RIBA

Royal Institute of British Architects

Report of the RIBA visiting board to the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Alexandria

Date of visiting board: 17 & 18 November 2019
Confirmed by RIBA Education Committee: 12 February 2020

1 Details of institution hosting courses

Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT)
College of Engineering and Technology
Department of Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design Department
P.O. Box 1029
Abu Qir Campus
Alexandria
Egypt

2 Dean of College of Engineering and Technology

Professor Amr Ali

Head of Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design Department

Professor Ahmed Elseragy

3 Courses offered for validation

BSc in Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design
MSc Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design

4 Programme Directors/leaders/course leaders

BSc in Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design
MSc Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design

RIBA Part 1 team leader: Dr. Sally Eldeeb
RIBA Part 2 team leader: Dr Nermin Hany
RIBA Coordinator Dr. Bakr Gomaa

5 Awarding body

Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT), Alexandria

6 The visiting board

Musa Garba – chair
Prof. Lilly Kudic – vice chair
Peter Culley
Ben Cowd
Associate Professor Ahmed Fahim – regional representative
Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk, RIBA validation manager – in attendance

7 Procedures and criteria for the visit

The visiting board was carried out under the *RIBA procedures for validation and validation criteria for UK and international courses and examinations in architecture* (published July 2011, and effective from September 2011)*;* this document is available at www.architecture.com.

8 Proposals of the visiting board

At its meeting on 12 February 2020 the RIBA Education Committee confirmed continued validation of the following programmes:

BSc in Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design, *(4 years full time)* RIBA Part 1

MSc Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design

(*The final two semesters (year 5) of the BSc in Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design, and including the two part-time years of the MSc Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design);* 1 year full-time: 36 credit hours, 2 years part-time: 24 credit hours, RIBA Part 2.

The next full visiting board will take place 2024.

9 Standard requirements for continued recognition

Continued RIBA recognition of all courses and qualifications is dependent upon:

i external examiners being appointed for the course

ii any significant changes to the courses and qualifications being submitted to the RIBA

iii any change of award title, and the effective date of the change, being notified to the RIBA so that its recognition may formally be transferred to the new title

iv submission to the RIBA of the names of students passing the courses and qualifications listed

v In the UK, standard requirements of validation include the completion by the institution of the annual statistical return issued by the RIBA Education Department

10 Academic position statement (written by the School)

The establishment of the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) as a Regional Institute for Maritime Transport was initiated in 1970 during the Arab League Transport Committee. This notion came after the Arab League's Council issued, in its fifty third session, decree no. 2631/1970 stipulating the endorsement of founding a regional centre for Maritime Transport training. The decree commissioned the Arab Republic of Egypt, on behalf of all the Arab countries, to ask for a technical aid from the United Nations' organizations specialized in the field of maritime transport.

By the end of 1971, the United Nations delegated a joint committee of its concerned organizations to study the region's need for this project. After visiting many of the region's countries, the committee chose the city of Alexandria, known for its cultural legacy and geographic location in the centre of the Arab region, in addition to Alexandria having highly qualified personnel.

Eventually, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) prepared document number (REM/71L286/01/19) for the project of establishing the Arab Academy for Maritime Transport in Alexandria in cooperation with the International Maritime Consultancy Organization of Governments as an executive agency of the project and the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development as a participant (UNCTAD).

Throughout the years, AASTMT has grown from a Maritime studies organization to be home for 13 colleges across 8 different campus spanning across Egypt and the Middle East.

The College of Engineering and Technology was established in 1990. Currently, the College offers Bachelor's and Master's degrees in the departments architectural engineering and environmental design, computer engineering, construction and buildings engineering, electrical and control

engineering, electronics and communications engineering, industrial and management engineering, marine engineering, and mechanical engineering. All programmes offered by the College are acknowledged by the Supreme Council of Egyptian Universities (SCU) and fully accredited from the British Professional Institutes (IMechE), (IMarEST), (IET), (ICE), (IStructE), and (IHT), beside the accreditation from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) parts 1 and 2 for the architectural engineering programme.

The Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design Department (AEEDD) in Alexandria is the first school of architecture in a series of seven schools established by the AASTMT throughout the years and based in different campuses. The Alexandria based school has provided expertise, human resources and academic advise to all other schools all of which have built on the curriculum developed in AEEDD Alexandria. Our academic expertise has led to us being the first school of architecture in the Middle East to be RIBA parts 1 and 2 validated. A long collaboration with the RIBA has led to us being recognized as the RIBA center of excellence locally and region.

AEEDD Alexandria is a practice-led school staffed by a large number of locally and regionally prominent architects who drive the learning process in the school by engaging the students in live projects. We are now in the phase where we only hire staff from our pool of excellent graduates. Our staff combine practical expertise with enthusiasm and research excellence in a number of design related fields.

In the AEEDD Alexandria we acknowledge that in Egypt Architecture is seen as part of engineering, a principle seen by many as a weakness. At AEEDD Alexandria we use this opportunity to create architects with a wide range of market required skills. We believe that being part of College of Engineering has embraced our design studios with a number of supporting and complementary modules that we hope would create architects with very broad set of skills. This has so far created very healthy employability for our graduates not only in the local market but also in the regional and international markets.

Our programmes are credit-hours based in which students register for a number of modules that total 180 Cr.hr over 5 years to graduate B.Sc. Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design, and further studies of 36 Cr.hr over 2 years would earn the students M.Sc. Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design. We are proud of our curriculum which hosts a number of sets of modules in computer drafting and modelling, history and theory, city and urban design, the science of environmental design, management and construction design, professional practice, and above all studios in the levels of architecture, Interior and urban design.

