

# EDUCATION STANDARDS



Australian Institute  
of Landscape Architects <sup>®</sup>

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All queries on National Policy and Procedures should be directed to the AILA's CEO.

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## Defining the Accreditation Standards

Each of the Accreditation Standards provides the description of one of the essential conditions that a program must meet to be accredited.

A program must provide adequate evidence that each standard has been met in order to obtain and maintain accreditation.

Each standard has performance criteria statements that define the components needed to satisfy the related standard.

To be accredited, a program must provide evidence that:

1. Criteria have been met, or;
2. Progress towards meeting the criteria has been made, or ;
3. Alternative criteria have been used to meet the standard.

## Key Terminology

**Program:** The collection of courses forming the degree or combination of degrees leading to registration.

**Program Head/Director:** The academic responsible for management and academic leadership of the program.

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

**Course outline:** The written description of the scope, inclusions, timetable or learning schedule, assessment criteria, and expectations of students completing the course.

**Curriculum:** The planned and documented learning experiences of the students in the program, includes a description of the program plus the course outlines for all courses in the program.

**C - #: Competency/Criteria:** Each criterion requires qualitative evidence, and in some cases also quantitative evidence, to demonstrate an acceptable level of performance. Such performance is to be demonstrated by a combination of:

- *Student work outcomes;*
- *Documented of curriculum content;*
- *Review of documentation of internal reviews;*
- *Interviews with the students, lecturers and administrator by the review panel;*
- *Documented assessment events;*
- *Demonstrated active participation leading to documented outcomes;*
- *Other documented evidence-based indicators.*

## Accreditation Standards

### 1 **Standard One** – Program Mission and Objectives

The program has a clearly defined mission statement supported by goals and objectives appropriate to and aligned with the Australian profession of landscape architecture and shall demonstrate progress towards their attainment.

The program literature, website, and other public information accurately and clearly reflect the program's aims and objectives.

#### *Performance Criteria*

- C-1. The program has a clearly stated mission reflecting the purpose and values of the program;
- C-2. The program aims and objectives are clearly and unambiguously stated;
- C-3. Program aims are consistent with the objectives of profession of Landscape Architecture and with the AILA's policies;
- C-4. Public program information and marketing, particularly web based material, clearly and accurately promote the profession of Landscape Architecture, its values and goals and its current directions;
- C-5. Program material clearly outlines the career paths being targeted and which discipline area(s) of the profession have been identified as the core of the program;
- C-6. Public program material is clearly and unambiguously states which programs are accredited by the AILA;
- C-7. The published curriculum details a sequence and emphasis on its individual courses that relate to the program objectives.

## 2 **Standard Two** – Governance and Administration

### 2.1 *Authority and Resources*

The program has the authority and resources to achieve its educational objectives.

#### *Performance Criteria*

- C-8. Where the program is a stand alone Landscape Architecture program, the program is structured as a discrete professional program with the authority, leadership and adequate control of resources;
- Where the program has multiple exits (into other allied professional careers, eg planning), the Landscape Architecture stream must be structured as a discrete professional program with the authority, leadership and adequate control of resources;
- C-9. The discipline leadership and resource management of accredited programs and streams is divested to persons holding relevant landscape architecture qualifications;
- C-10. The program is adequately resourced to meet program objectives, provide for academic staff development, support for academic research and to provide student support.

### 2.2 *Academic Staff*

Research and publication are integral activities of an accredited Landscape Architecture program.

Sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified and experienced academic staff are employed to provide the appropriate level of academic expertise across all aspects of the teaching and management of the program, including active engagement with the profession.

Where appropriate the program is encouraged and supported to develop partnerships with the profession to undertake research.

#### *Performance Criteria*

- C-11. Landscape Architecture and other academic staff have appropriate mix of tertiary qualifications and/or professional experience in the same field as the courses for which they have primary responsibility;
- C-12. The program must employ at least one academic staff member on a permanent or long-term contract basis per year of full-time program; or to ensure that at least 50% of the face-to-face teaching hours in the program is carried out by permanent or long-term contracted academic staff;\*
- C-13. The teacher: student ratio in studios and tutorials is not greater than 1:17; i.e. one equivalent full-time academic staff : seventeen equivalent full-time students; \*
- C-14. There is a demonstrated commitment to involve practising professionals with appropriate expertise in the program.

