

**The National Architectural
Accrediting Board**

1998 Guide to Student Performance Criteria

For the Faculty and Students of Professional Degree Programs in Architecture

Preface

An Overview of the Guide

This guide is written expressly for the faculty and students of professional degree programs in architecture. It begins with a brief overview of the parameters for accrediting professional degree programs, including a list of the twelve conditions your program must address to maintain its accreditation. However, the guide's primary purpose is to inform you about one of these conditions, namely the student performance criteria. These areas of every student must demonstrate who graduates from an accredited architecture program. The criteria define the minimum requirements for your professional education in architecture.

An Overview of NAAB Accreditation

The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) is the sole agency authorized to accredit US professional degree programs in architecture. Since most state registration boards in the United States require any applicant for licensure to have graduated from a NAAB-accredited program, obtaining such a degree is an essential aspect of preparing for the professional practice of architecture. While graduation from a NAAB-accredited program does not assure registration, the accrediting process is intended to verify that each accredited program substantially meets those standards that, as a whole, comprise an appropriate education for an architect.

The curriculum of a NAAB-accredited program includes general studies, professional studies, and electives, which together comprise a liberal education in architecture. The curriculum ensures that graduates will be technically competent, critical thinkers who are capable of defining multiple career paths within a changing societal context. More specifically, the NAAB requires an accredited program to produce graduates who: are competent in a range of intellectual, spatial, technical, and interpersonal skills; understand the historical, sociocultural, and environmental context of architecture; are able to solve architectural design problems, including the integration of technical systems and health and safety requirements; and comprehend architects' roles and responsibilities in society.

Although the NAAB recognizes that the areas and levels of excellence will vary among programs, all accredited professional degree programs must demonstrate compliance with each of the following twelve NAAB Conditions:

- 1 Program Response to the NAAB Perspectives**
 - 1.1 Architecture Education and the Academic Context
 - 1.2 Architecture Education and the Students
 - 1.3 Architecture Education and Registration
 - 1.4 Architecture Education and the Profession
 - 1.5 Architecture Education and Society
- 2 Program Self-assessment**
- 3 Public Information**
- 4 Social Equality**
- 5 Human Resources**
- 6 Human Resource Development**
- 7 Physical Resources**
- 8 Information Resources**
- 9 Financial Resources**
- 10 Administrative Structure**
- 11 Professional Degrees and Curriculum**
- 12 Student Performance Criteria**

The last condition, Student Performance Criteria, is presented in this guide exactly as it appears in the *1998 Conditions and Procedures*, which specifies in detail the requirements of accreditation.

**Requirements
for Presenting
Student Work**

During an accreditation site visit, a lockable, reasonably soundproof room must be set up in your school building so that the visiting team can review and discuss the program's documentation in confidence. Prior to the site visit, the program head usually discusses with the team chair the content and organization of the team room, which must contain fully labeled and easily accessible exhibits of student work. Exhibits must include examples of both minimum pass and high achievement, be of sufficient quantity to ensure that all graduates are meeting the performance criteria, have been executed since the previous site visit, and span no less than a single academic year. If more than one professional degree program is being reviewed, student work from each program must be clearly distinguishable. While a range of work must be displayed for each required course, it is not necessary to present the complete output of a studio, lecture, or seminar.

The means of presenting student work is at your program's discretion, but each piece must be cross-referenced to the course matrix and criteria it addresses, contain the date, and indicate its assessment from minimum to high achievement. Exhibits in spaces outside the team room can augment, but not substitute for, the team room exhibits; they should be identified in a manner that is consistent with the team room displays, except that indications of minimum and high pass may be omitted in public displays. Class assignments must be available for all projects presented, which ideally will furnish examples by several different students or teams.

**Learning
More About
Accreditation**

For more information about the accrediting process, faculty and students should read the *1998 Conditions and Procedures*, referred to as the *C&P*. You may also be interested in reviewing your program's most recent *Architecture Program Report*, referred to as the *APR*, *Visiting Report*, referred to as the *VTR*, and the *Annual Reports*, referred to as the *ARs*. All these documents can be found in your program's library.

Student Performance Criteria

The program must ensure that all its graduates possess the skills and knowledge defined by the performance criteria set out below, which constitute the minimum requirements for meeting the demands of an internship leading to registration for practice.

The program must provide evidence that all its graduates have satisfied each criterion through required course work. If transfer credits are granted for courses taken at other institutions, evidence must be provided that the courses are comparable to those offered in the program.

