
Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the RIBA Exploratory Visiting
Board to the Sri Lanka Institute of
Information Technology**

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- 1 Details of institution hosting course/s** **(report part A)**
School of Architecture
Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology
New Kandy Road
Malabe
Sri Lanka
- 2 Head of School**
Aishani Jayasinghe
- 3 Course/s offered for validation**
BSc (Hons) Architecture
- 4 Course Leader**
Aishani Jayasinghe
- 5 Awarding body**
Liverpool John Moores University
- 6 The visiting board**
Sally Stewart chair / academic
Luke Murray vice chair / academic
Albena Atanassova practitioner
Jeremy Diaper practitioner
Mano Ponnaiah regional representative
Sophie Bailey 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.
- 8 Recommendation of the Visiting Board**
On the 16 June 2020 the RIBA Education Committee confirmed that the following courses and qualifications are awarded full validation
- BSc (Hons) Architecture (part 1)**
- The next RIBA visiting board will take place in 2025.
- 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
 - iv submission to the RIBA of the names of students passing the courses and qualifications listed

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- 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)

The School of Architecture at SLIIT was established in January 2016 as a department under the Faculty of Engineering offering degrees in of both architecture and quantity surveying. Later in January 2019 the school was separated from the faculty of Engineering and made into an independent unit with a plan to expand as a School of Art, Design and Architecture from there onwards. Since 2019 the head of the school who formally reported to the Dean-Engineering now reports directly to the Vice Chancellor.

Presently the School offers only the B.Sc(Hons) Architecture degree in collaboration with Liverpool John Moore's University (LJMU) in UK, but will be commencing the M.Sc.(Architecture) programme in September 2020 which will also be in collaboration with the Liverpool John Moore's University in UK. The B.Sc(Hons)Architecture degree has already been validated as a declared course by the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects (SLIA) in 2018. Since then, the SLIIT architecture students have been participating in SLIA events and activities which has helped them to be more informed and connected with the architecture profession in Sri Lanka.

The school of architecture is headed by a "Head of School" and academically guided under a "Chaired Professor". The present "Chaired Professor", Archt. Prof. Nimal De Silva is Emeritus Professor of Architecture and a former Dean of the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Moratuwa. He carries with him long years of experience in architectural education & practice and is a recognized expert on Sri Lankan Architectural Tradition. One of the key focuses of the SLIIT architecture program is fostering Sri Lankan identity in architecture while producing globally competent graduates; for which his guidance has been of great value. The programme is directed and conducted by a team of dedicated and eminent Chartered Architects with practice experience, trained academics and subject specialists for each module.

The first two years of the Part 1 programme is a SLIIT HND which maps to the first two years of the LJMU architecture degree. In the 3rd year, students enter the LJMU 3rd year (Level 6) to complete the B.Sc. (Hons) Architecture degree. This format has allowed the school to give students a Sri Lankan essence more effectively through some of the specific modules they follow additionally during the first two years. However the planned M.Sc. Architecture degree is following the exact LJMU part 2 syllabus from beginning to end with some adjustments to fit the local context and requirements.

A theoretical and concept based approach to architecture is evident in student work throughout the programme. Exposure to nature, culture and contextual traditional architecture, provide inspirational sources for students when deriving design concepts combined with theoretical

grounding. The freedom and flexibility allowed in interpreting and pursuing an individual design agenda promotes unique design outputs from each student.

Design programs introduced to students involve actual sites and clients, encouraging them to come up with well-grounded design solutions. They are complemented by research of subject matter, within the discipline as well as inter disciplinary. With links to other disciplines & research work within SLIIT,

students are encouraged to explore emerging technologies in their design programmes. Network of tutors drawn from practicing architects interact with students in their design programmes regularly to ensure the creative solutions are also realistic.

The School of Architecture at SLIIT is located mainly on the 7th and 8th floors of the new 14 storey academic building at the SLIIT Malabe campus. The B.Sc (Hons) Architecture degree has a full capacity of 180 students across the 3 years, and the master's degree has a capacity of 120 students in total across both the years. Presently we have 34 staff members including permanent full time, part time design tutors and visiting staff teaching at the Part 1 level.

The students enjoy designated individual work spaces in modern studio environments to which they have 24 hours / 7days a week access. The lecture rooms, computer labs, printing and technology workshops at SLIIT provide an international standard study environment.

The library is located in the main building of the same campus. Apart from physical books, magazines and journals, it also has a digital collection of architecture books which the students can easily access from anywhere. The library also gives access to paid digital research journals which both staff and students have access to. Every year since the commencement of the Architecture programme, the architecture section is being updated with new books and the library has an annual budget of over 1million rupees for purchasing Architecture books. At the same time the SLIIT students have access to the LJMU library online and to all LJMU library facilities which they can access online.

The students are encouraged to take part in national level and international level competitions in architecture, and in 2019 there were 3 students who were placed in 2 competitions. One 3rd year student won 1st place in the INSPIRELI awards student design competition – in the architecture category where over 3000 students from all over the world competed. Another 3rd year student won joint 1st place in a design competition held by the Governor of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka and the SLIIT student's design in being built as the real project. In the same competition another 2nd year student was placed 3rd.

All in house staff are required to undergo staff development programmes which are conducted regularly by SLIIT or at other government universities. Architecture teaching staff is also sent for special Architectural teaching workshops conducted by different relevant institutes as the SLIA, ARCASIA and other universities. Staff is

encouraged to engage in research and pursue higher studies leading to MPhil and PhD. awards. At the same time Practicing architects are engaged as design tutors and visiting lecturers to ensure the programme retains a strong input from the industry.

So far all students who have completed their 3rd year have been successful in securing training positions with architectural practices both in Sri Lanka and abroad and the feedback we have received from the industry has been positive and encouraging.

11 Commendations

The visiting board made the following commendations:

- 11.1 The board commends the way in which the school has identified project vehicles allowing shared design modules to explore the appropriate physical, environmental and social circumstances relevant within contemporary Sri Lanka.
- 11.2 The board commends the level of student support available through a generous student/staff ratio, further supported by studio spaces provided for all academic years.

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 school should consider how process work is better represented within the academic portfolios, including records of the iterative cycles of design development used leading to final proposals.
- 12.2 The school should consider how much time and credit weighting is given to the professional aspects of Management, Practice and Law and how these are represented across modules in year three, in order to achieve Graduate Attribute 1.5.
- 12.3 The school should consider how structural and environmental factors can be better understood and deployed as design drivers, and the resolution of these can contribute to the spatial and tectonic qualities within design projects.

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 school should consider how the progression across years one, two and three can be better synthesised, and further aligned to recognise the current differences between structure and credit of modules generated through the HND (years 1 & 2) and those generated by LJMU (year 3).

13.2 In order to fully benefit from the advice provided by external examiners, the school should consider how it can develop an annual enhancement plan to monitor progress against the examiner's comments.

14 Delivery of academic position

The academic position did not show much of an understanding regarding the ethos of the school and its regional/social positioning. The school should consider how areas of activity and specific outcomes could be considered as exceptional and the features of teaching and learning that characterise and distinguish the course offered when considered against other schools of architecture.

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

The Board confirmed that all of the Part 1 graduate attributes were met by graduates of the BSc programme.

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

The Board confirmed that all of the Part 1 graduate criteria and were met by graduates of the BSc programme.

17 Other information

17.1 Student numbers

Year 1: 60

Year 2: 50

Year 3: 42 (Year out - 9)

17.2 Documentation provided

The faculty provided all advance documentation in accordance with the validation procedures.

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**