

# Landscape certification/Standardization.

Draft proposals for IFLA new project

**Aim:** Creating a new system of International Certification/Standardization in landscape architecture in accordance to ISO guidance and rules and UN ILO profession description.

**Objective:** There is a big demand in some countries like Italy, Spain, Russia and others to protect title of the profession “Landscape Architecture”, where legally it is not possible due to specific conditions in every country (no title acts, no existence of the profession, weakness of landscape professional associations etc.). In this case, defining International standards for Professional practice, implementation of landscape works, etc would allow National Associations to act as Accredited bodies within this international system. This could be landscape architecture analogue to ISO 9001:2000, which is widely used also in landscape design offices worldwide.

**ISO:** ISO, the International Organization for Standardization, is a network of the national standards institutes of 157 countries, on the basis of one member per country, with a Central Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland, that coordinates the system. ISO is a non-governmental organization: its members are not, as is the case in the United Nations system, delegations of national governments. Nevertheless, ISO occupies a special position between the public and private sectors. This is because, on the one hand, many of its member institutes are part of the governmental structure of their countries, or are mandated by their government. On the other hand, other members have their roots uniquely in the private sector, having been set up by national partnerships of industry associations. This is an idea and should be explored in detail.

<http://www.iso.org/iso/home.htm>

**Current status:**

Surprisingly, there is currently one International Standard, related to “landscape” (found through the search within ISO web site) which is **ISO 11091:1994 Construction drawings -- Landscape drawing practice**, which Establishes general rules and specifies graphical symbols and simplified representations for landscape drawing practice. The graphical symbols and simplified representations are jointly referred to as conventions. The conventions given in International Standards which are applicable to landscape drawings are presented in annex A.

[http://www.iso.org/iso/iso\\_catalogue/catalogue\\_tc/catalogue\\_detail.htm?csnumber=19080](http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=19080)

## Key Outcomes

- There is interest in the concept of pursuing a global certification standard. This was most recently expressed at the 2013 IFLA World Council's professional practice breakout session. The need for greater professional recognition and mobility are important drivers.
- IFLA's new Professional Practice and Policy Committee would provide a ready point of organizational connection and support to such a standard.
- CLARB's 40 years of experience in establishing, evaluating and supporting the maintenance of standards of competence in America and Canada may provide a useful base of knowledge and experience.
- Having an ISO (International Standards Organization) endorsed standard would provide important credibility and potentially facilitate adoption. There is benefit in exploring this further.
- There are many different approaches to establishing a standard. All have advantages and disadvantages. For example, doing a standard from the ground up may be long, slow and expensive. Taking a "top down" approach may be fast but may be short on engagement and "ownership." A hybrid approach may be to build upon the existing knowledge base to determine the "gap" and identify the desired core standard.
- A short term goal might be to prepare a short proposal for review and discussion at the upcoming IFLA World Council in Buenos Aires in June 2014.
- With respect to the proposal we want to be sensitive to countries that have well-established professional systems (e.g. U.K, Germany, and Australia to name a few).

## North American Licensure/Registration System

The basic standard of competence for professional practice in North America is licensure/registration (both terms are used) and 53 jurisdictions share this standard, which is based on three requirements:

- Education. Typically a first professional degree from an accredited institution.
- Experience. Usually three years of diversified experience under a licensed landscape architect.
- Examination. Passage of the Landscape Architect Registration Exam (L.A.R.E.)

While there is some variation in the education and experience that individual jurisdictions will accept, all require completion of the L.A.R.E. The exam provides a defensible demonstration of a profession's knowledge, skills and abilities and controls for variances in education and experience and is foundational to our reciprocity system.

Specific licensure/registration requirements are established by the states/provinces in keeping with the U.S. and Canadian concept of federalism. For example, some jurisdictions require a supplemental exam on local conditions or regulations.

## The Landscape Architect Registration Exam

The exam is made up of four "domain" areas that map to current practice, as determined by formal research and refined and prioritized by a diverse group of experienced landscape architects:

- Project and construction administration
- Inventory and analysis
- Design
- Grading, drainage and construction documentation

In keeping with best practices within the professional testing industry (and mirroring what is done in the architecture and engineering profession) CLARB retains a psychometric expert to conduct a practice analysis every five to seven years. This consists of a formal survey of licensed and unlicensed practitioners, educators, and students within the U.S. and Canada to determine what landscape architects are doing from a functional perspective.

This data is rigorously analyzed by landscape architects to determine frequency with which tasks are performed, their relative importance to health, safety and welfare, and what skills are needed at the time of initial licensure. From this work a benchmark for minimal competence is developed and a content blueprint is developed to support development of test questions or “items.”

Teams of landscape architects, with the guidance of a psychometrician, then develop test items, which are then pre-tested and analyzed for reliability and effectiveness. Substandard items are discarded and the remaining items are assembled to create the actual exam.

### **Initial Licensure**

Once the aforementioned requirements are met, the candidate applies to a jurisdiction. The CLARB Council Record, a secure, verified electronic record of one’s professional history, simplifies and streamlines the application process by organizing candidate information in a consistent format that can be transferred via the web. Individual jurisdictions approve licenses either on a rolling basis or at regular intervals (e.g. monthly or quarterly).

### **Reciprocal Licensure (Mobility)**

With a CLARB Council Record, once a licensee has met education, experience, and examination standards, he or she becomes “CLARB Certified” and receives the organization’s recommendation for approval without further review. The candidate then makes application to the desired jurisdiction and approval follows.

CLARB Certification was created to make the process of mobility easier and simpler for the practitioner and licensure board. It is essentially a CLARB standard that is based on the most widely accepted reciprocity requirements of member boards. CLARB Certification is the “gold standard” for qualification for reciprocal licensure in the U.S. and Canada and speeds up the process of reciprocity requests. It is also seen by many boards and employers as conveying that a practitioner is qualified to work in multiple jurisdictions.

### **Maintenance of Licensure**

Renewing a license is a fairly simple process that requires payment of fees and, in 36 jurisdictions, demonstration of satisfactory completion of approved continuing education.