The list of performance criteria begins with fundamental skills and knowledge, continues with technical skills and knowledge, and concludes with a focus on practice and societal roles. This sequence is intended to foster an integrated approach to learning that cuts across subject categories. These criteria encompass three levels of accomplishment.¹

Awareness: familiarity with specific information, including facts, definitions, concepts, rules, methods, processes, or settings. Students can correctly recall information without necessarily being able to paraphrase or summarize it.

Understanding: assimilation and comprehension of information. Students can correctly paraphrase or summarize information without necessarily being able to relate it to other material or see its fullest implications.

¹ As an example of how the team would approach these levels of accomplishment, consider the area of environmental conservation. Possible levels of accomplishment in this area are

- *Awareness:* the capacity to correctly recall a basic definition of environmental conservation;
- *Understanding:* the capacity to correctly paraphrase or summarize information about such principles of environmental conservation as minimizing building footprints, reusing and recycling buildings, avoiding the use of non-renewable resources, and avoiding materials that cannot be recycled or recovered; and
- *Ability:* the capacity to correctly apply these principles in the resolution of a design project.

The NAAB criterion on environmental conservation requires only that students demonstrate “understanding.”

Ability: skill in relating specific information to the accomplishment of tasks. Students can correctly select the information that is appropriate to a situation and apply it to the solution of specific problems.

The NAAB intends to establish performance criteria that assist programs in preparing students for the broad requirements of the profession, while also encouraging educational practices suited to the circumstances of particular programs. In addition to assessing whether student performance meets the expectations of professional education outlined by the criteria, the visiting team will also assess performance in relation to the program's stated curricular goals and content. While the NAAB stipulates the student performance criteria that must be satisfied, it specifies neither the educational programs nor the forms of student work that may serve as evidence of having satisfied these criteria. Programs are therefore encouraged to develop unique learning and teaching strategies, methods, and materials to satisfy these criteria. The NAAB will consider innovative methods for satisfying the criteria, provided the program has a formal evaluation process for assessing student achievement of these criteria and documents the results.

The *APR* must include the following information:

- An overview of the program's curricular goals and content
- A graphic matrix that cross-references each required course with the performance criterion(a) it fulfills.

For the purposes of accreditation, graduating students must demonstrate awareness, understanding, or ability in the following areas:

1 Verbal and Writing Skills

Ability to speak and write effectively on subject matter contained in the professional curriculum

2 Graphic Skills

Ability to employ appropriate representational media, including computer technology, to convey essential formal elements at each stage of the programming and design process

3 Research Skills

Ability to employ basic methods of data collection and analysis to inform all aspects of the programming and design process

4 Critical Thinking Skills

Ability to make a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of a building, building complex, or urban space

5 Fundamental Design Skills

Ability to apply basic organizational, spatial, structural, and constructional principles to the conception and development of interior and exterior spaces, building elements, and components

6 Collaborative Skills

Ability to identify and assume divergent roles that maximize individual talents, and to cooperate with other students when working as members of a design team and in other settings

7 Human Behavior

Awareness of the theories and methods of inquiry that seek to clarify the relationships between human behavior and the physical environment

8 Human Diversity

Awareness of the diversity of needs, values, behavioral norms, and social and spatial patterns that characterize different cultures, and the implications of this diversity for the societal roles and responsibilities of architects

9 Use of Precedents

Ability to provide a coherent rationale for the programmatic and formal precedents employed in the conceptualization and development of architecture and urban design projects

10 Western Traditions

Understanding of the Western architectural canons and traditions in architecture, landscape, and urban design, as well as the climatic, technological, socioeconomic, and other cultural factors that have shaped and sustained them

11 Non-Western Traditions

Awareness of the parallel and divergent canons and traditions of architecture and urban design in the non-Western world

12 National and Regional Traditions

Understanding of the national traditions and the local regional heritage in architecture, landscape, and urban design, including vernacular traditions

13 Environmental Conservation

Understanding of the basic principles of ecology and architects' responsibilities with respect to environmental and resource conservation in architecture and urban design

14 Accessibility

Ability to design both site and building to accommodate individuals with varying physical abilities

15 Site Conditions

Ability to respond to natural and built site characteristics in the development of a program and design of a project

16 Formal Ordering Systems

Understanding of the fundamentals of visual perception and the principles and systems of order that inform two- and three-dimensional design, architectural composition, and urban design

17 Structural Systems

Understanding of the principles of structural behavior in withstanding gravity and lateral forces, and the evolution, range, and appropriate applications of contemporary structural systems

