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**Royal Institute of British Architects**

**Report of the RIBA Full Visiting Board  
to the Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)  
(Perak)**

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- 1**     **Details of institution hosting course/s** **(report part A)**  
 Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) (Perak)  
 Seri Iskandar  
 32610 Bandar Baru Seri Iskandar  
 Perak  
 Malaysia
- 2**     **Dean of Faculty**  
 Prof TPr Dr Jamallunlaili Abdullah
- Head of Faculty**  
 Sr Dr Yuhainis Binti Abdul Talib
- 3**     **Course/s offered for validation**  
 Bachelor of Science (Hons.) Architecture, Part 1
- 4**     **Faculty co-ordinator for Bachelor of Science (Hons) Architecture**  
 Mr. Mohd Nasurudin Hasbullah
- 5**     **Awarding body**  
 Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)
- 6**     **The visiting board**
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|------------------|-------------------------|
| Sally Stewart    | chair/academic          |
| Nick Hayhurst    | vice chair/practitioner |
| Sara Biscaya     | academic                |
| Luke Murray      | academic                |
| Ar Heng Jee Seng | regional representative |
| Sophie Bailey    | RIBA validation manager |
- 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](http://www.architecture.com).
- 8**     **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 Science (Hons.) Architecture, Part 1
- The next RIBA visiting board will take place in 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

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- 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**  
(Statement written by the school)

**Our history**

Our university is one of the oldest public institutions of higher learning in Malaysia. Its history is traced back as a training college in 1956, which then became an institute in 1967 under the name Institut Teknologi MARA (ITM). The main concern for its establishment was to train the Bumiputeras<sup>1</sup> academically to become skilled professionals in various fields. Architecture was one of the earliest programmes offered by ITM. The Part 1 was first offered in 1969, followed by the Part 2 programme in 1970. The awards were then named Diploma in Architecture and Advanced Diploma in Architecture. The Institute's contribution towards producing quality graduates in various fields earned itself a university status in 1999, hence the name it carries today - Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). It is widely known in Malaysia as a premier university, being the largest in the country in scale and enrolment. Like other local universities, programmes offered at UiTM are centred on the outcome based education (OBE), in compliance with the requirements of the Malaysian Quality Framework (MQF)<sup>2</sup>. Architecture is an important entity of the Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying (acronym, FSPU). FSPU is reputed to be the pioneer in establishing comprehensive programmes related to the field of the built environment in the country. At present the faculty comprises of 11 Centre of Studies running 29 academic programmes. Since 2016, CoSA and 3 other Centres of Studies in FSPU have been relocated and running their programmes at new location in UiTM Puncak Alam campus (UiTM Selangor) which is about 25 kilometres away from its previous location at UiTM Shah Alam. These Centres of Studies are mainly design/studio based programmes.

**Our aim, approach and strength**

At its inception, the intention of UiTM architecture was purely practical, which was to train Bumiputeras at semiprofessional and professional levels to meet the manpower needs of the nation in the building industry and field of architecture. This intention continues to be the main concern of our programme till today as the number of architects and architectural expertise in the country remains inadequate to help steer the country's development and growth. We are grooming future professional architects to serve primarily the Malaysian society that is diverse in cultural standing, views and expectations. As a whole, the society is primarily educated, has high expectations and eager to embrace the status of a developed nation that the country aspires to soon become. Our programmes expand our students' sense of responsibility towards creating architecture that cares for the current and future generations.

In line with the history of UiTM as a technical-oriented institute, our strength is in the grooming of technically abled graduates tailored to serve the industry as professional architects, and design practitioners. In order to continue to hold the respectable position of a leader in a building construction team, an architect ought to be technically sound, information rich and sensitive towards the implications of his/her design decisions towards the society, the natural and built environment and the economy. We instil in our students sensitivity in spatial arrangements to be in sync with macro and micro level contextual parameters, and respectfulness towards the social needs, and the peculiarities of building users. We inspire our students to take a step further and be engaged on the practical dimensions of design inquiries that confront technological issues to realise the inward and outward beauty of an architectural outcome.

We interpret intellectual pursuit in architecture to not only include engagement in design narration, philosophy, architectural positioning and aesthetics. The ability to configure, resolve and communicate the technicalities to materialise and balance the art and science of an architectural conception is a demonstration of mental prowess and practical skills of the highest degree.

