



IFLA/UNESCO CHARTER FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

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Glossary of Terms used in the Charter

Landscape: 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)

Cultural landscapes: Landscapes that embrace the diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment. These include designed, organically evolved and associative landscapes. (as defined by ICOMOS ISC and the UNESCO World Heritage Convention)

Landscape architecture: The profession that applies aesthetic and scientific principles to the design, planning, analysis and management of both natural and built environments.

Sustainable development: A pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while preserving environmental values for both their own sake and to meet human needs for both present and future generations.

International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA): IFLA is a democratic non-profit, non-governmental organization that promotes education and practice in sustainable landscape design, planning and management.

Introduction

Our world presents complex challenges with respect to accommodating development and preventing the all too frequent ecological, social and functional degradation of human settlements and regional landscapes. The design and planning of landscapes has a long history and contemporary practice is concerned with issues facing society such as climate change, quality of life at the community level, and sustainable resource use. As landscape architects, we are concerned with the future development, management and protection of our landscapes and believe that sustainable development and human well-being are fundamental to our work. 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.

Educational qualifications to practice in the field of landscape architecture are to be founded on a vision that is sensitive to the diverse needs of society as reflected below:

- To improve the quality of life for communities and all the inhabitants and users.
- To recognize and nurture cultural diversity and biodiversity.
- To add social and cultural value to sites and outdoor public space.
- To promote an approach to landscape planning and design interventions which enhances social sustainability, cultural and aesthetic needs, and the physical requirements of people.
- To employ an ecological approach to land use planning, design and landscape regeneration, that ensures sustainable development of the built environment through the appropriate integration of biological, land, water and atmospheric systems.
- To recognize the role of public realm landscape as a place for social and cultural expression interchange and make these accessible to all individuals and communities.
- To promote equity through work with disadvantaged groups or communities and the development of solutions that are affordable and accessible to the broad population.

Educational Objectives

Landscape architecture incorporates architectural, artistic, ecological, engineering and scientific principles, and therefore landscape architectural education should build the capacity to conceptualize, coordinate and execute integral designs rooted in human traditions and the knowledge of natural and human-made systems.

1. Landscape architecture is an interdisciplinary field that comprises several major components including the humanities, social and natural sciences, technology and the creative arts. Education should include training in the physical design of landscapes; landscape studies that incorporate the assessment, planning, and management of landscapes; and landscape research.
2. The educational programmes leading to formal qualifications and permitting professionals to practice in both the private, public and academic sectors is to be at university level with landscape architecture as the principal subject.
3. The landscape architect does not work alone and students must be instilled with the ability and desire to work on interdisciplinary teams, often in a leadership role. Community outreach and service learning in multicultural contexts are encouraged. The importance of local knowledge (citizens, decision-makers or experts) and its contribution to the design process is essential.
4. Educational programs should promote landscape architectural design which considers the cost of future maintenance, life-cycle costing and site sustainability.
5. Landscape architectural students should be made critically aware of the political and financial motivations behind clients' needs within the context of public policy and the environment in order to foster an ethical framework for decision making.
6. Methods of education and training for landscape architects are varied and this diversity is encouraged to meet new challenges facing society and recognize local culture.
7. In order to benefit from the wide variety of teaching methods, exchange programmes for teachers, and students at advanced levels is desirable. Regional and international student design competitions, awards and exhibitions are to be supported by schools and the profession.
8. Systems for continuing education must be set up for landscape architects; landscape architectural education should never be considered as a closed process.
9. The increasing mobility of landscape architects between the different countries calls for a mutual recognition or validation of individual diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualification.

Criteria for Landscape Architecture Education

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, the following criteria should be considered:

1. Design project work must be a synthesis of acquired knowledge and skills. The landscape architectural curriculum should include the subjects referred to under the educational objectives of this Charter. Individual studio project work with direct teacher/student dialogue must form a substantial part of the teaching and learning process. Landscape architectural education involves the acquisition of knowledge and skills within the following areas:
 - History of cultural form and an understanding of design as a social art
 - Social, political, economic and natural systems
 - Natural sciences such as geology, hydrology and biology.
 - Plant material and horticultural applications
 - Site engineering including materials, methods, technologies, construction documentation and administration, and applications
 - Theory and methodologies in design, planning and research
 - Landscape design, management, planning and science at all scales and applications
 - Ecological studies and principles of sustainability
 - Information technology and computer applications
 - Public policy and regulation
 - Communications and public facilitation
 - Ethics and values related to the profession

Additional knowledge and skills may be required at a regional or local level.

2. The balanced acquisition of knowledge and skills outlined above requires a long period of maturation. The education and training of landscape architects encompasses both the academic and the post-graduate/professional elements. First professional degrees in landscape architecture may be offered at the undergraduate or the graduate levels. An undergraduate degree is generally not be less than four years of full-time studies in a university or an equivalent institution. Graduates from three year programmes are required to undergo further training and development before being fully qualified by the profession. The pathway to full professional status requires continuing education after graduation and is based on development and mentoring in order to fully prepare the graduate for professional life. A graduate degree will normally require a minimum of two years of full time study or for an acceptable period on a part time basis. Entrance into graduate programmes will require an undergraduate university degree in landscape architecture or other fields accepted by the institution. This diversity serves to accommodate local practice needs, research and/or specialization. Research degrees may also be offered at the PhD level.
3. Each teaching institution must adjust the number of students according to its teaching capacity. Criteria for the selection of students shall be in relation to the aptitudes required for a successful training in landscape architecture and will be applied by means of an appropriate selection process organized by the schools at the point of entry in the programme.
4. Adequate studios, facilities for research, advanced studies, information and data exchange for new technologies should be provided at schools of landscape architecture. Computer technology and the development of specialized software should be incorporated into appropriate aspects of landscape architectural education.
5. Continuous interaction between practice and teaching of landscape architecture must be encouraged and protected.
6. Research should be regarded as an inherent activity of for academic staff in landscape architectural programmes. Landscape architectural research may be founded on project work, methodologies, technologies, ecological and social issues, and other relevant topics. Peer-review is to be encouraged to evaluate landscape architectural research and publication.
7. Educational institutions are advised to create, with the support of the profession, accreditation systems for self-evaluation and peer-review conducted at regular intervals. Included in the review panel should be teachers from other schools, practicing landscape architects and others.

Conclusion

This Charter was created on the initiative of IFLA and with input from UNESCO, and is intended to serve as a guide for landscape architectural schools on the international and national levels. It is our intent that this Charter will assist in the creation of a network of landscape architectural education opportunities to advance the quality of environmental design and planning world-wide.