolution on the Accreditation Panel's report and recommendations.

On receipt of an appeal, the IFLA APR Council will appoint an Appeals Panel with membership chosen under the same requirements that are in place to appoint an Accreditation Panel. The Appeals Panel will elect a Chair and a member of the IFLA APR Education Committee will act as Secretary to the Panel and coordinate its deliberations. The hearing of an appeal will take place at a time and place designated by the Panel Chair within 45 days of the receipt of the documented appeal. The hearing may be conducted via telephone conference or video link, subject to agreement by all parties. The Chair will preside at the hearing and rule on procedural matters.

The Appeals Panel may either affirm the Accreditation Panel's recommendation or advise the Council to reconsider the recommendation of the Accreditation Panel, giving reasons in either case. All decisions must be agreed by a majority of the Appeals Panel members. If the Appeals Panel affirms the

recommendations of the Accreditation Panel, there is no further remedy available to the school in question and the recommendation remains. If the appeal is upheld, the Appeals Panel will make recommendations to the Executive Council for further action. The cost of an appeal is on the same basis as the costs incurred for an accreditation visit.

#### 4.4 Provisional Accreditation

Where a new programme is being planned, or a substantial restructure of an existing programme or programmes is to be undertaken, the School may formally apply for IFLA APR accreditation in advance. In relation to new programmes, provisional accreditation may be granted, subject to available evidence, before the programme commences.

The IFLA APR requires schools to give sufficient notice of the proposed implementation of a new programme or a substantial restructure of an existing programme, to enable the Accreditation Panel to have time to advise on and respond to the new programme content or the restructured programme. The IFLA APR takes no responsibility for delay in granting accredited status if this process cannot be completed in time for the programme's introduction or if information requested is delayed and thus cannot be responded to in a timely manner.

The Accreditation Panel will make an assessment and recommend to the IFLA APR Council whether or not the programme should be provisionally accredited.

##### *4.4.1 Key Submission Stages:*

1. Notify the Hon. Secretary of the intention to alter the programme or to introduce a new programme with proposed timelines. (If a new programme is being proposed, the IFLA APR will assume that the provider has set up an industry group to assist in establishing the broad outline for the proposed programme.)
2. The tertiary provider will then prepare a formal submission to an Accreditation Panel, detailing how the proposed programme meets IFLA APR education standards.
3. The Accreditation Panel makes a recommendation to the Education committee which then considers this recommendation and makes its own recommendation to the IFLA APR Council.

##### *4.4.2 Provider Responsibility*

By agreeing to accept the IFLA APR's provisional accreditation for a new programme, the programme/school is agreeing to performance reviews, including annual reporting, which allows the IFLA APR to validate provisional accreditation given in advance.

While the programme is still being considered for Full Accreditation, the School shall not make any statements to students or potential students about the likelihood of the success of the application for full accreditation. For example, the school must not state that "IFLA APR Full Accreditation is pending", but the school can state that provisional accreditation has been granted.

Provisional accreditation may also be granted to existing programmes as an outcome of their first accreditation review, in cases where the programme meets many of the criteria for full accreditation but some substantial aspects need to be addressed to fully meet the global benchmark standard required by the IFLA APR. These aspects can be divided into required changes, strongly recommended changes, or optional programme enhancements:

- **Required changes** mean that a subsequent visit by the national representatives on the accreditation panel will find clear evidence presented that such changes have been made on a permanent basis as a formal and documented modification to the programme.
- **Strongly recommended changes** are those which the panel believes will strengthen the programme, but understands that resources may limit the extent to which changes are able to be made in the short term. However, there will be a demonstrated commitment from the provider to ensure that incremental change is able to be made such that any strongly recommended changes have a reasonable chance of implementation during the review period.
- **Optional programme enhancements** mean that as resources permit, the provider investigates the possibility of adding breadth or depth to the programme by considering these possible developments.

Conditions to be met prior to full accreditation being considered may include reference to facilities, staffing, or the curriculum.

#### 4.5 Variations

The IFLA APR Council reserves the right to vary its decisions on the accreditation of particular programmes on a case by case assessment of situations that may develop, in particular where such circumstances are not covered by these guidelines and policy documents.

#### 4.6 Accreditation Fees

An administrative fee is to be paid to the IFLA APR Treasurer by the Institution requesting accreditation, prior to the IFLA APR Council appointing an Accreditation Panel. An additional fee is payable if the Institution is requesting an accreditation review of more than one programme. The Institution will also pay for all reasonable travel costs, accommodation and meals for panel members during their visit. All travel will be at economy class at reasonable cost.

The IFLA APR Council appoints the Accreditation Panel who provide their time and professional expertise as a service to the profession, although a modest honorarium may be appropriate in some cases. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, there should be no further charges for Accreditation.

## **Appendix 1: Accreditation Process Summary**

### **Seeking Accreditation from IFLA APR**

This appendix summarises the process for an Institution to apply for accreditation of one or more of its programmes in landscape architecture. Programme visits are normally undertaken in April and/or October each year.