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\* For Accreditation purposes the AILA would require the accredited program

1. to supply annually the University Policies relevant to staffing of the program (or web link to same),
2. to demonstrate how the program is working to reach the target of having the stated staffing ratios for studios
3. to demonstrate how the program is maintaining a satisfactory level of permanent/long term contract Landscape Architecture staffing across the program.

The above evidence would form the basis of discussions with the AILA annually (through the local committee) and with the national panel to identify that the program is being staffed to a level acceptable to the AILA (in accordance with policy directions) and in line with addressing the targets as stated.

### 3 Standard Three – Professional Curriculum

#### *Standard*

The curriculum includes the core knowledge, skills, and applications of Landscape Architecture, with a designed structure to allow for progression, integration, and variety.

#### 3.1 Coursework inclusions

##### *Performance Criteria*

- C-15. The curriculum addresses the program's mission, goals and objectives;
- C-16. The knowledge, skills, abilities and values of the program are systematically arranged throughout courses and course combinations to ensure that all graduates achieve at least the expected minimum standards and to maximise integration of subject areas, allow flexibility and provide a systematic framework of courses;
- C-17. The graduate attributes align with the AILA policy directions and code of conduct;
- C-18. The curriculum has a stated core within the discipline areas of Landscape Architecture;
- C-19. Students receive training and experience in scholarly research methods and report writing;
- C-20. The program encourages student and staff exchanges between universities and other organisations;
- C-21. Programs are to actively encourage or to arrange for students to gain significant practical experience, mentorship, internship and/or practicum in the final years of the course through placements in offices (private and public sector); programs are to provide formal guidance and to monitor the placements to ensure the experience is relevant to the program outcomes;
- C-22. Students have opportunities to engage in regular multi-disciplinary or cross-disciplinary studies;
- C-23. Students have opportunities to engage in an organised and complimentary study exchange scheme.

#### 3.2 Education Outcomes

A program offers students education opportunities sufficient to enable an understanding and appreciation of the range of competencies expected of a professional landscape architect. Particular emphasis in relation to the core performance criteria listed below.

##### *Performance Criteria*

- C-24. A program may choose to develop particular emphasis in relation to the core performance criteria listed below provided that the program outcomes demonstrate evidence that students are able to access instruction and guidance to develop an appropriate understanding of skills in the following core competencies:

##### ➤ **C-24a: History & Theory**

- The history, theory and cultural context of landscape architecture;
- Natural and cultural landscapes and their conservation and management;
- The social, cultural and economic aspects of landscape values;
- Indigenous people's cultural and spiritual relationships to country, landscape, and place.

##### ➤ **C-24b: Landscape Analysis and Planning**

- Design skills, including aesthetic literacy relevant to landscape planning, landscape management, landscape design and/or urban design;
- The design, planning and management of rural, regional, remote landscapes;
- Site analysis and appraisal;
- Problem solving and critical thinking;
- Sustainable community design.

- **C-24c: Construction Technology, implementation and Management Technical Skills**
  - Landscape materials, construction methods and technologies relevant to discipline area(s);
  - Standards and processes to enable the implementation of landscape projects;
  - The implementation of landscape management policies and the management of designed landscapes necessary to maintain landscape systems.
  
- **C-24d: Natural and Cultural Systems**
  - Planning, management and design solutions to address climate change adaptation and mitigation requirements;
  - Natural sciences, especially of plants, botany, horticulture, ecology and basic earth sciences;
  - Ecological, cultural, economic and land management issues;
  - Ecosystem services and land management.
  
- **C-24e: Communication and research**
  - Relevant research skills and techniques;
  - Communication and report writing skills, including graphic, hand drawing, visual communication skills, verbal and presentation skills and the ability to present a coherent argument;
  - Critical thinking and analytical skills;
  - Application of computers and advanced technology.
  
- **C-24f: Professional Ethics**
  - The Australian Landscape Principles;
  - The code of ethics in professional practice.
  
- **C-24g: Professional Practice**
  - The diversity of the practice of landscape architecture;
  - The roles of allied professional disciplines and specialist fields of knowledge;
  - Government procurement systems and processes;
  - Techniques and skills required in community consultation and engagement;
  - The institutional context which governs the practice of Landscape Architecture including national, regional and local planning policy and procedures, and environmental law.
  - Project management skills and techniques;
  - Business and managerial skills required to practice relevant to discipline area(s);
  - Office practice and procedures.
  
