CHARTER

UNESCO /UIA FOR ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

REVISED EDITION 2017

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF ARCHITECTS

UNESCO-UIA CHARTER FOR ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION
Revised, 2017 Edition
2017 Sexennial revision with no modifications of the 2011 Edition
2014-2017 Revision by UNESCO-UIA VALIDATION COUNCIL FOR ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

PREAMBLE

We, the architects, concerned for the future qualitative development of the built environment in a fast changing world, believe that architecture involves everything that influences the way in which the built environment is planned, designed, made, used, furnished, landscaped and maintained. We feel responsible for the improvement of the education and training of future architects to enable them to meet the expectations of XXIst Century societies worldwide for sustainable human settlements in every cultural heritage.

We are aware of the fact that, in spite of many outstanding and sometimes spectacular contributions of our profession, there is a surprisingly small percentage of the built environment which is actually conceived and realised by architects and planners. There is still room for the development of new tasks for the profession when architects become aware of the increasing needs identified and possibilities offered in areas which have not, up to now, been of major concern to the profession. Still greater diversity is therefore needed in professional practice and, as a consequence, in architectural education and training. The basic goal of education is to develop the architect as a « generalist ».

This is particularly true for those who are working in a developing context, where the architects could accept the role of an «enabler», rather than that of a «provider», and where the profession can meet new challenges. There is no doubt that the architect's capacity to solve problems, can greatly contribute to tasks such as community development, self-help programmes, educational facilities, etc., and thus make a significant contribution to the improvement of the quality of life of those who are not accepted as citizens in their full right and who cannot be counted among the architect's usual clients.

0. AIMS

The aims of this Charter are that it be used, in the first instance, for the creation of a global network of architectural education within which individual achievements can be shared by all and that it will enhance the understanding that architectural education constitutes some of the most significant environmental and professional challenges of the contemporary world.

We therefore declare:

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

0 That the educators must prepare architects to formulate new solutions for the present and the future as the new era will bring with it grave and complex challenges with respect to social and functional degradation of many human settlements. These challenges may include global urbanisation and the consequent depletion of existing environments, a severe shortage of housing, urban services and social infrastructure, and the increasing exclusion of architects from built environment projects.

1 That architecture, the quality of buildings and the way they relate to their surroundings, respect for the natural and built environment as well as the collective and individual cultural heritage are matters of public concern.

2 That it is in the public interest to ensure that architects are able to understand regional characteristics and to give practical expression to the needs, expectations and improvement to the quality of life of individuals, social groups, communities and human settlements.

3 That methods of education and training for architects are varied in order to develop a cultural richness and allow for flexibility in the development of the curriculum to respond to the changing demands and requirements (including methods of project delivery) of the client, the users, the construction industry and the architectural profession, whilst being aware of the political and financial motivations behind such changes.

4 That, subject to recognition of the importance of regional and cultural customs and practices and the need for differences in curriculum to accommodate these variations, a common ground exists within the pedagogical methods used, and by establishing capabilities, this will enable countries, architecture schools and professional organizations to evaluate and improve the education given to future architects.

5 That the increasing mobility of architects between different countries calls for mutual recognition or validation of individual degrees, diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualification.

6 That the mutual recognition of degrees, diplomas, certificates or other evidence of formal qualification to practise in the field of architecture has to be based on objective criteria, guaranteeing that holders of such qualifications have received and continue to maintain the kind of education and training called for in this Charter.

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

7 That the vision of the future world, cultivated in architecture schools, should include the following goals :
- a decent quality of life for all the inhabitants of human settlements.
- a technological application which respects the social, cultural and aesthetic needs of people and is aware of the appropriate use of materials in architecture and their initial and future maintenance costs.
- an ecologically balanced and sustainable development of the built and natural environment including the rational utilisation of available resources.
- an architecture which is valued as the property and responsibility of everyone.

8 That issues related to architecture and the environment should be introduced as part of the general education at primary and secondary schools, because an early awareness of the built environment is important to both future architects, clients and users of buildings.

9 That systems for continuing professional development should be set up for architects as architectural education should never be considered a closed process but one in which life-long learning occurs.

10 That architectural heritage education is essential to:
- understanding sustainability, the social context and sense of place in building design, and
- transforming the professional architectural mentality so that its creative methods are part of a continuous and harmonious cultural process (Refer to Appendix X, UIA paper on Heritage Education, of UIA Education Commission Reflection Group 7, on Heritage Education, Torino 2008)

11 That cultural diversity, which is as necessary for human kind as biodiversity is for nature, is the common heritage of all humanity, and should be recognized and understood, for the benefit of present and future generations. (Refer to the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of November 2001, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf).