#### **A1.1 Initiation**

The Institution seeking accreditation from the IFLA APR for one or more of its programmes in landscape architecture should invite the Head of School to write to the IFLA APR Hon. Secretary listing the programme(s) for which it is requesting accreditation at least six months before the anticipated visit date. The request should refer to the official standing of the Institution within the formal education framework of the particular Nation in which the programme is being delivered.

This first step will apply to applications for both new and continuing accreditation.

#### **A1.2 IFLA APR Requirements**

The Hon. Secretary will respond to the request on behalf of Council, commenting on the possible timeline and noting the information which the Council will require in an initial disclosure statement at least three months prior to undertaking an accreditation visit. This information would normally include reference to programme characteristics to demonstrate that it generally meets the IFLA APR guidelines, the IFLA Charter for landscape architectural education and the IFLA Guidance Document for Recognition or Accreditation regarding level, length, staffing and resources. The Education Committee, on behalf of Council, would seek suggestions for suitably qualified panel members from the Head of School or National association according to sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 of these procedures, normally appointing a panel chair to be an international representative where possible.

#### **A1.3 Accreditation Panel Appointment, Information and Visit**

The Education Committee then appoints an Accreditation Panel, normally three months before the proposed visit date and confirms the information which needs to be provided by the Institution, summarised in Appendix 3 of this document. Appendix 3 refers to the matters normally considered during the visit, although the Institution can add to or suggest variations to these matters depending upon the unique circumstances of the Institution or programme.

#### **A1.4 Findings**

The Accreditation Panel would normally outline their initial views to senior staff at the conclusion of the visit and then later prepare a draft report and recommendation which is reviewed by the School to ensure the accuracy of the information included. The report is considered on behalf of the Council by the Education Committee which then makes a recommendation to the Council regarding the application(s) for programme accreditation. The Institution is advised of the outcome of their application as being provisional, conditional or full accreditation for a period not exceeding five years, or that their application has been declined.

Section 4.3 of this document outlines the procedure should an Institution disagree with the findings of the IFLA APR Council.

## **Appendix 2: The Initial Disclosure**

### **Key Required Information**

An initial disclosure statement should be provided to the IFLA APR at least three months prior to a proposed visit, to confirm compliance with the provisions of the IFLA APR Education Policy and Standards and Accreditation Procedure listed below:

- The Institution offering the programme is authorised to offer degrees by the appropriate National Government Ministry;
- The programme name includes the term "Landscape Architecture";
- There are adequate facilities including studio, library, study and exhibition spaces, and access to printing and digital technology;
- Academic staff have an active research programme which informs teaching;
- The programme maintains a regular audit and review system, including external contributors from landscape practice;
- The programme meets the staffing levels required at all times; and
- The Head of School (ideally) holds an academic appointment in landscape architecture.

The initial disclosure statement is normally accompanied by the fee to be paid to IFLA APR to conduct an accreditation review. This fee includes a payment to IFLA, an administration fee to IFLA APR, and a modest honorarium for the accreditation panel chair and panel members.

Please contact the secretariat for the most up to date information about fees.

## Appendix 3: The Accreditation Panel Visit Procedures

### Key Information

The following information should be provided as a self-review report to the Panel at least two months prior to its visit. This report is to demonstrate that the programme meets its educational objectives and delivers the Education Policy and Standards defined in Part A of this document, unless an Annual Report has been provided within 6 months of the proposed visit date.

- A description of the educational Institution, its standing Nationally and its authorisation to offer programmes of this nature, its relationship with the programme, and the involvement of staff with the profession, nationally and regionally;
- The academic rationale for the programme, including key objectives and strategies for achieving these objectives;
- The programme curriculum, including summaries of core course content;
- A matrix, mapping the competency standards (Part A, section 5.3) against the core courses of the programme, with a critical self-evaluation about how well each competency is being met;
- A graduate profile, summarising the key attributes of a programme graduate, normally structured as Knowledge, Skills and Values.
- Measures for obtaining student feedback and external consultation on the manner in which the programme is delivered;
- The profiles of all permanent academic staff, full-time and part-time, comprising their qualifications, teaching responsibilities, research activities, publications, professional engagement, and community involvement;
- Copies of academic handbooks, departmental plans, and reports relevant to the nature or status of the programme;
- An appraisal of the operation of the programme (if already holding accreditation), including reference to any reviews, major changes which have taken place including changes to courses, staffing or resourcing, special features of the programme, provision for audits and bench marking, relationships with other departments and faculties, relationships with other accredited programmes (such as comparative reviews) and likely future directions;
- Details of entry standards, criteria and methods of selection;
- Student enrolments, attrition, pass rates and grades for the previous five-year period;
- Staff/student ratios; and
- An outline of available resources such as non-academic technical and support staff, studio space, exhibition and model-making spaces, the library collection, access to digital technology, and any other relevant resources.

