
Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the RIBA Revisiting Board to
Abu Dhabi University**

**Date of visiting board: 23-24 October 2019
Confirmed by RIBA Education Committee: 22 January 2020**

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- 1 Details of institution hosting course/s** **(report part A)**
 Abu Dhabi University
 Abu Dhabi Campus
 P.O Box 59911, Abu Dhabi, UAE
- 2 Head of Department & Programme Coordinator**
 Mohamed El Amrousi-Associate Professor
- 3 Course/s offered for validation**
 Bachelor of Architecture Part 1
- 4 Awarding body**
 Abu Dhabi University
- 5 The visiting board**
- | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| David Dernie | chair / academic / practitioner |
| Lilly Kudic | vice chair / academic |
| Negar Mihanyar | practitioner |
| Peter Williams | practitioner |
| Sophie Bailey | validation manager |
- 6 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.
- 7 Recommendation of the Visiting Board**
 On the 22 January 2020 the RIBA Education Committee confirmed that the following courses and qualifications are awarded full validation
- Bachelor of Architecture Part 1**
- The next RIBA visiting board will take place in 2023.
- 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 institution of the annual statistical return issued by the RIBA Education Department

9 Academic position statement
(Statement written by the school)

Abu Dhabi University offers highly rewarding career oriented undergraduate and graduate degree programs aligned with the needs of the UAE and the region through excellence in teaching, student learning, faculty scholarship and engagement in community development. Abu Dhabi University participates in the process of growth, development, and prosperity of the UAE society by providing high quality graduates equipped with knowledge, skills and a thorough understanding of today's world. In order to achieve this objective, Abu Dhabi University is committed to recruiting and employing internationally qualified and experienced faculty to offer professional diploma, baccalaureate, postgraduate diploma, master's degree programs and a doctoral program that are primarily career-oriented yet integrated with the liberal arts and sciences. Abu Dhabi University promotes collegial, efficient, and effective management practices, seeks and capitalizes upon opportunities to cooperate with peer institutions worldwide and applies state-of-the-art learning technologies in modern facilities. Abu Dhabi University is an institution where research, teaching and learning are paramount.

Faculty members are hired primarily because of their ability to enhance the active learning of Abu Dhabi University students. Staff are recruited who display a genuine interest in helping Abu Dhabi University students achieve their academic goals. Relevant scholarship and research are valued not as ends in themselves, but because they have an applied value to the institution and the degree programs which students study. Service to the University and the Community are part of the responsibility of all faculty, in support of the overall mission of the University to serve the nation and the people of the UAE. Faculty and staff are encouraged to remain current in pedagogy and their fields of study for purposes of enhancing their classroom teaching.

1.1 Vision and Mission

Abu Dhabi University's vision and mission set the overall institutional direction and inform strategic planning. The institution's core character and purpose are summarized in the vision and mission statements thus:

Vision statement: Abu Dhabi University is an internationally recognized university for quality education and applied research that drives economic and social development in the region and beyond.

Mission statement: The mission of Abu Dhabi University is to produce highly qualified career-oriented graduates in alignment with regional and global needs through excellence in teaching, student learning, faculty scholarship and engagement in community development.

The mission statement and associated policies prioritize the university's engagement with the local community to contribute to its corporate social responsibility role in the development of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). To this end, ADU engages in community development by providing educational programs for local secondary and university

students, involving students in internships, offering courses to advance professional development and through collaborative relationships with other universities and business organizations.

ADU's educational objectives, set out in the mission statement, are further articulated in the second

ADU five-year Strategic Plan. The key strategic objectives being:

1. Create a student-centered learning environment conducive to intellectual and professional student growth.
2. Meet the needs of our stakeholders and be a responsive contributor to our community.
3. Achieve academic excellence at every level.
4. Deliver operational excellence across the institution.
5. Support a collegial and innovative work environment.
6. Maintain a sustainable financial position with the ongoing capacity to invest in growth and pursuit of excellence.

1.1.1 Fit of the Proposed Program within the Institutional Mission

The Bachelor Architecture supports fully the principal strategic vision and mission of Abu Dhabi University; namely, to drive the economic and social development of the UAE, in alignment with regional and global needs, through excellence in teaching student learning, faculty scholarship and engagement in community development.

The educational mission of the Architecture Program is to provide students with a multidisciplinary curriculum that is fundamental, yet broad and flexible. The program seeks to produce graduates who are well-rounded skills, in Design and technical knowledge; who are able to analyze, evaluate, and design projects of various complexity; who have the ability to communicate effectively. Students that have ideas for undergraduate research; and who have acquired an understanding and appreciation for global, societal and environmental issues and are thus prepared for a successful career path toward leadership in industry, government institutions, and academia.

1.2 Organization

Abu Dhabi University operates under the patronage of HH Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed Al Nayhan, Deputy prime Minister and President of Abu Dhabi University's Board of Trustees. His Excellency Ali Saeed Bin Hanna! Al Dhaheri is the Chairman of the Executive Board of Governors. The strategy and operation of ADU are led by the Chancellor, Provost and other senior executives. Academically, the Provost is the Chief Academic Officer and the Deans report directly to the Provost. ADU has five Colleges, each led by a Dean; the College of Engineering (CoE), the College of Business Administration (CoBA), the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Law and University College, the latter charged primarily with General Education. In addition, there is a Director of the Military Programs tasked with the leadership and management of the programmed offered to the military.

10 Conditions

There are no conditions

Please see below for the revisiting board's response to 2018's conditions:

Conditions taken from the 2018 validation report:

Action points 6.2 and 6.3 of the Exploratory Board of August 2016 specifically concerned the requirements to present a sample of complete academic portfolios and assessment sheets in accordance with the Procedures for Validation. These were not available in full at the Full Visit as required. The full academic portfolio is essential evidence for visiting boards in determining whether all graduate attributes and criteria have been satisfactorily met. A revisiting board will take place in the summer of 2019 to consider whether the condition has been met.

Action points taken from the 2016 exploratory validation report:

6.2 The full visiting board will expect to see a comprehensive academic portfolio of work for an agreed sample of students in accordance with the Procedures for Validation. The academic portfolio is described in section 4.7 of the Procedures documents (page 34). All items in bold must be included.

6.3 The Board will also require assessment sheet to be provided (section 4.4 of the Procedures for Validation, pages 26 and 27, first two bullet points).

Board response

The board confirms that it was able to review full and complete academic portfolios and mark sheets for an adequate sample of students. They were clearly labelled and navigable.

2019 board commentary

Whilst the board was pleased to see complete academic portfolios, there were some areas of weakness identified, including aspects of comprehensive design projects, history and theory and urban design. The development of the students' capacity for critical thinking in architecture should be a key ambition for the teaching team as it will inform all other curricular areas.

The board also noted that the provision of studio facilities was limited to timetabled class rooms. The development of a richer learning environment and studio culture would require significant reconsideration of facilities including dedicated studio space. This would support peer to peer learning and enhance the student experience.

In addition, the board encourages further engagement with the profession both in the region and internationally; despite economic downturn the successful internship would benefit from being extended as a fruitful component of the curriculum.

Notes of meetings

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On request, the RIBA will issue a copy of the minutes taken from the following meetings:

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