
Royal Institute of British Architects

**Report of the RIBA visiting board
to the Universidad Nacional de
Colombia - Manizales**

Faculty of Engineering and Architecture

Date of visiting board: 8/9 May 2017

Confirmed by RIBA Education Committee: 20 September 2017

- 1 Details of institution hosting course/s**
Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Manizales
Faculty of Engineering and Architecture
Cra 27 # 64-60 Manizales, Caldas - Colombia
- 2 Dean, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture**
Fabiola Angulo García

Vice-Dean, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture
Gustavo Adolfo Osorio Londoño

Head of School of Architecture and Urbanism
Maria Del Pilar Sánchez Beltrán

Head of the Architecture and Urbanism Curricular Area
Luis Fernando Acebedo Restrepo
- 3 Courses offered for validation**
The Programme of Architecture
- 4 Awarding body**
Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Manizales
- 5 The visiting board**
Professor Karim Hadjri, Chair
Kate Cheyne, Vice Chair
Ian Wroot
Carlos Sanchez
Javier Peinado - 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 20 September 2017 the RIBA Education Committee confirmed, by circulation, that the following courses and qualifications be unconditionally validated:

Programme of Architecture, 10 semesters

 - Part 1 is deemed to be met on successful completion of cycle 2 (semesters 4-7)
 - Part 2 is deemed to be met on successful completion of the thesis project (conclusion of semester 10)

This is effective from the 2016 graduating cohort.

The next full visiting board will take place in 2022.

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- 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

10 Academic position statement (written by the School)

MANIFEST OF THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM, UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE COLOMBIA, MANIZALES CAMPUS

The curricular programme of Architecture of the School of Architecture and Urbanism of Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Manizales Branch, assumes, in general terms, the principles of conceptual plurality that feed it, the respect for the diversity of members of the academic community that participate in it, and the pertinence of the disciplinary subjects that Architecture demands today, in a context of globalization where there remains a tension between knowledge homogenization processes and the claim of the cultural identity at the national, regional and local levels.

By taking into consideration that the architecture workshop exercise is the moment and place where architecture knowledge and practice are synthesised, courses of the Projects grouping are the articulating axis of the instruction cycle, where three moments are identified: the moment of acquisition of a basic language (the grammar of the architect); the moment of knowing and handling the different disciplinary perception and acting scales that are considered fundamental but at the same time complementary; and lastly, the moment of deepening, where abilities, interests and aptitudes to attain an improved performance in more specific fields of knowledge are outlined.

The Architecture Workshop is the space where knowledge from different fields converges: representation knowledge, of instrumental nature; technical knowledge, that provides ideas and concepts not only to solve the support as a whole but also to suggest spatial forms; knowledge of the city and the territory, that provides context to the project in its urban, environmental and land-use planning dimensions; and lastly, knowledge of history and theory, that reflects and references the architectural experience in its various areas of knowledge. Accordingly, the Project grouping follows this structure: by three foundation workshops, four disciplinary workshops, two

emphasis or concentration workshops, and the final work for the bachelor degree.

Undoubtedly, instruction in Architecture requires the graphic and communication media as a form of language and writing around the project. The grouping of Representation Techniques addresses three compulsory courses where students must acquire the basic skills to express their ideas. The permanent evolution of digital media supported by ICTs is a field of permanent action, exploration and renovation, which is offered through optional courses. The grouping seems itself as a field of knowledge that looks for its own theoretical and conceptual identity, thus becoming an instrument to address the complexity of the project, in this case from representation technologies.

In the Architecture Programme, the courses of the Technology grouping are conceived to provide students with three answers in their instruction: project conceptualization tools (in the first three semesters), instruments for the design, monitoring and control of the construction process (in the two following levels), and lastly, mechanisms for planning and controlling work execution (in the last two levels). The Technology grouping is complemented with optional courses that cover more precise topics from the area. National and foreign students are particularly interested in the grouping called Low height construction culture, which studies the traditional regional technical expressions and the diverse inherited and contemporary types of bahareque. This grouping provides the student with the possibility of delving into the knowledge of the Construction Emphasis, and later in the Master Program in Construction that the School initiated in 2014.

In the grouping City and Territory, the set of courses of Urbanism (1 and 2) introduce the subject, along with an offer of optional courses related to public space, land-use planning, landscape, environment and sustainability. It gathers an important counterpart in the courses of History, particularly in the aspects related to the origin and evolution of Latin American cities from pre-Hispanic times until today. Middle size cities are a topic of study that constantly appears in design exercises, with the commitment of replying to regional demands, but also to a field of knowledge that is little explored, since the world trend is to research global metropolis. The student can delve into this knowledge in the Emphasis workshops of "Landscape and Project" and "Architecture, Environment and Sustainability". With both Emphasis lines, graduates are better prepared to apply for the Master Program in Environment and Development, and the Master Program in Habitat.

In the grouping Theory and History a set of five courses and other optional courses are offered along the duration of the programme. Besides the contents of universal theory and history of architecture and urbanism, the grouping looks into the pre-existences in historical centres of Latin American cities and in particular of

Colombian architecture, which related to our concern about the construction of identity in the instruction of our students. In this grouping students can delve into their knowledge in the Emphasis in Heritage where the topic of contemporary intervention in Historical Centres is prioritised. Instruction in the cultural heritage has received special interest in association to the initiatives of Universidad Nacional in the topic of Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia, declared by the UNESCO.

All particular concerns, necessarily understood as research problems, have generated creation processes of the so-called Research Incubators, where students do an initial approach to the exercise of academic inquiry. At another level, these same problems have manifested in the formulation of postgraduate programs, as was previously mentioned in this document. In the short term, the School has particular interest in the formulation of a Master Programme in Architecture, where questions regarding the analysis of architectural and urban planning projects can be addressed from different perspectives. The Emphasis line "From detail to design studio project" has served as a hotbed for this initiative. This way we can achieve an integrated correspondence among the instruction of the first, second and third cycles.