### Accreditation Timetable

The Institution should provide the Panel Chair with a draft timetable prior to the visit so that a final version can be confirmed at least four weeks in advance of the visit.

There is no prescriptive format, but the schedule should allow for a review of key programme criteria as well as:

- An introductory meeting with the Head of Programme and senior members of staff for the Panel Chair to provide an overview of the process and raise any issues identified in the Annual Report or self-review, and for the Head of Programme to provide an overview and comment



on any outstanding points including an update on programme changes since the last Accreditation report if continuing accreditation is sought; and

- A de-brief with the Head of Programme and senior staff, with a verbal summary from the Panel Chair of the draft findings (unless the Panel requires further material before confirming those provisional findings in which case it may withhold comment).

The final formal recommendation is made by the IFLA APR Council after consideration of a recommendation from the Education Committee which will review the Accreditation Panel report. The formal notification of the Council's resolution on the Education Committee's recommendation is sent to the Head of Programme, who will have four working weeks to respond to any issues raised, if any.

## **The Accreditation Visit**

### *Key Elements*

- An introductory discussion with the Head of Programme and senior members of staff;
- An review of student work;
- An inspection of the school facilities both in use and when not being used, including building accommodation, range of equipment and student resource material;
- Discussion with both full-time and part-time teaching staff as a group;
- Discussion with landscape practitioners who teach into studio or lecture classes;
- Discussion with students;
- Where possible, discussion with recent graduates;
- Where possible, discussion with representatives from landscape practice who employ programme graduates; and
- A meeting with the Head of the Programme and Faculty Dean or those holding equivalent positions.

### *Resources during the visit*

- The use of a lockable meeting room for the duration of the visit;
- Access to tea and coffee facilities during meeting breaks, with lunch provided (which may be shared at different times with staff, student or graduate representatives); and
- Easy and unlimited access over the two days of the visit to programme resources and examples of student work completed during the previous 12 months. Student work can be provided in digital form well ahead of the accreditation visit, as well as having a selection of hard copy work available to the panel during their visit. The panel expects to see:
  - Work from all years arranged to demonstrate development by students over the period of the programme, including all core courses, a range of electives and examples of portfolios from the final year of the programme that achieved a range of results, including excellent, good, competent and fail grades.
  - All course outlines, assignments and assessment criteria (as used by both examiners and students) to demonstrate the Institution's assessment procedures and benchmarking standards.
  - Mapping of courses in the programme cross-referenced against the IFLA APR Education Standards in a matrix table, to assist the Accreditation Panel to review student work in a methodical and efficient manner.

### *Meetings during the visit*

- A meeting with staff should include both full time and part time staff and any practicing landscape architects who regularly teach into studio or lecture classes, held in a closed session;
- A meeting with students without staff present, as representative as possible of the different years to allow the panel to obtain a comprehensive overview of the student experience

(students are to be briefed in advance by the programme staff as to the role of the Accreditation Panel's work and the IFLA APR Accreditation processes);

- A meeting with a range of recent graduates of the programme from the five-year accreditation period, including a range of work types such as a sole practice, small and large practices, and a local, regional or central Government department; and
- Ideally, a meeting with those employing programme graduates across the same sectors.

## **Appendix 4: Annual Report Checklist**

### **Contents**

This appendix indicates the structure and content that is likely to be appropriate for an annual report. Much of the content will remain constant from year to year unless there are major changes in either the programme or the Institution providing the programme. The normal annual task is therefore limited to dealing with change in detail from year to year. Provided that the appropriate base data has been established and the Education Committee maintains familiarity with the operation of the programme, a typical Annual Report would normally be less than 10 –15 A4 pages. The suggested structure follows:

#### **Executive summary**

- Programme title, type and length
- Standing of the programme, status of the education provider
- Accredited degrees (full, conditional or provisional)
- Key points (highlighting contemporary changes, issues, highlights)

#### **Report focus and scope**

#### **Programme vision and objectives**

- Vision
- Objectives
- Graduate profile(s)

#### **Summary analysis programme/student indicators**

- Quality management
- Student numbers, retention and programme completions
- Student awards
- Graduate destination survey outcomes
- Teaching quality (awards, promotions, professional development)
- Student evaluations of teaching

#### **Responses to previous feedback from the APR Council**

#### **Contemporary issues and developments**

- Current academic staff profile, noting changes from previous reports
- Staffing issues
- Accommodation and facilities
- Relationship with the profession, locally and Nationally

#### **Actions and programme improvements**

- Programme improvements, reviews, reorganisation
- Introduction of new programmes, professional development courses etc.
- Community service
- Staff activities, research, grants, and publications.

#### **Current academic curriculum synopsis**

- Course codes and names by level and programme year

#### **Accreditation status**

- Rationale for updating the accreditation status of the programme (if appropriate)