

Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the RIBA visiting board
to the Universidad de Palermo**

Date of visiting board: 4 and 5 July 2019

Confirmed by RIBA Education Committee: 19 September 2019

1 Details of institution hosting course/s

Facultad de Arquitectura
Universidad de Palermo
Ecuador 931 C1214ACO
Buenos Aires
Argentina

2 Dean of Architecture

Daniel Silberfaden

3 Courses offered for validation

Programme of Architecture

4 Awarding body

Universidad de Palermo

5 The visiting board

Matt Gaskin - Chair
James Lai – Vice Chair
Carol Norton
Kate Cheyne
Arch. Alejandra Achával – regional representative

Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk, RIBA Validation Manager – in attendance.

The Board expresses its thanks to Andrea Moncalvo and Roció Chakarian who acted as interpreters during the visit.

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 Proposals of the visiting board

On 19 September 2019 the RIBA Education Committee confirmed unconditional revalidation of the following course:

Programme of Architecture, Parts 1 and 2

The next full visiting board will take place in 2024.

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 (*written by the School*)

The vigor of the Architecture School of the University of Palermo, since its foundation, expresses through a teaching deeply rooted in reality and the spirit of our era. Our projects are designed to provide concrete solutions to real problems. Our main goal is to improve the life of people thanks to architecture.

We understand architecture as a universal language generated and modify by the input of our students and teachers, who come from different parts of the world, as the benefit of being constantly bringing external professionals to our students. Architecture is created here, to local issues, but with contributions from all latitudes, which generates original expressions for problem solving. Likewise, we integrate the different areas of architecture across digital technology, going along with the permanent evolution of architectonic knowledge and being at the forefront in the learning regarding new equipment revolutionizing construction.

In this sense, we research to improve the habitat of human beings and comprehend the cultural transformations to which architecture should have to answer. We research to defy the established and inspire our community to find answers to questions not yet asked. Our Arquis document is the expression of this search and is considered the best-edited research publication by the most relevant professional institutions of the country.

We love what we do. A deep-rooted flame that never extinguishes, even during hard times. It is our engine and we feel that, without architecture something is missing. Because of this, in our workshops we project, design, debate and reflect creating new knowledge, all together in small groups and where everyone's opinion matters. Our academic staff is formed by architects sharing their passion for teaching and professional activity, where they stand out with prestigious awards. Professors close to their students create a community that learns collectively.

THE ARCHITECT THAT WE EDUCATE

The figure of the architect as an enlightened character, owner and lord of all decisions in the contemporary design, no need to explain decisions, disappeared long ago. The necessity and efficiency appear in all the decisions in the contemporary project. Moreover, the collaborative structure of work prevents this Renaissance reminiscence.

For the architect to be able to participate in these new processes in contemporary spaces, must be an expert in what he does and integrate in teams where he collaborates and complements the other expert's work.

Thus, we must look all the clues searching, for example, contemporary art, which has always given very rapid signals of inquiry into space and formal appreciation. We look in economic and innovative architectural projects, we search in industrial processes, we look in reutilization and self-construction, we look in doctoral thesis, in scientific papers, in brilliant minds, in new materials development and new applications. We look widely in all that physically or emotionally unveils a series of ideas that helps us be what these times of efficiency and rationality demands on us.

If we could overlook the redundant and needless of projects more arrogant than needed, we would only remained with efficiency and necessity. We assist to a real overwhelming avalanche of news and information about architecture from all around the planet. Not only regarding to its production flow, but for the exponential proliferation of news media that offer permanently more data, more projects, more images, more fundamental values of an architecture yet to come. In that sense, we consider the architecture workshop the center that integrates the universe of knowledge and actions to be an architect. Throughout the career, the students learn that in architecture converge many areas of knowledge and that involves research, analysis, reflection, synthesis and proposals. These actions are the basics of the contemporary attitude of being an architect committed to his time.

The workshop as a learning environment: space that educates

The architecture workshop in the environment where creative liberty rules and students achieve the skills and knowledge needed to develop projects of increasing complexity, research and integrate the contents from construction, structures, history and culture acquired in these and other courses. Creativity and design capacity are developed, always keeping in mind that their ideas must be committed with their societies and comprehend the scope of today's architecture, its content, form and technology as a transformation of contemporary design. We aim to bring a balanced training among design, construction, history and theory. We consider project research as the necessary step for the creation of architectural knowledge.

Within this framework, our Research Center considers that architecture constitutes its own language and scope of knowledge, with the aim of developing through a good design project, advances within the field, understanding the need of the process of intellectual stimulation, oriented to the development of critical search and evaluation processes. This scope not only refers to technological

aspects, but also involves understanding how spaces and forms create societies and their values.

Project research and creation of knowledge in architecture

The training offered by the architecture career includes the development and participation in research, development and creation tasks (R&D+c). This objective is achieved through the introduction of dedicated modules providing knowledge and training for the research task, the development of R&D projects and the option of deepening this training by selecting elective courses and applying to work as student-researcher in projects conducted by professors.

The incorporation of advanced students is promoted as student-researchers. Such incorporation emerges at the initiative of a proposal from the director of the research project or through the opening of a call for such participation, whose bases are established for each case in particular.

10. Commendations

The Board commends:

- 10.1 The scale of the School which enables an impressive student:staff ratio, which clearly strengthens the academic experience, contributing to excellent teaching practice and student success.
- 10.2 The equilibrium and strength across all subject areas, particularly the approach to urbanism in the design studio which demonstrates the School's passion for realistic proposals for the city.
- 10.3 The ongoing publication of Arquis (the Faculty of Architecture magazine) which frames the School's research, ethos and innovation.

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 recommends that the School review the time allocated to the final year design projects to enable the students to show greater depth of complex thinking and material resolution.

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 recognises the excellent, informal communication between staff and students and would recommend introducing mechanisms to allow students to contribute to the evolution of the school management and culture.
- 13.2 The Board encourages the School to establish a digital archive of student work from all years to capture the quality and energy of the work presented at the juries.
- 13.3 The Board advises the School to evidence the way it moderates the assessment process to ensure parity between shifts.
- 13.4 The Board advises the School to ensure that all students undertake a variety of design projects and typologies during their time of study.

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 The Board confirmed that all Part 1 and 2 graduate attributes were met by the graduates of the Programme of Architecture.

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.

- 15.1 The Board made no further comments.

16 Other information

16.1 Student numbers

600

16.2 Documentation provided

The School 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 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 Dean
- Meeting with external examiners
- Meeting with staff