

The National Architectural Accrediting Board

1735 New York Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20006-5209

NAAB Conditions for Accreditation

For Professional Degree Programs in Architecture 2004 Edition

[These are excerpts of the following pertinent sections for students. To see the complete document, go to the NAAB website <http://www.naab.org/> and open the pdf file entitled: 2004 NAAB Conditions for Accreditation.]

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Preface

The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) is the only agency recognized by registration boards in the United States to accredit professional degree programs in architecture. Because most registration boards require an applicant for licensure to hold an NAAB-accredited degree, obtaining such a degree is an essential part of gaining access to the licensed practice of architecture.

The curriculum of an NAAB-accredited degree program includes professional studies, general studies, and electives. To gain and retain accreditation of its degree program, each institution must both develop a program specific to its mission and also educate students to be knowledgeable and capable of producing work that can be measured by, and satisfy, specific performance criteria.

The NAAB fully recognizes the rights and responsibilities of the educational institutions that offer degrees in preparation for entry into professional careers in the licensed practice of architecture as defined and governed by the laws of the individual states and jurisdictions. Educational institutions are composed of a faculty responsible for the appropriate development of individual courses and curricula that are required, at a minimum, to provide each student the educational opportunity to meet the student performance criteria as defined by the NAAB.

The NAAB recognizes the institutional rights and responsibilities of the faculty to explore fundamental and innovative educational concepts, scholarship, research, methods, and technologies that exceed the minimum student performance criteria and that will lead to even higher standards of performance within the profession of architecture and related alternative careers of diverse and creative service to society.

Background

The first step leading to architectural accreditation was taken in Illinois where the first legislation regulating the practice of architecture was enacted in 1897. Following that enactment, the Illinois Board of Examiners and Regulators of Architects gave its first examination in 1898 and by 1902 had established a rule restricting the examination to graduates of the state's approved 4-year architecture curriculum. In 1903, the board expanded this policy to include graduates from Cornell, Columbia, and Harvard Universities, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Pennsylvania. That action suggested the need for national standards of architectural education.

The first attempt to establish national standards came with the founding of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) in 1912 and its adoption 2 years later of "standard minima" that schools were required to meet to gain ACSA membership. While these standard minima were in place, ACSA membership was equivalent to accreditation.

In 1932, the ACSA abandoned the standard minima, causing an 8-year hiatus in the profession's national system of education—a hiatus brought to an end when the ACSA, American Institute of Architects (AIA), and National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) established the NAAB and gave it authority to accredit schools of

architecture nationally. The founding agreement of 1940 also announced the intention to create an integrated system of architectural education that would allow schools with varying resources and circumstances to develop according to their particular needs.

The accreditation system has evolved in response to changing times and the advice of its constituency; advice now formalized through a process of validation. Today, the NAAB's accreditation system for *professional degree programs* within schools requires a selfassessment by the accredited degree program, an evaluation of that assessment by the NAAB, and a site visit by an NAAB team that concludes with a recommendation to the NAAB as to the term of accreditation. The decision regarding the term of accreditation is then made by the NAAB Board of Directors.

The Members

The members of the NAAB bring varied insight and concerns to the accreditation process and ensure a broad and inclusive view of architecture. In addition to two nonarchitects, one with a background in academia and the other a generalist who together represent the public interest, the members include representatives from the four organizations that serve the profession of architecture:

- **The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture.** The mission of ACSA, founded in 1912, is to advance architectural education through support of member schools, their faculties, and their students. This support involves serving by encouraging dialogue among the diverse areas of the discipline; facilitating teaching, research, and scholarly and creative works through intra- or interdisciplinary activity; articulating the critical issues forming the context of architectural education; and fostering public awareness of architectural education and issues of importance to it. This advancement shall be implemented through five primary means: advocacy, annual program activities, liaison with collateral organizations, dissemination of information, and response to the needs of the member schools in order to enhance the quality of life in a global society.
- **The American Institute of Architects.** Since 1857, the AIA has represented the professional interests of America's architects. AIA numbers more than 70,000 licensed architects, emerging professionals, and allied partners who, in design, express their commitment to excellence and livability in our nation's buildings and communities.
- **The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards.** Founded in 1919, the NCARB today provides assistance in protecting the public's health, safety, and welfare to 55 boards regulating architecture in the 50 states, 4 territories, and District of Columbia.
- **The American Institute of Architecture Students.** Founded in 1956, the AIAS serves architecture students throughout North America by promoting and complementing architectural education and by representing the concerns of students to the profession and the public.

The Mission

The NAAB is committed to the provision of effective professional architectural education through the establishment and application of accrediting procedures determined by a board of representative members from each of the four collateral organizations (ACSA, AIA, NCARB, and AIAS) and the public.