- **C-24h Electives Units**
  - Opportunities for elective units in related areas of practice;
  - The electives should be based on extending from the core units of the program into allied and related specialist streams;
  - Opportunities for electives to assist in defining the particular strengths and focus of a program;
  - Opportunities for electives to broaden the student study experience.

#### 4 **Standard Four** – Student and Program Outcomes

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

##### *Performance Criteria*

- C-25. The program provides for student annual reviews of projects involving juries that include practicing Registered Landscape Architects;
- C-26. Students are to be aware of professional opportunities, registration, professional development, advanced educational opportunities and continuing professional development requirements associated with professional practice;
- C-27. Students undertake projects that demonstrate competencies from concept and design to documentation and construction;
- C-28. Students are to be actively encouraged to participate in related professional and community activities, such as AILA events, community activities, associated professional societies or special interest groups;
- C-29. Final year student work demonstrates the competency required for entry level positions in the profession of Landscape Architecture.

## 5 Standard Five – Facilities

### 5.1 Facilities and Equipment

The AILA values the shared learning experiences that occur in studio environments.

Landscape Architecture programs must be supported through the provision of resources and facilities to ensure effective program delivery.

As studio-based teaching is at the core of Landscape Architecture education, students must have access to adequate and suitable studio space.

Programs are to ensure students have adequate access to Information Technology facilities and this includes relevant industry software and support services. Students are to be exposed to and encouraged to explore current and emerging information technologies.

#### *Performance Criteria*

- C-30. Adequate computers, software, electronic and other technical equipment are available, maintained and updated;
- C-31. Students have access to study and meeting rooms, and project work facilities;
- C-32. Student studio, teaching, and study spaces are suitably furnished and equipped;
- C-33. The correct and safe use of necessary equipment is integrated in the curriculum;
- C-34. Students have adequate storage space in line with courses requirements, particularly for model making and other project work;
- C-35. Students have out-of-class, safe access to facilities.

### 5.2 Information Resources

A library collection and information resources must be provided to support the program.

Library and learning resources, both physical and digital, should be accessible to students.

#### *Performance Criteria*

- C-36. The library collection is sufficiently up-to date, adequate and diverse in its forms (books, journals, maps and other print media, digital and photographic media) to support the program and all areas of program specialisation – and regular acquisitions supplement the existing collection as required by academic staff;
- C-37. Library operating hours, loan and study facilities, allowing for appropriate access for staff and students. On-line access is to be provided to library resources;
- C-38. Curriculum integrates library use with coursework.

## 6 Standard Six – Outreach

### 6.1 Professional Institutes and Associations

The program has established effective relationships with the AILA, and other relevant associations and institutes, in order to provide learning opportunities for students, scholarly development for faculty, and professional guidance.

#### *Performance Criteria*

- C-39. The program regularly liaises with the appropriate local AILA Accreditation Advisory Panel with a commitment to keeping it informed of program responses to AILA's accreditation evaluation and course directions;
- C-40. The program provides an annual report and accreditation documentation in accordance with the AILA's Accreditation Procedures;
- C-41. The program establishes appropriate professional links where relevant with other professional institutes and associations.

### 6.2 The Landscape Architecture Profession

The program actively promotes positive relationships with the profession (practising Registered Landscape Architects) and maintains currency through on-going interaction with the profession.

The AILA advocates to its members to offer support to the programs, for example through offering opportunities for mentoring, participating in reviews, assessment and by providing access to practices and their project work as applicable and for the program to utilise this support.

#### *Performance Criteria*

- C-42. The program utilises the resource of practitioners.
- C-43. The program encourages student involvement with the profession:
  - Members of the profession are invited to participate in the program's teaching and research activities;
  - Academic staff members actively seek opportunities for involvement with the profession;
  - The program includes members of the profession on design juries or other opportunities for direct feedback to students on their work;
  - The program encourages the profession to provide students with information about their work;
  - The program provides the students with information about members of the profession who achieve awards, professional accolades, or other notable recognition of their contributions to the profession;
  - The program actively encourages student participation in the profession's activities, including AILA activities.

### 6.3 Community Engagement

The program pursues relationships with the community and the public.

#### *Performance Criteria*

- C-44. The program encourages students and staff to participate in community activities which showcase or contribute to aspects of Landscape Architecture;
- C-45. The program seeks opportunities for real professional interaction for its students.