However, there is also awareness of the limitations and potential inherent to the fact of being located in a middle size high-mountain city, which lacks the incentives of big cities and is very attractive for a significant number of students coming from towns and small cities, especially from the South and Centre of Colombia.

This school has insisted in establishing a national and global intercultural bond from teaching practice (short duration national trips scheduled from diverse courses); an inaugural conference presented semi-annually by recognized national or international architects; the creation of the Learning by Travelling practice, which has allowed each year that our students travel to places such as Cuzco, Buenos Aires, Chicago, Florence and Rome. Also, the support to mobility programs to both Colombian (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana in Medellín, Universidad del Valle in Cali, among others) and foreign universities (Universidad de Buenos Aires, Universidad de Flores and Universidad Nacional de Rosario in Argentina; Universidad de Alcalá, Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura in Spain, etc.); thanks to these programs, an important number of our students have taken one or two semesters at another university.

Under the framework of Faculty policies, professors also receive support to attend or participate as presenters in national or international academic events. It is worth to mention here the creation in 2010, as an initiative of some of our instructors, of a biannual academic event on the teaching of Architecture with the participation of twenty Latin American schools of architecture. We hosted its first edition; the second edition took place in 2012 in

Valparaiso, Chile; the third one in 2014 in Mendoza, Argentina; and the fourth version is currently being prepared and will be held in our school once again.

The continuous assessment process has allowed the School to be in permanent reflection on teaching-learning methodologies, curricular content, assessment methods, undergraduate-postgraduate relationship, among other topics. This way, we have understood that curricular design should be in permanent evolution, it should be infused by the needs of the external world, but, above all, it should look for a profile of alumni that is capable of establishing a dialogue between the particularity of our cultural identity and global contemporary trends in Architecture.

One of the challenges that lie ahead is to establish a structured protocol of relations with the field of professional practice that enables us to consolidate professional practicums, the relations with alumni, and the entrance in the emerging field of creative industries. Our school establishes a direct relationship with some of its alumni and professional practice by engaging active practitioners as part-time teachers and lecturers in the different areas of knowledge.

11 Commendations

- 11.1 The Board commends the School for its social responsibility and engagement and its focus on cultural heritage.
- 11.2 The Board commends the flexibility of the curriculum and the choices it offers students.
- 11.3 The Board commends the Research Incubators and extension (real-world) projects as an opportunity for both students and staff to generate research-based and practice-based projects.
- 11.4 The Board commends the uniqueness of the School campus and its role in keeping with the School's distinctive ethos.

12 Conditions

There are no conditions.

13 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 procedures. Failure by the university to satisfactorily resolve action points may result in a course being conditioned by a future visiting board.

- 13.1 *GC4 (Graduate Criteria): Adequate knowledge of urban design, planning and the skills involved in the planning process*

The role of design and urban planning to better inform architectural design through contextual studies needs to be strengthened and made explicit.

- 13.2 *GC9 (Graduate Criteria): Adequate knowledge of physical problems and technologies and the function of buildings so as to provide them with internal conditions of comfort and protection against the climate, in the framework of sustainable development*

The School should ensure that GC9 is achieved in the core (mandatory) modules (courses).

- 13.3 *GA2.4 (Part 2 Graduate Attributes). With regard to meeting the eleven General Criteria at parts 1 and 2 above, the part 2 will be awarded to students who have: critical understanding of how knowledge is advanced through research to produce clear, logically argued and original written work relating to architectural culture, theory and design.*

The Board strongly recommends that the School ensures that, within the mandatory courses, research work should lead to an original piece of written work.

- 13.4 The Board recommends that the School reviews its assessment processes, particularly for design work, and to include moderation to ensure that measures of attainment are transparent, consistent and fair.

14. 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.

- 14.1 The Board welcomes the School's ambition to increase national and international mobility for staff and students and encourages the University to continue to resource this in order to extend this opportunity.

- 14.2 *GC3 Knowledge of the fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural design*

The Board advises the School to develop the application of Fine Arts methodologies to inform and communicate the design process and architectural language.

- 14.3 The Board advises the School to encourage students to produce complete academic portfolios of work, including process work.

We welcome the School's approach to valuing process, however the Board suggests that the School needs to better capture this through a systematic documentation of the design genesis through development into resolution of a project.

This will ensure that a future visiting board will be able to better assess the graduate attributes. An academic portfolio should contain the following (section 4.7, RIBA Procedures Document 2011)

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- ***an academic portfolio contains all the assessed work produced by a student for an academic year, and must include:***
 - ***design studio projects***
 - ***design process and development work***
 - ***drawings, sketches, and design diagrams***
 - ***sketch and final models***
 - ***larger scale 3D work***
 - ***structural, constructional, and environmental information***
 - ***essays***
 - ***dissertations***
 - ***reports and other research work***
 - ***examination scripts***

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.

15.1 The Board was content that all Part 1 graduate attributes were met.

15.2 The Board was content that most Part 2 graduate attributes were met. Please refer to Action Point 13.3 regarding GA 2.4.

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.

16.1 While the Board was content that validation criteria were met, please refer to action points 13.1 and 13.9 and advice point 14.2 referring to specific criteria.

17 Other information

17.1 Student numbers

456

17.2 Documentation provided

Please see advice point 14.3 regarding the requirement to provide complete academic portfolios.

18. 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 next full visiting board.

- Meeting with Head of School and course leaders
- Meeting with students
- Meeting with the Vice-Rector and senior management
- Meeting with external peers, professionals and graduates
- Meeting with staff