The NAAB is responsible for establishing policies and procedures relating to the accreditation of professional education and ensuring that schools of architecture have a clear understanding of the policies and procedures. Further, the NAAB is responsible for establishing criteria to be used by its visiting teams to assess the performance of schools and students and by the Board of Directors in determining the appropriate levels of accreditation for degree programs.

Through an atmosphere of cooperation supported by clarity of information, the NAAB strives to foster an educational foundation that prepares students who are both broadly and professionally educated for the profession of architecture.

3. The Thirteen Conditions of Accreditation

3.1 Program Response to the NAAB Perspectives

Schools must respond to the interests of the collateral organizations that make up the NAAB as set forth by this edition of the NAAB *Conditions for Accreditation*. Each school is expected to address these interests consistent with its scholastic identity and mission.

The following subsections address what the *APR* must include.

3.1.1 Architectural Education and the Academic Context

The accredited degree program must demonstrate that it benefits from and contributes to its institution. In the *APR*, the accredited degree program may explain its academic and professional standards for faculty and students; its interaction with other programs in the institution; the contribution of the students, faculty, and administrators to the governance and the intellectual and social lives of the institution; and the contribution of the institution to the accredited degree program in terms of intellectual resources and personnel. [In the following sections, a break line like the following

_____ / . . . / _____ indicates removal of the recommended or required material for the *APR*. Again, the full text of the 2004 “*Conditions. . .*” can be found at the NAAB website <http://www.naab.org/>.]

3.1.2 Architectural Education and the Students

The accredited degree program must demonstrate that it provides support and encouragement for students to assume leadership roles in school and later in the profession and that it provides an environment that embraces cultural differences.

_____ / . . . / _____

3.1.3 Architectural Education and Registration

The accredited degree program must demonstrate that it provides students with a sound preparation for the transition to internship and licensure.

_____ / ... / _____

3.1.4 Architectural Education and the Profession

The accredited degree program must demonstrate how it prepares students to practice and assume new roles and responsibilities in a context of increasing cultural diversity, changing client and regulatory demands, and an expanding knowledge base.

_____ / ... / _____

3.1.5 Architectural Education and Society

The program must demonstrate that it equips students with an informed understanding of social and environmental problems and develops their capacity to address these problems with sound architecture and urban design decisions.

_____ / ... / _____

3.2 Program Self-Assessment Procedures

The accredited degree program must show how it is making progress in achieving the *NAAB Perspectives* and how it assesses the extent to which it is fulfilling its mission. The assessment procedures must include solicitation of the faculty's, students', and graduates' views on the program's curriculum and learning. Individual course evaluations are not sufficient to provide insight into the program's focus and pedagogy.

_____ / ... / _____

3.3 Public Information

To ensure an understanding of the accredited professional degree by the public, all schools offering an accredited degree program or any candidacy program must include in their catalogs and promotional media the *exact language* found in the *NAAB Conditions for Accreditation*, Appendix B. To ensure an understanding of the body of knowledge and skills that constitute a professional education in architecture, the school must inform faculty and incoming students of how to access the *NAAB Conditions for Accreditation*.

_____ / ... / _____

3.4 Social Equity

The accredited degree program must provide faculty, students, and staff—irrespective of race, ethnicity, creed, national origin, gender, age, physical ability, or sexual orientation—with an educational environment in which each person is equitably able to learn, teach, and work. The school must have a clear policy on diversity that is communicated to current and prospective faculty, students, and staff and that is reflected in the distribution of the program's human, physical, and financial resources. Faculty, staff, and students must also have equitable opportunities to participate in program governance.

_____ / ... / _____

3.5 Studio Culture

The school is expected to demonstrate a positive and respectful learning environment

through the encouragement of the fundamental values of optimism, respect, sharing, engagement, and innovation between and among the members of its faculty, student body, administration, and staff. The school should encourage students and faculty to appreciate these values as guiding principles of professional conduct throughout their careers.

_____ / ... / _____

3.6 Human Resources

The accredited degree program must demonstrate that it provides adequate human resources for a professional degree program in architecture, including a sufficient faculty complement, an administrative head with enough time for effective administration, and adequate administrative, technical, and faculty support staff. Student enrollment in and scheduling of design studios must ensure adequate time for an effective tutorial exchange between the teacher and the student. The total teaching load should allow faculty members adequate time to pursue research, scholarship, and practice to enhance their professional development.

_____ / ... / _____

3.7 Human Resource Development

Schools must have a clear policy outlining both individual and collective opportunities for faculty and student growth inside and outside the program.