18 Environmental Systems

Understanding of the basic principles that inform the design of environmental systems, including acoustics, lighting and climate modification systems, and energy use

19 Life-Safety Systems

Understanding of the basic principles that inform the design and selection of life-safety systems in buildings and their subsystems

20 Building Envelope Systems

Understanding of the basic principles that inform the design of building envelope systems

21 Building Service Systems

Understanding of the basic principles that inform the design of building service systems, including plumbing, electrical, vertical transportation, communication, security, and fire protection systems

22 Building Systems Integration

Ability to assess, select, and integrate structural systems, environmental systems, life-safety systems, building envelope systems, and building service systems into building design

23 Legal Responsibilities

Understanding of architects' legal responsibilities with respect to public health, safety, and welfare; property rights; zoning and subdivision ordinances; building codes; accessibility and other factors affecting building design, construction, and architecture practice

24 Building Code Compliance

Understanding of the codes, regulations, and standards applicable to a given site and building design, including occupancy classifications, allowable building heights and areas, allowable construction types, separation requirements, occupancy requirements, means of egress, fire protection, and structure

25 Building Materials and Assemblies

Understanding of the principles, conventions, standards, applications, and restrictions pertaining to the manufacture and use of construction materials, components, and assemblies

26 Building Economics and Cost Control

Awareness of the fundamentals of development financing, building economics, and construction cost control within the framework of a design project

27 Detailed Design Development

Ability to assess, select, configure, and detail as an integral part of the design appropriate combinations of building materials, components, and assemblies to satisfy the requirements of building programs

28 Technical Documentation

Ability to make technically precise descriptions and documentation of a proposed design for purposes of review and construction

29 Comprehensive Design

Ability to produce an architecture project informed by a comprehensive program, from schematic design through the detailed development of programmatic spaces, structural and environmental systems, life-safety provisions, wall sections, and building assemblies, as may be appropriate; and to assess the completed project with respect to the program's design criteria

30 Program Preparation

Ability to assemble a comprehensive program for an architecture project, including an assessment of client and user needs, a critical review of appropriate precedents, an inventory of space and equipment requirements, an analysis of site conditions, a review of the relevant laws and standards and an assessment of their implications for the project, and a definition of site selection and design assessment criteria

31 The Legal Context of Architecture Practice

Awareness of the evolving legal context within which architects practice, and of the laws pertaining to professional registration, professional service contracts, and the formation of design firms and related legal entities

32 Practice Organization Management

Awareness of the basic principles of office organization, business planning, marketing, negotiation, financial management, and leadership, as they apply to the practice of architecture

33 Contracts and Documentation

Awareness of the different methods of project delivery, the corresponding forms of service contracts, and the types of documentation required to render competent and responsible professional service

34 Professional Internship

Understanding of the role of internship in professional development, and the reciprocal rights and responsibilities of interns and employers

35 Architects' Leadership Roles

Awareness of architects' leadership roles from project inception, design, and design development to contract administration, including the selection and coordination of allied disciplines, post-occupancy evaluation, and facility management

36 The Context of Architecture

Understanding of the shifts which occur—and have occurred—in the social, political, technological, ecological, and economic factors that shape the practice of architecture

37 Ethics and Professional Judgment

Awareness of the ethical issues involved in the formation of professional judgments in architecture design and practice

“Serving the educational needs of every student, and the professions they will enter, must remain a top priority in architecture education, but such private concerns, while critically important, are not sufficient. The academic and professional lives of architects must also be grounded in public purpose. Harking back to the three ancient principles of Vitruvius—firmness, commodity, and delight—the education of architects should prepare future practitioners dedicated to building technically sound, visibly pleasing, and useful structures for clients and users, and equally, to making life more comfortable, pleasurable, secure, and productive for all citizens, including the disenfranchised in our society. The scholarly activities of both faculty and students should relate not only to private goals and agendas, but to matters of consequence to the profession, and beyond that, to society as a whole. No less important than acquiring design skills, technical competence, and business judgment, education must begin to help students develop the ethical grounding, the intellectual roundedness, and the maturity to weigh the impact of their work on present users and future generations.”

–Ernest L. Boyer and Lee D. Mitgang (1996).

Building Community: A New Future for Architecture Education and Practice.

Princeton: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, p.145.

2002 Addendum

to the

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(Please note that material omitted from the 1998 Guide to Student Performance Criteria is enclosed in brackets; text added is in boldface type.)

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