

Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the RIBA Full visiting board
to University of Liechtenstein**

Date of visiting board: 28 – 29 May 2024

Confirmed by RIBA Education Committee: 4 September 2024

1 Details of institution hosting courses

University of Liechtenstein
 Fürst-Franz-Josef-Strasse
 9490 Vaduz
 Liechtenstein

2 Courses offered for validation.

BSc Architecture (equivalent to RIBA Part 1)
 MSc Architecture (equivalent to RIBA Part 2)
 PhD programme in Architecture and Planning

3 Head of School & Course Leads

Prof. Dr. Daniel Stockhammer
 Professor of Built Heritage and Upcycling
 Dean LSA

Prof. Dr. Lindsay Blair Howe
 Associate Professor of Architecture and Society and academic director of the
 doctoral programme in Architecture and Planning

Prof. Dipl. Arch. ETH Urs Meister
 Professor of Design and Construction
 Head of the Master's degree programme in Architecture

Prof. Dipl.-Arch. ETH Dietrich Schwarz
 Professor of Architecture and Sustainable Design
 Co-Academic Director of the Bachelor's degree programme in Architecture

Prof. Dipl. Arch. ETH Michael Wagner
 Professor of Architecture and Urban Design
 Co-Academic Director of the Bachelor's degree programme in Architecture

4 Awarding body

University of Liechtenstein

5 The visiting board

Professor Paul Jones (Chair)	Academic
Daniel Goodricke	Academic
Paula Craft-Pegg	Academic
Dr Jenny Russell	Director of Education & Learning
Tracy Flanagan	RIBA Validation Manager
Joshua Brookes	RIBA Validation Manager (Observer)

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 4 September 2024, the RIBA confirmed continued validation of the following courses:

BSc Architecture (equivalent to RIBA Part 1)
MSc Architecture (equivalent to RIBA Part 2)
PhD programme in Architecture and Planning

The next visit to University of Liechtenstein will take place in 2029.

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)

The Liechtenstein School of Architecture (LSA) is committed to sustainable design and construction. Our research and teaching focus on spatial responses to climate change, resource scarcity and urbanization processes. The LSA creates, teaches and cultivates knowledge for the benefit of society and the environment. We equip architects with the skills to meet global and local challenges with innovative, sustainable and liveable solutions. In the context of social transformation and the responsible use of energy, land, materials and immaterial resources, the LSA's strategic fields of action focus on:

- resilient settlement structures and mobility
- sustainable materials, energy efficient buildings and local value creation
- fostering the development of built heritage and building cultures.

Concentration on key topics

To be able to react quickly to the needs of society and education, the former institute and its chairs have been transformed into five agile units:

- The "Urbanism, Architecture & Society" unit examines the connections between people and space, across multiple scales of engagement, and how this knowledge provides us with the tools to confront urgent societal challenges.
- The "Urban Design & Spatial Development" unit investigates how to create low emission, climate change-adapted, biodiverse and inclusive

urban landscapes and resilient settlement structures through urban design and future-oriented spatial development.

- The "Sustainable Design" unit pioneers a sustainable future by blending advanced green technologies with holistic approaches and ethical reevaluation, aiming to harmonize architectural practices with earth's planetary boundaries and enhance global and local quality of life.
- The "Built Heritage & Upcycling" unit examines the material and immaterial resources of the built environment and strategies for their preservation, reuse and transfer to a circular economy.
- The "Craft & Structure" unit explores the relationship between material, construction and structure with regard to sustainably built and tectonically joined architecture."

In addition to building up the academic units with their focus areas, the LSA strives to recruit the best possible teaching staff from practice. For this purpose, we have created the position "Professor of Practice". This enables the LSA to retain excellent teaching staff by offering these part-time professorships in alignment with professional practice.

Unique study experience

In an international, personally mentored and close-knit environment, aspiring architects learn to initiate and successfully implement sustainable projects across various scales. Different educational formats encourage students to act both responsibly and for the common good. We educate architects of the future, who:

- design with ecological and economical responsibility.
- are regionally rooted yet globally active.
- unite theory and praxis within their practice.
- act with social relevance.
- and pursue cultural sustainability with their work.

Small and personal: Like the Principality of Liechtenstein, the LSA is one of the smaller players in Europe. With around 200 students, we describe ourselves as one of the most close-knit and intimate architecture schools in the region. The ratio of teaching staff to students in the design studios is around 1 to 10, the studio size is around 20 students.

Interdisciplinary: Additionally, the design studios are co-taught by experts from professional and academic fields, encouraging design proposals that are at their heart inter- or even transdisciplinary.

Socially responsible: The students learn to recognise the challenges of the future, initiate projects and implement them successfully. Awareness of the social, political, ecological, economic, and cultural relevance of projects is important to us.

International: The second award level, taught in English, distinguishes itself through its international and multi-cultural student body. On average, students in the advanced studios come from around 20 countries. The programme's third semester is reserved for an exchange abroad, to one of our 35 partner Universities across the globe.