_____ / ... / _____

3.8 Physical Resources

The accredited degree program must provide the physical resources appropriate for a professional degree program in architecture, including design studio space for the exclusive use of each student in a studio class; lecture and seminar space to accommodate both didactic and interactive learning; office space for the exclusive use of each full-time faculty member; and related instructional support space. The facilities must also be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and applicable building codes.

_____ / ... / _____

3.9 Information Resources

Readily accessible library and visual resource collections are essential for architectural study, teaching, and research. Library collections must include at least 5,000 different cataloged titles, with an appropriate mix of Library of Congress NA, Dewey 720–29, and other related call numbers to serve the needs of individual programs. There must be adequate visual resources as well. Access to other architectural collections may supplement, but not substitute for, adequate resources at the home institution. In addition to developing and managing collections, architectural librarians and visual resources professionals should provide information services that promote the research skills and critical thinking necessary for professional practice and lifelong learning.

_____ / ... / _____

3.10 Financial Resources

An accredited degree program must have access to sufficient institutional support and financial resources to meet its needs and be comparable in scope to those available to meet the needs of other professional programs within the institution.

_____ / ... / _____

3.11 Administrative Structure

The accredited degree program must be, or be part of, an institution accredited by one of the following regional institutional accrediting agencies for higher education: the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS); the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSACS); the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC); the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCACS); the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU); and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The accredited degree program must have a measure of autonomy that is both comparable to that afforded other professional degree programs in the institution and sufficient to ensure conformance with the conditions for accreditation.

_____ / ... / _____

3.12 Professional Degrees and Curriculum

The NAAB accredits the following professional degree programs: the Bachelor of Architecture (B. Arch.), the Master of Architecture (M. Arch.), and the Doctor of Architecture (D. Arch.). The curricular requirements for awarding these degrees must include professional studies, general studies, and electives. Schools offering the degrees B. Arch., M. Arch., and/or D. Arch. are strongly encouraged to use these degree titles exclusively with NAAB-accredited professional degree programs.

The number of credit hours for each degree is specified in the following paragraphs:

- **Doctor of Architecture.** Accredited degree programs awarding the D. Arch. degree must require either an undergraduate baccalaureate degree or a minimum of 120 undergraduate semester credit hours, or the undergraduate-level quarterhour equivalent, and a minimum of 90 graduate-level semester credit hours, or the graduate-level quarter-hour equivalent, in academic coursework in professional studies and electives.
- **Master of Architecture.** Accredited degree programs awarding the M. Arch. degree must require a minimum of 168 semester credit hours, or the quarter-hour equivalent, of which 30 semester credit hours, or the quarter-hour equivalent, must be at the graduate level, in academic coursework in professional studies and electives.
- **Bachelor of Architecture.** Accredited degree programs awarding the B. Arch. degree must require a minimum of 150 semester credit hours, or the quarter-hour equivalent, in academic coursework in professional studies and electives. Every existing accredited program must conform to the above minimum credit hour requirements by 1 January 2015.

Curricular requirements are defined as follows:

- **General Studies.** A professional degree program must include general studies in the arts, humanities, and sciences, either as an admission requirement or as part of the curriculum. It must ensure that students have the prerequisite general studies to undertake professional studies. The curriculum leading to the architecture degree must include at least 45 credit hours, or the quarter-hour equivalent, that must be outside architectural studies either as general studies or as electives with other than architectural content. For the M. Arch. and D. Arch., this calculation may include coursework taken at the undergraduate level.
- **Professional Studies.** The core of a professional degree program consists of the required courses that satisfy the NAAB Student Performance Criteria. The accredited degree program has the liberty to require additional courses including electives to address its mission or institutional context.
- **Electives.** A professional degree program must allow students to pursue their special interests. The curriculum must be flexible enough to allow students to complete minors or develop areas of concentration, inside or outside the program.

Table 3-1, Minimum Credit Distribution, presents a summary of the preceding three paragraphs.

Table 3-1
Minimum Credit Distribution

General (nonarchitecture) Studies
45 Semester-Credit-Hour Minimum*

- Required courses with other than architectural content
- Elective courses with other than architectural content

Professional Studies

- Courses with architectural content required of all students
- Elective courses with architectural content

*Or the quarter-hour equivalent

_____ / ... / _____

3.13 Student Performance Criteria

The accredited degree program must ensure that each graduate possesses the knowledge and skills defined by the criteria set out below. The knowledge and skills are the minimum for meeting the demands of an internship leading to registration for practice.

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

The criteria encompass two levels of accomplishment:

- **Understanding**—means the assimilation and comprehension of information without necessarily being able to see its full implication.
- **Ability**—means the skill in using specific information to accomplish a task, in correctly selecting the appropriate information, and in applying it to the solution of a specific problem.