II. OBJECTIVES OF ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

0 That architectural education develops the capacity in students to be able to conceptualise, design, understand and realise the act of building within a context of the practice of architecture which balances the tensions between emotion, reason and intuition, and which gives physical form to the needs of society and the individual.

1 That architecture is a discipline which draws knowledge from the humanities, the social and the physical sciences, technology, environmental sciences, the creative arts and the liberal arts.

2 That education leading to formal qualifications and permitting professionals to practice in the field of architecture has to be guaranteed to be at university/tertiary level with the discipline of architecture as the main subject and be available at universities, polytechnics and academies. This education must maintain a balance between theory and practice.

3 That architectural education includes the following fundamental objectives:

3.1. Ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements.
3.2. Adequate knowledge of the history and theories of architecture and the related arts, technologies and human sciences.
3.3. Knowledge of the fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural design.
3.4. Adequate knowledge of urban design, planning and the skills involved in the planning process.
3.5. Understanding of the relationship between people and buildings, and between buildings and their environment, and of the need to relate buildings and the spaces between them to human needs and scale.
3.6. Understanding of the profession of architecture and the role of the architect in society, in particular in preparing briefs that take account of social factors.
3.7. Understanding of the methods of investigation and preparation of the brief for a design project.
3.8. Understanding of the structural design, construction and engineering problems associated with building design.
3.9. Adequate knowledge of physical problems and technologies and of the function of buildings so as to provide them with internal conditions of comfort and protection against the climate.
3.10. Design skills necessary to meet building users' requirements within the constraints imposed by cost factors and building regulations.
3.11. Adequate knowledge of the industries, organisations, regulations and procedures involved in translating design concepts into buildings and integrating plans into overall planning.
3.12. Awareness of responsibilities toward human, social, cultural, urban, architectural, and environmental values, as well as architectural heritage.
3.13. Adequate knowledge of the means of achieving ecologically responsible design and environmental conservation and rehabilitation.
3.14. Development of a creative competence in building techniques, founded on a comprehensive understanding of the disciplines and construction methods related to architecture.
3.15. Adequate knowledge of project financing, project management, cost control and methods of project delivery.
3.16. Training in research techniques as an inherent part of architectural learning, for both students and teachers.

II. OBJECTIVES OF ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

4. That architectural education involves the acquisition of the following capabilities:

4.1. DESIGN

- Ability to engage imagination, think creatively, innovate and provide design leadership.
- Ability to gather information, define problems, apply analyses and critical judgement and formulate strategies for action.
- Ability to think three-dimensionally in the exploration of design.
- Ability to reconcile divergent factors, integrate knowledge and apply skills in the creation of a design solution.

4.2. KNOWLEDGE

4.2.1. Cultural and Artistic Studies

- Ability to act with knowledge of historical and cultural precedents in local and world architecture.
- Ability to act with knowledge of the fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural design.
- Understanding of heritage issues in the built environment.
- Awareness of the links between architecture and other creative disciplines.

4.2.2. Social Studies

- Ability to act with knowledge of society, and to work with clients and users that represent society's needs.
- Ability to develop a project brief through definition of the needs of society users and clients, and to research and define contextual and functional requirements for different types of built environments.
- Understanding of the social context in which built environments are procured, of ergonomic and space requirements and issues of equity and access.
- Awareness of the relevant codes, regulations and standards for planning, design, construction, health, safety and use of built environments.
- Awareness of philosophy, politics, and ethics as related to architecture.

4.2.3. Environmental Studies

- Ability to act with knowledge of natural systems and built environments.
- Understanding of conservation and waste management issues.
- Understanding of the life cycle of materials, issues of ecological sustainability, environmental impact, design for reduced use of energy, as well as passive systems and their management.
- Awareness of the history and practice of landscape architecture, urban design, as well as territorial and national planning and their relationship to local and global demography and resources.
- Awareness of the management of natural systems taking into account natural disaster risks.

4.2.4. Technical Studies

- Technical knowledge of structure, materials, and construction.
- Ability to act with innovative technical competence in the use of building techniques and the understanding of their evolution.
- Understanding of the processes of technical design and the integration of structure, construction technologies and services systems into a functionally effective whole.
- Understanding of services systems as well as systems of transportation, communication, maintenance and safety.
- Awareness of the role of technical documentation and specifications in design realisation, and of the processes of construction, cost, planning and control.

4.2.5. Design Studies

- Knowledge of design theory and methods.
- Understanding of design procedures and processes.
- Knowledge of design precedents and architectural criticism.

