



Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the RIBA Full visiting board
to Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile**

Date of visiting board: 24-26 November 2023
Confirmed by RIBA: 04 December 2023

1 Details of institution hosting courses

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
Av Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins 328
Santiago
Región Metropolitana
Chile

2 Courses offered for validation

Part 1 and 2: Professional Qualification in Architecture (6 years)

Part 1: Years 1-4

Part 2: Professional Title and Masters

Master in Architecture

Master in Urban Design

Master in Landscape Architecture

Master in Sustainable Architecture and Energy

3 Head of School

Faculty of Architecture, Design and Urban Studies (FADEU) Dean:
Mario Ubilla

School of Architecture (ARQ UC) Director: Luis Eduardo Bresciani

4 Awarding body

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

5 The visiting board

Alex Wright	Chair / Academic
Alison Coutinho	Practitioner
Cindy Walters	Practitioner
Sophie Bailey	RIBA Head of Validation

6 Procedures and Themes and Values for Architectural Education

The visiting board was carried out under the RIBA Procedures for Validation and Themes and Values for UK and international courses in architecture (published September 2021, and effective from September 2022); this document is available at www.architecture.com.

7 Proposals of the visiting board

On the 04 December 2023 the RIBA confirmed that the following courses and qualifications are unconditionally revalidated:

Part 1 and 2: Professional Qualification in Architecture (6 years)

Part 1: Years 1-4

Part 2: Professional Title and Masters

Master in Architecture

Master in Urban Design

Master in Landscape Architecture

Master in Sustainable Architecture and Energy

The next visit to Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile will take place in 2028.

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 of the annual statistical return issued by the RIBA Education Department

9 Academic position statement (written by the School)

Training for Committed Leadership

The School of Architecture UC (ARQ UC) stands out for providing a comprehensive education in the field of architecture, which balances strong training in project design in all its scales and dimensions, with solid theoretical training in the fields of architectural history, technology, urban design, and landscape. The School aims to generate research and critical action capabilities, socially committed to the main challenges of the built environment and contemporary society.

This training, which favours reflective competencies based on project design, has allowed our graduates to expand their activities in fields as diverse as public building, housing, urban design and planning, landscape architecture, heritage recovery, and sustainable architecture. This action-oriented approach has enabled our lecturers and graduates to assume leading positions in academia and in public and private practice, both nationally and internationally.

Our approach has made it possible to attract the best students in the country, with the highest scores in the National University Selection Test for the 2022-2023 intake. This leadership has also translated into the School of Architecture being ranked 36th in the "QS World University Ranking 2023 of Architecture Schools", ranking the school 21st globally in "Employer Reputation" and 39th in "Academic Reputation". Likewise, national leadership has meant that the school has been consistently ranked 1st in Chile and Latin America.

This reputation is based on a highly qualified academic body: 46% of our full-time professors have doctorates and 36% have master's degrees from the best universities in the world. Professionally, our academics have been recognised both nationally and internationally for their work, winning various awards for their careers, works, and publications, or being appointed to positions of national importance in public and private entities.

As a whole, the research activities of the university have expanded in recent years, diversifying in all disciplinary fields. The School of Architecture is the largest unit within the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Urban Studies (FADEU) and has developed a recognized core of the UC Interdisciplinary Research Centres, such as the Centre for Sustainable Urban Development;

the UC Wood Innovation Centre; the UC Cultural Heritage Centre; or the Concrete Innovation Centre, among others.

The dissemination of ideas, projects, and debates on architecture is also part of the essence of the school, its training, and intellectual leadership. To this end, the school has a publishing house "Ediciones ARQ", which publishes a wide range of material including the quarterly ARQ magazine. In particular, this magazine is one of the university publications indexed in the Thomson ISI: WOS Arts and Humanities Citation Index, among others, and has positioned itself as an important actor in the dialogue with culture and architecture at a global level.

Integrated and project-oriented training as a way of doing research

Since 2013, our study programme has reinforced the integration of theory, research, and design in it's with the Master's programmes as a way of promoting more innovative practices. We argue that much of the relevant and innovative research in architecture tends to emerge from design practices. From our perspective, relevant and innovative research in architecture — a key part of the UC Architecture School's approach — is fundamental to generating better projects and training students with the ability to ask and answer relevant questions based on reality. We believe this research is especially necessary in times of uncertainty and change, such as the present.

From this perspective, the teaching of architecture at UC also emphasises the development of critical thinking skills and a deep understanding of history and theory in all fields of the discipline. Our programme prioritises gradual learning in architecture workshops and representation in relation to courses in Theory, History and Criticism, Technology, Construction and Energies, City and Landscape.

Our curriculum is based on a model of academic training at university level, which takes advantage of all the opportunities of the discipline and professional practice that many teachers bring to the school, where 45% of the permanent staff manage their own outstanding professional practices. This condition provides for a diverse offer of architectural workshops and courses at the undergraduate stage, allowing our students to move towards a more interdisciplinary and in-depth study in project design in the existing Master's programmes: Master of Architecture; Landscape Architecture, Urban Project and Sustainable Architecture and Energy¹. The stage leading to the title of architect and the Master's degree, also allows some students to progress to the Doctorate in Architecture and Urban Studies, an interdisciplinary academic programme offered by the same Faculty to which we belong.