The majority of the credits in both programmes are for studio modules (i.e., Architectural Design and Building Technology modules). During the B.Sc. programme students are introduced into the basics of design from sketching techniques to ideas generation and architectural representation. Parallel to this students are introduced to a range of building technology models that develop the students understanding of the structural and technical design behind the architectural products. In the M.Sc. programme the learning

experience is shifted towards research driven design in the different fields of architecture.

Both programmes provide the student with a unique learning experience in a number of design related themes; Architectural Design, Urban Design, Building Technology, Science of Environmental Design, and Interior Architecture. While in the B.Sc. level 'Architectural Design' is the primary focus and all other themes feed into it, in the M.Sc. programme (in which About 60 percent of our students are returners) students get to choose their research focus from one of the available themes.

Both programmes and all themes have been developed and are run around 'Alexandria as a Laboratory' principle. At the AEEDD Alexandria we acknowledge and embrace the strengths, potentials and weaknesses of the city we are based. Culture and modernization, old and new, connectivity and segregation, healthy nature and weak environmental performance, order and chaos, etc… in the AEEDD Alexandria our design efforts all revolve around finding answers to Alexandria's needs and envisioning its future.

Our most valuable asset is our students who we envision to be great designers and future partners. For this we at AEED Alexandria prescribe to the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adjusting our primary vision for deep transformation from teaching to learning. The school has established a teaching and learning framework which is responsive to a fast-changing market focusing primarily on the followings; (a) enhance student-tutor relationship on all levels, (b) change culture across all design studios from teaching to learning, (c) prepare students/future graduates for "life after studio" and encourage the skills and environment of learning to learn and provide competences-based learning (d) the school strives to provide student-centred education system where students are perceived as partners and not as end-users, (e) the school values the importance of providing work experience and exposure nationally and internationally to all students and see it as a key element towards producing market-ready graduates.

11 Commendations

The Board commends the following:

11.1 The standards achieved at Part 2 across all criteria are admirable and provide a rich resource for the ongoing development of the Part 1.

11.2 The atmosphere of the School is warm, vibrant and engaging. The School has created a positive working environment, for staff and students, who are passionate about architecture and education. Staff and students embrace the Head of Department's new vision for the School and ambition for design studio teaching. Institutional and departmental support for staff development is exceptional.

11.3 The Board applauds the students' exploratory work and evidence of process.

11.4 The School's responsiveness to the needs of the profession, by preparing students of high competency to be ready for practice in the region and beyond.

12 Conditions

There are no conditions.

13 Action points

The visiting board proposes the following action points. The RIBA expects the university to report on how it will address these action points. The university is referred to the RIBA's criteria and procedures for validation for details of mid-term monitoring processes. Failure by the university to satisfactorily resolve action points may result in a course being conditioned by a future visiting board.

13.1 The Board strongly recommends that contemporary best practice from the local region and other similar climatic areas of the world is introduced at an earlier stage at Part 1 i.e. thermal envelope, materiality and construction methods.

13.2 At Part 1 the School should celebrate the use of Alexandria as a complex design laboratory, exploring more diverse types of sites within a dense fabric in the local context.

14. Advice

The visiting board offers the following advice to the School on desirable, but not essential improvements, which, it is felt, would assist course development and raise standards.

14.1 The Board encourages the School to find a method by which Part 1 students can reflect upon their work.

14.2 At Part 1 the Board advises the School to encourage greater experimentation and innovation with technology and materials as an ideas generator in design studio, to bring this to the level of sophistication found in the visual representation and process work.

14.3 The Board notes that the School has introduced horizontal integration of modules with design studio, while also maintaining vertical integration. The Board welcomes this and looks forward to seeing evidence of group urban design analysis, for example, being carried through to individual architectural design projects.

14.4 The School should strengthen evidence of the Fine Arts on architectural design at Part 1 (GC3).

14.5 The School should strengthen evidence of GC11 at Part 1.

14.6 The Board encourages the School to pursue its ambition to establish digital fabrication and environmental studies testing facilities to further enhance the design culture and product. This will also be of benefit to graduates entering practice.

15 Delivery of graduate attributes

It should be noted that where the visiting board considered graduate attributes to have been met, no commentary is offered. Where concerns were noted (or an attribute clearly not met), commentary is supplied. Finally, where academic

outcomes suggested a graduate attribute was particularly positively demonstrated, commentary is supplied.

15.1 Part 1
The Board confirmed that all Part 1 graduate attributes were met.

15.2 Part 2
The Board confirmed that all Part 2 graduate attributes were met.

16 Review of work against criteria
It should be noted that where the visiting board considered a criterion to have been met, no commentary is offered. Where concerns were noted (or a criterion clearly not met), commentary is supplied. Finally, where academic outcomes suggested a criterion was particularly positively demonstrated, commentary is supplied.

16.1 The Board made no further comments.

17 Other information

17.1 Student numbers
Part 1 c. 600 (approximately)
Part 2 c.70

17.2 Documentation provided
The Department provided all documentation as required by the Procedures for Validation.

18 Notes of meetings
On request, the RIBA will issue a copy of the minutes taken from the following meetings: **These notes will not form part of the published report but will be made available on request. The full set of notes will be issued to the mid-term panel and the next full visiting board.**

- Meeting with Dean and Head of Department
- Meeting with students
- Meeting with the Head of Department
- Meeting with external examiners
- Meeting with staff