4.2.6. Professional Studies

- Ability to understand different forms of procurement of architectural services.
- Understanding of the fundamental workings of the construction and development industries, such as finance, real estate investment and facilities management.
- Understanding of the potential roles of architects in conventional and new areas of activity and in an international context.
- Understanding of business principles and their application to the development of built environments, project management and the functioning of a professional consultancy.
- Understanding of professional ethics and codes of conduct as they apply to the practice of architecture and of the architects' legal responsibilities where registration, practice and building contracts are concerned.

4.3. SKILL

- Ability to work in collaboration with other architects and members of interdisciplinary teams.
- Ability to act and to communicate ideas through collaboration, speaking, numeracy, writing, drawing, modelling and evaluation.
- Ability to utilise manual, electronic, graphic and model making capabilities to explore, develop, define and communicate a design proposal.
- Understanding of systems of evaluation, that use manual and/or electronic means for performance assessments of built environments.

5. That the quantitative indicators necessary are that:

5.1. The balanced acquisition of subjects and capabilities cited in Sections II.3 and II.4 requires a period of not less than five years of full-time studies in an accredited Study Programme at University or an equivalent institution.

5.2. Graduates of architecture will be required to have completed at least two years of acceptable experience/training/ internship, in addition to the 5 years of study, prior to registration/ licensing/certification to practice as an architect (but with the objective of working towards three years) while allowing flexibility for equivalency, of which one year may be obtained prior to the conclusion of academic studies.

III. CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS OF AN ACCREDITED SCHOOL

In order to achieve the above mentioned Objectives, the following conditions and requirements should be taken into account:

1. That adequate studios, laboratories, facilities for research, advanced studies, libraries, information and data exchanges for new technologies should be provided at schools of architecture.

2. That in order to promote a common understanding and to raise the level of architectural education, the creation of a network, on a worldwide basis for the exchange of information, teachers and senior students is as necessary as a regional network to promote an understanding of diverse climate, materials, vernacular practices and culture. The use of external examiners is a recognised method of achieving and maintaining comparable national and global standards.

3. That each teaching institution must adjust the number of students according to its teaching capacity and the selection of students shall be in relation to the aptitudes required for a successful education in architecture, and this will be applied by means of an appropriate selection process at the point of entry into each academic programme.

4. That teacher/student numbers must reflect the design studio teaching methodology required to obtain the above capabilities as studio teaching should be a major part of the learning process.

5. That individual project work with direct teacher/student dialogue should form the basis of the learning period, continuous interaction between the practice and teaching of architecture must be encouraged and protected and design project work must be a synthesis of acquired knowledge and accompanying skills.

6. That the development of conventional drawing skills is still a requirement of the educational programme and modern personalised computer technology and the development of specialised software makes it imperative to teach the use of computers in all aspects of architectural education.

7. That research and publication should be regarded as an inherent activity of architectural educators and may encompass applied methods and experiences in architectural practice, project work and construction methods, as well as academic disciplines.

8. That education establishments should create systems for self-evaluation and peer review conducted at regular intervals including in the review panel, appropriately experienced educators from other schools or other countries and practising architects, or participate in the approved UNESCO-UIA Validation System or a recognized, equivalent system.

9. That education should be formalised by an individual's demonstration of capabilities by the end of the programme of studies, the principal part being a presentation of an architectural project demonstrating the acquired knowledge and concomitant skills. For this purpose, juries should constitute an interdisciplinary team, including examiners external to the school who may be practitioners or academics from other schools or countries but who must have experience and expertise in the assessment process at that level.

10. That in order to benefit from the wide variety of teaching methods, including distance learning, exchange programmes for teachers, and students at advanced levels are desirable. Final projects could be shared among architecture schools as a means of facilitating comparison between results and self-evaluation of teaching establishments, through a system of international awards, exhibitions and publications on the internet web site.

IV. CONCLUSION

This Charter was created on the initiative of UNESCO and the UIA to be applied internationally to architectural education and needs the guarantee of protection, development and urgent action.

The Charter constitutes a framework providing direction and guidance to students and teachers of all establishments involved in education and training in architecture and planning. It is conceived as a «dynamic» document that will be revised regularly, thus taking into consideration new orientations, needs and developments in professional practice, as well as in education systems.

Beyond all aesthetic, technical and financial aspects of the professional responsibilities, the major concerns, expressed by the Charter, are the social commitment of the profession, i.e. the awareness of the role and responsibility of the architect in his or her respective society, as well as the improvement of the quality of life through sustainable human settlements.

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