
Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the RIBA Visiting Board
to the Universidad de la Salle**

Parts 1 and 2 for the Programme of Architecture

Date of visiting board: 11-12 May 2017

Confirmed by RIBA Education Committee: 20 September 2017

1 Details of institution hosting course/s **(report part A)**

Universidad de La Salle, Bogotá, Colombia
 Cra. 2 No. 10 – 70
 Bogotá
 Cundinamarca
 Colombia

2 Course offered for candidate course status

Programme of Architecture, Part 1 & Part 2

Name of awarding body

Universidad de la Salle

Course Leaders

Liliana Giraldo Arias	Dean, Faculty of Habitat Sciences
Alex Leandro Perez Perez	Director, Architecture Program
Claudia J. Sanchez	Academic Secretary
Diana M. Cortes	Academic Assistant

3 Members of the RIBA Visiting Board

David Dernie	chair/academic
Lilly Kudic	vice chair/academic
Alison Coutinho	practitioner
Peter Williams	practitioner
Claudia Mejia	regional representative
Sophie Bailey	RIBA validation manager

4 Procedures and criteria for the visit

The Visiting Board was carried out under the *RIBA procedures for validation and validation criteria*, effective from September 2011. For more information see www.architecture.com.

5 Recommendation of the Exploratory Board

At its meeting on the 20 September 2017, the RIBA Education Committee confirmed that the following courses and qualifications are unconditionally validated

Universidad de la Salle Programme of Architecture (Parts 1 & 2)

The next full RIBA visiting board will take place in 2022.

6 Commendations

The Visiting Board commends the Institution for the following:

6.1 The board commends the quality of the exhibition and in particular work in years 1, 2 and 3; the activities of the urban observatory and other studios related to aspects of research and habitat studies. The exhibition is testament to the strength of the curriculum design, and to the integrity and commitment of both staff and students.

6.2 The board commends the powerful social agenda that runs throughout the school both in terms of the curriculum design and delivery and the diversity of the student body.

- 6.3 The board commends the leadership shown by the school in terms of inclusive design.
- 6.4 The board commends the school's values, commitment to freedom of expression, its support for vulnerable communities and the way in which its strategic goals are expressly oriented towards creating a better society.
- 6.5 The board commends the school's active participation with local and national organisations and initiatives.

7 Action points

The following action points are intended as constructive suggestions to the institution:

- 7.1 Whilst the board acknowledges the progress in the development of professional portfolios, the board requires the school to produce complete academic portfolios for each student - containing all assessed work - as detailed in 4.7 of the RIBA procedures for validation.

8 Advice

The visiting board offers the following advice to the institution on desirable, but not essential, improvements, which it is felt would assist course development and raise standards:

- 8.1 The school should consider developing a more diverse range of representation techniques at later stages of the programme.
- 8.2 The board advises that the school revise the academic position statement prior to publication on the RIBA website, to better reflect the ambitious and rich environment as evidenced in the curriculum and exhibition.
- 8.3 The school should consider introducing a more robust procedure for moderation for all assessments in order to facilitate parity across workshop groups.
- 8.4 The school is encouraged to keep regular oversight of criteria mapping against course learning outcomes in order to assure ongoing compliance.
- 8.5 The board recognises progress made in space provision, but advises the school to further enhance facilities in order to support evident student ambition.

9 Delivery of academic position

The following key points were noted: see advice point 8.2.

10 Academic Position Statement

La Salle University has been included in the exclusive 10% higher educational institutions in Colombia that have been distinguished with a High Quality Institutional Accreditation, given by the Ministry of National Education, and it is the only university outside the European continent that has been certified by the European Consortium for Accreditation

(ECA) for internationalization quality, this means that the University has the processes and tools necessary to provide excellent international experiences to all students.

The Faculty of Habitat Science has three academic programs, Urbanism and Architecture for its undergraduate program, and Habitat and land management for its postgraduate Masters' degree. As part of the strategic education plan, continuous coordination processes are developed between the three programs, this allows the student to obtain the architect degree and the urban planner degree in less than seven years while coursing a Masters' credits and academic spaces.

The Architecture program thinks that in the current national context and recognizing inequalities of the global context, the architectural profession must contribute with its training and knowledge to the development of concrete proposals for the improvement of the most vulnerable populations quality of life, and because of this we are interested in the Lasallian Educational Project that promotes the development of academic exercises in contact with the local and national realities, especially with vulnerable communities, through processes with a high sense of values, sensitivity and social responsibility.

Currently the Architecture program is nationally accredited and has maintained its high quality accreditation for more than 11 consecutive years, also, our academic proposal for the recent years has been highly recognized for its results in academic and professional, and international and national contests.

We recognize that we are an academic community that learns by researching through scientific and educational methods in all of the creative processes, including research projects for the continuous improvement of academic spaces and workshop and design exercises, conducted by teachers.

The flexibility of our academic proposal allows us to incorporate different pedagogic strategies between Part 1 and Part 2 of the curriculum, thus encouraging the participation of student teams in strategic projects such as contests, special projects and national and international workshops ¹. These experiences are subject to self-evaluation and continuous improvement processes in order to promote educational processes in student academic plan.

The first part in the student's academic plan (Part 1 RIBA classification) includes 6 semesters divided into three formative years. The second (Part 2 RIBA classification) corresponds to the last 4 semesters, divided into 2 academic years.

Each academic year answers a specific question posed as a research problem and its answer becomes the convergence center for the curricular axes (basic area, professional area, research education areas and complementary education areas.)

The first year of education refers to the exploration of the basic concepts of spatial composition, linking the physical and environmental determinants of natural and built environments, developing design proposals that answer complex architectural needs.

During the second year, the emphasis is on understanding housing quality from the user and communities needs and expectations, recognizing habits and customs, in harmony with the city, its immediate environment and its living space, generating design solutions that favor human development.

The third year focuses on understanding the components that are part of the urban and rural structure, developing design proposals that integrate themselves to the different scales with which it interacts (local, urban, metropolitan and regional).

The last two years that belong to part 2 (as proposed by the RIBA classification), answers more specific questions, have a higher level of complexity with theoretical foundations, and are related to research and technical matters in order to develop detailed solutions.

During the fourth year the student recognizes and values architectural and urban heritage as having development potential, in order to make proposals that promote and encourage social development along with cultural awareness, projecting themselves towards growth and progress in different territorial scales.

On the fifth and final year of the education plan, the student demonstrates the skills and knowledge acquired during the academic processes and proposes habitat interventions based on a design exercise, by assessing its transformations and a research methodology that responds to reality's complexity. The production process is strategically articulated to the Faculty's tactical projects, internships in public or private companies, and spaces for continued theoretical study in line with the student's interests or the issues addressed in his final thesis.

Finally, we highlight the leadership role that the program and the Faculty of Habitat Science has taken on amongst private and public entities in order to strengthen the educational programs, counseling, awareness and proposal generation that promote universal accessibility, the recognition of the needs of people with different skills and mobility, and a highly developed humanist sense.

11 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 Parts 1 and 2

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

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 Parts 1 and 2

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

12 Other information

12.1 Student numbers 746 students

12.2 Documentation provided

All required RIBA documentation was provided prior the visit.

***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**