

**Report of the RIBA visiting board
to the Universidad Europea de Madrid**

Date of visiting board: 3 & 4 October 2019
Confirmed by RIBA Education Committee: 22 January 2020

1 Details of institution hosting course/s

Departamento de Arquitectura, Diseño y Civil
Escuela de Arquitectura, Ingeniería y Diseño
Universidad Europea de Madrid
C/ Tajo, s/n. Villaviciosa de Odón. 28670 Madrid

2 Dean of School of Architecture, Engineering and Design

Dr Alberto Sols

Head of Department of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Design

Dr Miguel Lasso de la Vega

3 Courses offered for validation

- Bachelor's Degree in Fundamentals of Architecture
- Master's Degree in Architecture

4 Awarding body

Universidad Europea de Madrid

5 The visiting board

Professor David McClean, Chair
Jane McAllister – Vice Chair
Layton Reid
Dr Paula Montoya Regional representative

Stephanie Beasley-Suffolk – validation manager – in attendance.

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 22 January 2020 the RIBA Education Committee confirmed validation of the following:

- Bachelor's Degree in Fundamentals of Architecture, Part 1
- Master's Degree in Architecture, Part 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:

- external examiners or an acceptable alternative being appointed for the course
- any significant changes to the courses and qualifications being submitted to the RIBA
- 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
- 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

The Architecture program at the Universidad Europea de Madrid is closely related to the plural and contemporary context of our city. Here we can find the headquarters of many innovative architecture studios, international architecture magazines and editors, cultural foundations, other public and private schools, etc. Madrid is also an important center for construction activity, with many examples of first-rate buildings throughout the 20th & 21st centuries.

The program has many prestigious and diverse architects that are teaching and doing research for the School. 80% of our academic staff are active, renowned, independent professionals based in Madrid who teach on a part-time basis at the University. They focus their particular briefs on the understanding of contemporary problems and opportunities, on training that is constantly updated for our increasingly international student body. This is reflected in our students' high satisfaction with their teachers. All of this at a medium-sized school, with very close collaboration between professors and pupils, sharing classrooms with art students where a double degree art+architecture has been created.

The present academic context is multidisciplinary, and future architects have the obligation to collaborate with numerous experts who enrich the experience with their points of view. Accordingly, integrated design workshops are the core of our Project-Based School. This pedagogy allows students to develop their personal competences and skills, tracing links between knowledge areas: the Design Studio, being at the core, articulates history, construction, structures, urban planning and technology and are blended in a particularized mixture adapted to their own personal balance. In this rich and warm atmosphere where tutors and students working side by side, any idea can find a way to grow. This acts as a catalyst for shared learning.

“Hands-on” methodologies are also a strong part of our ethos. Students are encouraged to work on real case scenarios continuously, developing full scale prototypes or small size real and implies working daily in our laboratories with all kinds of technologies. The Design and Engineering schools, our brethren, share studio space and skills with us to achieve unexpected results. In addition, the school strongly supports collaborative projects abroad. This commitment has led us to build in Africa & South America using our own resources.

One of our favorite and most successful events is the festival called “Handstinking”: all lessons are postponed and an intensive series of lectures linked to cross curricular hands-on workshops are organized and managed by the students from the three schools all together. The festival is subsidized by the School, lasts for a full week and has been celebrated since 2014.

Furthermore, UEM establishes compulsory internships for our students with prominent architecture studios of their choice. Internships comprise a total of 12 ECTS, 300 hours of work on real projects, double the usual standard and

is defined as part time dedication so as to be compatible with their ongoing studies. Many students find their professional path through this initiative.

We can state that our School is deeply committed to a creative, technical, realistic and plural approach to architecture.

We are proud that our graduates in architecture have developed their own vision of the profession and of the global scene. This is what surely explains the high rate of employment, at present 94%. In addition, many alumni and students are awarded relevant prizes and commendations with their projects in prestigious competitions such as Biennial Architecture and Urbanism of Spain, European, Archiprix International, Mies van der Rohe Award, Triennial of Architecture of Oslo, Shelter Student Architectural Design, etc.

At the Universidad Europea de Madrid, we believe that there are so many different ways to become an architect that we try to promote an environment where every student can find their own path. This attitude towards the practice of architecture describes our open and plural ethos, an ethos that we try to enhance every year.

10 Commendations

The Board commends:

- 10.1 The School's focus on internationalisation from the perspective of both diversity of staff and students in the learning experience and professional opportunities for graduates.
- 10.2 Staff and student commitment and engagement in the creation of a robust and entrepreneurial community of learning.
- 10.3 The live and onsite project activities within the city and further demonstration through the internship programme.

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 revisit its existing academic position statement to convey more assertively the character and accomplishments of the School and its strategy for further development.
- 12.2 The Board recommends the further development and explicit demonstration in design work of user engagement and social context.
- 12.3 Based on the evidence presented, the Board recommends that management, practice and law be further defined and identified as a constituent component

of the major project outcome at Part 1 and Part 2. This relates to action point 9.4 of the 2018 Exploratory Board.

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 Based on the value that the students place on the dual degree, the Board advises the School either to reconsider the provision of a dual art and architecture degree or some equivalent action that ensures that collaboration with the arts is not lost.
- 13.2 The Board advises that the school ensures that a full range of development and sketch design materials is made explicit as part of the design process in the major projects at Part 1 and Part 2.
- 13.3 The Board advises the School to develop at each level monitoring and feedback processes to refine communication between subject and design projects.

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 Bachelor's Degree in Fundamentals of Architecture

The Board confirmed that all Part 1 graduate attributes were met.

14.2 Master's Degree in Architecture

The Board confirmed that all Part 2 graduate attributes were met.

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

Bachelor's Degree in Fundamentals of Architecture, Part 1: 153
Part Master's Degree in Architecture, Part 2: 19.

16.2 Documentation provided

While the School provided all documentation as required by the Procedures for Validation, please see Advice 13.2.

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 made available on request. The full set of notes 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 head of institution
- Meeting with external examiners
- Meeting with staff