Focused: The Doctoral programme, taught in English and German, enables students to investigate personal research interests on PhD level within the five research units of the school: urbanism, architecture & society; urban design & spatial development; sustainable design; built heritage & upcycling; craft & structure. Students from this programme are actively part of research and teaching activities at the school, enabling a direct impact of research on teaching and vice versa.

Offering three individual programmes

The Bachelor's degree programme in Architecture:

- comprehensive and sound education with opportunities to customise the curriculum.
- personalised teaching by established and successful architects and scholars
- balance between theory and practice.
- possibility to combine studying with work and family life.

Workshop: We use the metaphor of the "workshop" for the Bachelor's degree programme. It offers students a space in which they can learn and experience the regional practice of architecture. The programme revolves around the question of how sustainable architecture is developed in the Alpine Rhine Valley and beyond that, with implications back to this. Our students are characterised by active craftsmanship knowledge and a strong sense of responsibility towards our environment and society. The Bachelor of Science in Architecture at the University of Liechtenstein enables students to competently practice architecture in the Alpine Rhine Valley and beyond.

Master's degree programme in Architecture

- cosmopolitan atmosphere in a unique alpine setting with an international outlook
- one-to-one teaching in small studios and classes
- architectural studies committed to sustainability and social relevance.
- possibility to combine studying with work and family life.

Laboratory: We consider our Master's degree programme to be a "laboratory". It builds upon the knowledge gained in the Bachelor's degree programme and aims to put the expertise and practice of our region into a global context. The way in which architecture is being produced today is questioned and reflected in order to develop the discipline for the future. Interdisciplinarity and internationality enable comparisons with other building cultures, sciences and

methods. The programme uses scientific research as a basis from which to develop experimental and visionary design proposals.

Doctoral degree programme in Architecture and Planning

- personalised programme of studies grounded in cutting-edge research and teaching.
- flexible course structure and options for achieving credit points.
- fully integrated into the university's networks in academia and practice

Forum: As an extension of our Master's degree programme, the Doctoral programme aims to promote and develop researchers in the fields of architecture and planning, with specialisations in the LSA's unique research focal points. It is geared toward the highest international standards in doctoral teaching and methods. Students are embedded in interdisciplinary research projects and consortia. We see the programme as a platform of scientific exchange, or "forum" for groundbreaking and societally relevant research endeavours.

By cooperating with international partners bridging science and practice, the LSA is the research and competence centre for sustainable architecture and spatial development for Liechtenstein, the Alpine Rhine Valley and the German-speaking «Vierländerregion». As the cosmopolitan think-tank for critical and creative discussion and action, the LSA links global questions and answers with regional challenges.

10 Commendations

- 10.1** The board commends the school for the richness of its community of practice, which underpins the provision of an outstanding student experience.
- 10.2** The board commends the ongoing critical reflections culminating in the new 2024 curriculum that addresses the pertinent challenges of future practice, through the lens of the RIBA Themes and Values.
- 10.3** The board commends the school for its outward-facing, civic engagement to the benefit of local and regional community through its pro bono projects, and its growing commitment to international outreach.

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 While the board commends the school on the quality of the students' design reports, care should be taken to ensure that the rich process work is not lost in the editorial process. The board strongly recommends that a process portfolio is collated throughout the academic year as an assessed component.
- 12.2 The board was highly impressed by the school's curricula, philosophy and resources and strongly recommends that the university better promotes and communicates this exemplary provision.
- 12.3 The board strongly recommends that the school develop and formalise a clear policy, and related procedures, to ensure that all doctoral and postgraduate research projects have the appropriate ethical approval.
- 12.4 While the board commends the school on its commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility, the portfolios need to better evidence the passive environmental strategies and fundamental principles that underpin all design work.

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 advises that the school extends the role of the external examiner to ensure that appropriate academic standards are benchmarked across all taught modules, in addition to the design modules.
- 13.2 While the board commends the school for its commitment to doctoral study, opportunities exist to diversify the modes of enquiry (such as PhD by design and/or creative practice), to reflect and advance the craft and making tradition of the school.
- 13.3 The board strongly suggests that the school ensure equal opportunities for staff development and progression particularly at senior level.
- 13.4 The board advises that the school provides greater opportunity for the staff to meet regularly to better contribute to the continued development of the architectural provision and the broader institutional direction.

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 BSc Architecture.

Graduate Attributes for Part 2

The Board confirmed that all of the Part 2 graduate attributes were met by graduates of the Part 2 MSc Architecture

- 15** 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 BSc Architecture.

Themes and Values for Part 2

The Board confirmed that all of the Themes and Values were met by graduates of the MSc Architecture

16 Other information

16.1 Student numbers (from the School)

BSc Architecture (equivalent to RIBA Part 1)	116
MSc Architecture (equivalent to RIBA Part 2)	46
PhD programme in Architecture and Planning	6

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. The full set of notes will be issued to the next full visiting board.

- Budget Holder and course leaders
- Students
- Head of Institution
- External Examiners
- Staff