Common disciplinary training and training of expanded fields of architecture

Part 1: Licenciante in Architecture (8 semesters)

Part 1 includes the Workshops and Formative Courses. Except for the possibility of choosing workshops in semesters 6, 7 and 8, all courses in this stage are compulsory in the areas of Workshops, Theory-History-Criticism, Technology-Building, and City-Landscape. The aim of this common formative stage is to provide a broad range of knowledge and skills so that students

have a general understanding of architecture and its fields and can define their skills and interests. The Elective Workshops in semesters 7 and 8 are especially oriented to reinforce professional competences and open options for students to explore their different interests in architecture. This formative stage is especially complemented by elective courses from other disciplines (OFG) as part of the UC General Training Plan.

Part 2: Professional Degree in Architecture + Master (3 semesters)

Part 2 leads to the Master's Degree and the Professional Degree in Architecture. This stage of training is structured based on the student's choice of one of the four Master's programmes offered by the School in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Urban Project (Urban Design), and Sustainable Architecture and Energy. Through a format of specialisation courses, research seminar courses and project-oriented research workshops, students acquire research and critical reflection skills in projects of various scales. At this stage, students obtain the Professional Degree along with the master's degree.

10 Commendations

- 10.1 The Board commends the exemplary academic rigour of the programmes, the distinctive curriculum structure that enables specialisms to be pursued at Master's level, and the pedagogical approach that embeds research by design as a means to prepare students for an uncertain future.
- 10.2 The Board commends the school on the quality and commitment of its staff, and in its combination of research staff with teaching staff, who have strong links to professional practice.
- 10.3 The Board commends the school for its response to the last Visiting Board and for the on-going reflective, critical self-assessment of its programmes, which was evident in all the meetings we attended.

11 Conditions

There are no conditions.

12 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.

- 12.1 The Board welcomes the elements within the programmes that aim to address issues related to sustainability. However, given the urgency of the climate and ecological crises which we face, and the important role of architectural, urban and landscape design in addressing these crises, we recommend that the school reviews the core mandatory content of its Part 1 and 2 programmes with respect to sustainability.

The Board welcomes the opportunity for students to specialise in Sustainable Architecture and Energy at Part 2, but we recommend that attention is paid to

ensuring the carbon literacy of all Part 1 and Part 2 graduates. We also recommend the review includes the acquisition of skills, knowledge and techniques that can be applied to design projects where the consideration of the full carbon life cycle informs the design process. We recommend that the role of architecture's response to the climate emergency is considered core to all pathways through the school, and that particular attention is given to the content delivered at Part 1 level.

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** The Board welcomes the aspects of internationalisation that were explained to us. However, we suggest there may be benefit in the school finding ways to more fully present and celebrate the various forms of international engagement which take place in order that these are more visible and accessible.
- 13.2** The Board was impressed by the excellent workshop facilities which are available to the benefit of students at Part 1 and 2 levels. However, given the rapidly developing nature of equipment and software, especially associated with digital fabrication, we suggest this provision is regularly reviewed. This should ensure the school continues to offer the same standard of provision as a key component of the Part 1 and 2 programmes.
- 13.3** The Board welcomes the focus on the importance of studio culture within the school. However, we suggest that the provision of studio space is reviewed for all the cohorts within the context of the physical resources within the school. Making maximum beneficial use of all available space may provide some additional benefit to students. If possible, creation of additional space to support the studio-based pedagogy would be welcomed. The provision of suitable studio space can be an important component in ensuring a level playing field for those students who do not have access to independent study space.
- 13.4** The Board welcomes the school's approach to widening participation and social inclusion. We suggest it may be helpful to monitor the academic outcomes of students who enter through the various social inclusion routes. This may suggest areas where additional support would be of benefit during their academic pathway.
- 13.5** The Board suggests the school reviews how the requirements (including accessibility) of the full range of potential building users are manifest in the design and representation of projects at Parts 1 and 2.

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.

Graduate Attributes for Part 1

The Board confirmed that all of the Part 1 graduate attributes were met by graduates of the Part 1: Licenciante in Architecture (8 semesters).

Graduate Attributes for Part 2

The Board confirmed that all of the Part 2 graduate attributes were met by graduates of the Part 2: Professional Degree in Architecture + Master (3 semesters). [Master in Architecture; Master in Urban Design; Master in Landscape Architecture; Master in Sustainable Architecture and Energy]

15 Review of work against Themes and Values

It should be noted that where the visiting board considered the Themes and Values to have been met, no commentary is offered. Where concerns were noted (or a T&V were clearly not met), commentary is supplied. Finally, where academic outcomes suggested a T&V was particularly positively demonstrated, commentary is supplied.

Themes and Values for Part 1

The Board confirmed that all of the Themes and Values were met by graduates of the Part 1: Licenciante in Architecture (8 semesters).

Themes and Values for Part 2

The Board confirmed that all of the Themes and Values were met by graduates of the Part 2: Professional Degree in Architecture + Master (3 semesters). [Master in Architecture; Master in Urban Design; Master in Landscape Architecture; Master in Sustainable Architecture and Energy]

16 Other information

16.1 Student numbers (from the School)

Part 1 Undergraduate 870
Part 2 Master 330

16.2 Documentation provided

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

17 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.

- Budget holder and course leaders
- Students
- Head of Institution
- External examiners
- Staff