

**Report of the RIBA visiting board  
to The Arab Academy of Science,  
Technology and Maritime Transport, Cairo,  
Egypt**

**Date of virtual visiting board:** 18 & 19 October 2022  
**Confirmed by RIBA:** 17 April 2023

**1 Details of institution hosting courses**

The Arab Academy of Science, Technology and Maritime Transport  
 Department of Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design  
 College of Engineering and Technology, Cairo  
 El-Mosheer Ahmed Ismail St.,  
 Sheraton Area, Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt

**2 Courses offered for validation**

Part1: B.Sc. in Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design: years 1-4  
 Part 2: B.Sc. in Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design: year 5 +  
 M.Sc. in Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design: years 6 & 7

**3 Head of Architecture Department**

Sherif M. El-Fiki, Ph.D. Professor

**4 Awarding body**

The Arab Academy of Science, Technology and Maritime Transport

**5 The visiting board**

Paul King – Chair  
 Albená Atanassova – Vice Chair  
 Neil Stacey  
 Dr. Amr Abdel Kawi – regional representative

**In attendance:**

Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk – RIBA – validation manager

**6 Procedures and criteria for the online visit**

The visiting board was carried out under the *RIBA procedures for validation 2021*; this document is available at [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com). The RIBA procedures and criteria were in transition at the time of the visit. The School could choose to use the 2011 criteria or the new Themes and Values. The procedures were modified to allow the visit to take place online.

**7 Proposals of the visiting board**

On 17 April 2023 the RIBA confirmed continued validation of the following courses:

Part1: B.Sc. in Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design: years 1-4  
 Part 2: B.Sc. in Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design: year 5 +  
 M.Sc. in Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design: years 6 & 7

The next visit to AASTMT will take place in 2027.

**8 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 School of the annual statistical return issued by the RIBA Education Department

**9 Academic position statement (written by the School)**

The Department aims at achieving excellence in architectural education, providing the best possible learning experience to students, and competing for the best offered courses in Egypt and the region. Our mission is to equip graduates to meet challenges of the future, address local and regional responsibilities towards society and the architectural profession, and prepare licensed architects who meet local and international academic and professional standards. The course takes place in Cairo, a city with a rich architectural heritage and a multiplicity of cultural and architectural influences. A city that is also witnessing vigorous intellectual and political activity since the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, which has significant influences on every aspect of its dwellers' everyday life. Internationally, the course must respond to many global challenges including social, environmental, economic and technological dimensions. It must also engage in recent and emerging global discourses on architecture, technology and urbanism. The sections below detail the ways in which the Department meets the aforementioned goals and challenges.

The B.Sc. course is mainly planned in ten integrated groups of core and elective subjects, which are studied over the degree-award years. The core groups include Introductory modules; Visual Studies; Architectural Design modules; Building Technology and Execution Design modules; History and Theories of Architecture modules; Town Planning and Urban Design modules; Management modules; Environmental Studies modules; Computer Application modules and Structural Engineering modules. This organization allows for easy tracing of students' development in relation to every group of subjects, in order to devise the most appropriate means for supporting them in regard of their very specific needs.

Being chiefly meant with 'architectural design' as a main component, the course extends its emphases to the various scales and elements of 'design' to be addressed at the levels of Urban design, Landscape design, Interior design and Execution and detailing design, parallel with the different 'Architectural design' modules.

Nevertheless, the environmental dimension is well-addressed in contextual, social, cultural, and physical terms. This is to make sure they all reflect well upon design in an integrated fashion that clearly realizes the holistic nature of design, as a process and a product that addresses human satisfaction without compromising sound environmental settings.

Taking this down to practical contexts, the modules lay no less emphasis upon the comprehensive technical modules of Building technology, Execution design, Project Management, Professional Activities, and Regulations and Laws being a backbone for sound implementation and site work technicalities.

On another hand, 'History and Theories of Architecture' modules set a theoretical springboard out of which grounded understanding to the course-objectives may stem, towards feeding into their design approaches and methods. The courses also recognize the significance of modern technologies in supporting its objectives. Therefore, digital applications like Computer Aided Drafting, 3D Modelling are introduced to students as core modules, with the intent to improve their design and presentation skills.

Parallel with the aforementioned core modules, students can choose from a wide spectrum of elective modules to extend their knowledge in particular areas and to cater for their individual interests. Such modules include some theoretical means to further understand architectural discourses like 'Architectural Criticism', 'Research and Programming', 'Scientific Thinking' 'Topics in Sustainability', 'Introduction to Environmental Systems, 'Mediterranean cities' and 'Historical Preservation and Conservation '. Elective modules also encompass art components like 'Painting', 'Photography', 'Workshop and Architectural Models', 'Sculpture' and 'Music and Civilization' to address another significant approach to architectural studies.

For those who are keen on focusing on technology, more computer applications like 'GIS', 'Rendering and Animation', 'Computer Graphic Design' and 'Web Design' are introduced using up-to-date software, to improve design and communication skills.

Students who have special interest in interior design have the following electives: 'Interior Design Principles', 'Colours & Light In Interior', 'Furniture Design', 'Functional Requirements In Interior Environment', '20th Century Interior', and 'Comparative Styles In Furniture'

## **10 Commendations**

- 10.1 The Board commends the staff team for the exceptional support provided to students. This collegiate approach to architectural education has fostered a strong community and identity in the department.
- 10.2 The Board commends the department on the elective course system and the wide variety of subjects students can choose from. The diversity of elective choice allows students to express themselves in different domains of design and creativity.
- 10.3 The Board commends the department for its commitment to educating architects of the future through projects situated in the real world. The socially driven ambitions of the department help students develop their design skills in preparation for architectural practice.

## **11 Conditions**

There are no conditions.

## **12 Action points**

There are no action points.

**13 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.

- 13.1 To build on the energy and enthusiasm of the students, the Board advises the department to continue the dialogue with students about access to studios outside of timetabled sessions and the provision of storage lockers.
- 13.2 The Board encourages the department to expand on the existing staff engagement with the Alexandria and Smart Village branches of AASTMT to include collaborative student projects and presentations.
- 13.3 The student projects in the selected samples demonstrated a mature level of technical development, rigorous research methods, and design process development. The Board advises the department to explore how further development of the conceptual foundations of a project could aid deeper critical engagement with topics.
- 13.4 The Board advises the department to encourage students to further relate the scale of buildings and spaces to human needs, with a specific focus on explorations at a range of scales. This is particularly relevant to Architectural Design 6 and the Graduation Project modules. This approach could be supplemented with further experimentation during the progress submissions, which would also encourage students to seek inspiration from precedents both within and outside of the Egyptian context.

**14 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.

**14.1 Part 1**

The Board confirmed that all Part 1 graduate attributes were met by graduates of the following programme:

B.Sc. in Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design (year five)

**14.2 Part 2**

The Board confirmed that all Part 2 graduate attributes were met by graduates of the following programme:

M.Sc. in Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design (years six & seven)

**15 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.

The Board made no further comments.

**16 Other information**

**16.1 Student numbers**

Part 1: 546

Part 2: 246

**17 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 budget holder and course leaders
- Meeting with students
- Meeting with the head of institution
- Meeting with external examiners
- Meeting with staff