Our strategy: The concerns towards practical dimension of architecture is channelled into our learning environment through the capacity of our experienced studio tutors, invited experts, manufacturers, practitioners, and other allied fields. We respond to scrutiny and learn through our appointed external examiners, academic advisor, and expert juries. Our faculty's comprehensive offering of diverse built environment programmes conveniently places us within the intensive dialogue on issues pertaining to the building industry as a whole. We gain through regular visits and talks by professors and practitioners from other Centre of Studies, and other universities.

Our syllabus: Our curriculum is carefully updated in order to keep pace with new technologies and challenges. Our programme, particularly the Part 1 is mainstream in approach. We designed our curriculum by being mindful of the criteria and requirements set by our local Board of Architects (LAM), and the RIBA to strike a balance between science, technology and culture in design. We are committed to produce graduates that are wholesome, equipped with integrated knowledge, skills and competency in architectural design, technical systems, technological advancement, environmental and social issues; and that they understand the essence of cultural, historical, social, economic and environmental dimensions in connection with the architects' role and responsibilities in society. We view our B.Sc. (Hons) Architecture Part 1 as preparatory ground for the next stage into the Master of Architecture Part 2 programme. Our anticipation is that the B. Sc. Architecture graduates will eventually continue their education to Part 2 to complete the full cycle of the academic training of a professional architect. Our current capacity allows us to recapture about 30% (previously 25%) of our own Part 1 graduates to be feeder candidates for our Part 2 Master of Architecture programme.

Part 1 and 2: Our Part 1 programme emphasizes on instilling fundamental knowledge and sensitivity, and to train and stimulate students to equip themselves with multiple architectural technical skills. The Part 1 education is designed to develop strong basic knowledge in design conception and principles, technology and drawing skills (eg. solid draughtsmanship, illustration and visualization, model-making). Our Part 1 graduates should be able, and capable of developing a concept sketch of his/her supervising architect into a complete set of presentation drawings and submission drawings, fit for the authority's approval.

The emphasis of our Part 2 education is on building higher knowledge, confidence and intellect to enable them to be managers and leaders. We challenge our students to think concurrently of how a design idea is to be attuned to meet building performance challenges. Strong communication aptitude, leadership and managerial skills are the fundamental characteristics that the programme aims to develop. They are to initiate, conceptualise, and develop design scheme into a detailed presentation and construction drawings. These will be aided by 3D physical models and up-to-date technological visualisations such as digital models and animation enhanced by the appropriate textual aspect of design report and theoretical discourse. The Part 2 holders are expected to be able to carry out the task as designing architects with confidence and independence.

Our course delivery: We assume a combination of traditional and highly technological approaches in our course delivery. Studio environment offers a formal and informal place to learn architecture, where ideas are experimented, developed and criticised by the lecturers and peers. Our lecturers are committed to studio tutorials, where the sessions are intense, and challenging to bring about the best of our students.

Practical training is an experiential approach to better understand architecture. Our Part 1 programme offers a full semester practical training - which is the longest duration in the country. Practical training offered within our academic session is a welcomed breather from the simulated studios learning environment. It allows students to gain valuable field experience, better appreciate theoretical knowledge application, and experience a diverse building industry work place. UiTM promotes the use of e-learning platforms that many of our members have adopted in their teaching and learning (T&L) processes. Other essential methods of T&L include academic visits, collaborative workshops and competitions. Our syllabus has the flexibility to enable lecturers to formulate non-conventional T&L method for their students to earn credit points.

Our graduates: Our graduates are expected to make an impact at the national and international scale and able to contribute to society and the profession. In any route of their vocational choice, our graduates exhibit technical competency and leadership confidence. Our graduates strive to serve the society through expansion of knowledge in their field of choice. Our graduates possess multiple skills and competencies to diversify into allied fields of interest such as education, research, and creative industries. We take pride of our graduates' track record of high

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employability and successes in furthering their educations at various universities around the world.

### **Future CoSA and DoA**

While our educational stand are the same, CoSA and DoA will in the immediate future chart their own respectable path to be distinctively and collectively strong to contribute better towards a significantly unique blend of architectural education in the country, to the advantage of our stakeholders. The articulation of niche areas will serve to steer and further enrich our programmes in the future. Our vision is that the two campuses will continue to harvest the opportunity in maintaining a symbiotic relationship with each other. We are in the process of defining the niche for each campus, which will take the cue from the siting, environment and cultural surrounding of the two campuses.

