



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.