The NAAB establishes performance criteria to help accredited degree programs prepare students for the profession while encouraging educational practices suited to the individual degree program. In addition to assessing whether student performance meets the professional criteria, the visiting team will assess performance in relation to the school's stated curricular goals and content. While the NAAB stipulates the student performance criteria that must be met, it specifies neither the educational format nor the form of student work that may serve as evidence of having met these criteria. Programs are 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 school 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 school's curricular goals and content.
- A matrix cross-referencing each required course with the performance criteria it fulfills. For each criterion, the school must highlight the cell on the matrix that points to the greatest evidence of achievement.

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

1. Speaking and Writing Skills

Ability to read, write, listen, and speak effectively

2. Critical Thinking Skills

Ability to raise clear and precise questions, use abstract ideas to interpret information, consider diverse points of view, reach well-reasoned conclusions, and test them against relevant criteria and standards

3. Graphics Skills

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

4. Research Skills

Ability to gather, assess, record, and apply relevant information in architectural coursework.

5. 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

6. Fundamental Design Skills

Ability to use basic architectural principles in the design of buildings, interior spaces, and sites

7. Collaborative Skills

Ability to recognize the varied talent found in interdisciplinary design project teams in professional practice and work in collaboration with other students as members of a design team

8. 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

9. Non-Western Traditions

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

10. National and Regional Traditions

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

11. Use of Precedents

Ability to incorporate relevant precedents into architecture and urban design Projects

12. Human Behavior

Understanding of the theories and methods of inquiry that seek to clarify the relationship between human behavior and the physical environment

13. Human Diversity

Understanding of the diverse needs, values, behavioral norms, physical ability, and social and spatial patterns that characterize different cultures and individuals and the implication of this diversity for the societal roles and responsibilities of architects

14. Accessibility

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

15. Sustainable Design

Understanding of the principles of sustainability in making architecture and urban design decisions that conserve natural and built resources, including culturally important buildings and sites, and in the creation of healthful buildings and communities

16. Program Preparation

Ability to prepare a comprehensive program for an architectural project, including 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 assessment of their implication for the project, and a definition of site selection and design assessment criteria

17. Site Conditions

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

18. Structural Systems

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

19. Environmental Systems

Understanding of the basic principles and appropriate application and performance of environmental systems, including acoustical, lighting, and climate modification systems, and energy use, integrated with the building envelope

20. Life Safety

Understanding of the basic principles of life-safety systems with an emphasis on Egress

21. Building Envelope Systems

Understanding of the basic principles and appropriate application and performance of building envelope materials and assemblies

22. Building Service Systems

Understanding of the basic principles and appropriate application and performance of plumbing, electrical, vertical transportation, communication, security, and fire protection systems

23. Building Systems Integration

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

24. Building Materials and Assemblies

Understanding of the basic principles and appropriate application and performance of construction materials, products, components, and assemblies, including their environmental impact and reuse

25. Construction Cost Control

Understanding of the fundamentals of building cost, life-cycle cost, and construction Estimating

26. Technical Documentation

Ability to make technically precise drawings and write outline specifications for a proposed design

27. Client Role in Architecture

Understanding of the responsibility of the architect to elicit, understand, and resolve the needs of the client, owner, and user

28. Comprehensive Design

Ability to produce a comprehensive architectural project based on a building program and site that includes development of programmed spaces demonstrating an understanding of structural and environmental systems, building envelope systems, life-safety provisions, wall sections and building assemblies and the principles of sustainability

29. Architect's Administrative Roles

Understanding of obtaining commissions and negotiating contracts, managing personnel and selecting consultants, recommending project delivery methods, and forms of service contracts

30. Architectural Practice

Understanding of the basic principles and legal aspects of practice organization, financial management, business planning, time and project management, risk mitigation, and mediation and arbitration as well as an understanding of trends that affect practice, such as globalization, outsourcing, project delivery, expanding practice settings, diversity, and others

31. Professional Development

Understanding of the role of internship in obtaining licensure and registration and the mutual rights and responsibilities of interns and employers

32. Leadership

Understanding of the need for architects to provide leadership in the building design and construction process and on issues of growth, development, and aesthetics in their communities

33. Legal Responsibilities

Understanding of the architect's responsibility as determined by registration law, building codes and regulations, professional service contracts, zoning and subdivision ordinances, environmental regulation, historic preservation laws, and accessibility laws

34. Ethics and Professional Judgment

Understanding of the ethical issues involved in the formation of professional judgment in architectural design and practice.

[end of excerpts from 2004 NAAB Conditions for Accreditation document.]