UiTM Selangor is strategically located 25 kilometres from Shah Alam, bordering the greater Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley north-east boundary. Its economic growth is fast, and the pace of development is intense. Sited in the Klang Valley gives it an added advantage. Klang Valley offers a laboratory of rich mix of urban issues and inspiring architectural solutions that students of architecture can experience, appreciate and learn from. Many prominent architects and practitioners have offices in the Klang Valley that make them more accessible to connect, and be part of the university activities. Being part of the biggest university and faculty, CoSA has ready access to experts from multi-disciplinary fields.

DoA Perak is located in the mid-northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. This region is rich in historical and natural elements which can become significant resources for the department to engage with the local communities and work with them for the development of local and regional architecture that have strong sense of tradition, materiality and sustainability. The exposure given to students through cultural grounded projects, will develop a high degree of consciousness to the cultural, environmental and societal aspects that present architecture of character. The course delivery will take a formal and informal approach to make connections with the local community, and historical context. Hence, DoA Perak considers this to be its niche area for future direction of programme development.

## **11 Commendations**

The visiting board made the following commendations:

- 11.1 The board commends the coordination of events and preparations including the extent of work and documentation made available to the board during their visit.
- 11.2 The board commends the energy, vitality and design thinking that takes place in Semesters 2-4. This includes the clear use of design concepts to inform an approach to architecture, the integration of ideas of tropical regionalism and the documentation of architectural thinking that is followed through to the resolution of the final project.

**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. 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 notes that action point 13.1 has not been met since the last visit. The board strongly urges the school to address this before the next visit to avoid it becoming a condition at a future RIBA visiting board.

History, theory, cultural context (GC2.1 and GC2.2) and awareness of the fine arts (GC3.3) were all evident in written submissions. However, they should be more apparent in the design work presented in the award year (semesters 7 and 8).

- 12.2 The board notes that action point 13.4 has not been met since the last visit. The board strongly urges the school to address this before the next visit to avoid it becoming a condition at a future RIBA visiting board.

The board noted that any analysis of sense of place, communities and the character of the area in which projects are undertaken are not evident in the student work. In accordance with GC1.1 and GC5.3, the Board would encourage greater qualitative understanding of context in the design process and final representation.

- 12.3 The board notes that the academic position statement submitted does not adequately reflect the current academic agenda. The board recommends that the school rewrite the academic position to better communicate this. The academic position statement should also define UiMT Perak's approach to 'tropical regionalism' including social cultural and environment context and regional identity.

- 12.4 The board recommends that the school considers how the work carried out by students in Cultural Context and Construction, Environment & Technology modules can be designed to support the development of integrated and holistic architectural thinking in semesters 7 and 8.

- 12.5 The board recommend that the school consider how a wider range of assessment methods in Cultural Context and Construction, Environment & Technology modules provide a sense of critical reflection in these subject and to aid integrated thinking of this material within the design studio. In particular they should consider, alternatives to examinations that support progressive in-depth thinking, and academic writing.

- 12.6 The board recommend the school map the RIBA requirement for 50% design content within the degree against the current curriculum.

- 12.7 The board recommend the school map project aims and outcomes across the eight semesters to be able to reflect on the progressive nature of work set, and the architectural knowledge and understanding being tested particularly in semesters 5 to 8.

12.8 The board requires the school to prepare a document that maps within which modules students meet the Part 1 RIBA Graduate Attributes.

**13. Advice**

The visiting board offers the following advice to the Department 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 reconsiders the timing of the module Architectural Practice (AAR686) to sit before student's placement in industry in Semester 6.

13.2 The board advises that students in semesters 7 and 8 be encouraged to fully explore and rigorously test spatial and experiential qualities.

13.3 The board encourages the school to provide regular briefings on assessment methods and grading with students in all levels of the programme, to support personal development and learning.

**14 Delivery of academic position**

Please see action point 12.3.

**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.

**Graduate Attributes for Part 1**

Please see action point 12.8.

**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.

**Graduate Criteria for Part 1**

Please see action point 12.1 and 12.2.

**17 Other information**

**17.1 Student numbers**

Year 1: 107

Year 2: 129

Year 3: 122

Year 4: 170

**Total: 528**

**17.2 Documentation provided**

Whilst the documentation prior to the visit was adequate, accurate mapping had not been provided. Please see action point 12.8.



**Notes of meetings**

**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**