

Self-Evaluation Report Format for First-Professional Programs in Landscape Architecture Programs



CSLA Accreditation Council | LAAC
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REPORT FORMAT

First Professional Degree Programs in Landscape Architecture

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND OVERVIEW

The preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) is considered a vital part of the accreditation process and it is mandatory that it be made available to the LAAC and the Visiting Team a minimum of 45-days in advance of the accreditation review. The following outline is designed to assist those involved with a first professional degree to prepare a thorough, yet concise, evaluation of the program's performance. The SER must be organized into chapter headings that are precisely aligned with the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Council's published standards.

Respondents are welcome to provide any supplementary supporting or related information about the program that they consider beneficial to the review, however, this material must be bound as a separate appendix. Any such material will be reviewed only with respect to its relationship to and/or effect upon the program under review.

Visiting evaluators assigned by the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board will be expected to thoroughly review the SER prior to and during their visit – approaching the task as colleagues interested in understanding the program and its stated objectives within the framework of the governing institution and the LAAC standards.

Report Preparation

Respondents are encouraged to bring as many faculty members, administrators, students, graduates, staff and employers as possible into the preparation of this self-study.

Terminology

The *institution* refers to the university, college, institute, or other parent body through which the program is organized and administered.

The *program* is typically administered by some division of an institution such as a college, school, division, or department responsible for the curriculum and the students enrolled. The SER must precisely describe the applicable organizational hierarchy (see attached form).

The program *administrator* is the chairperson, director, head, dean, or other official immediately responsible for the first professional degree program.

SER Format

The SER must be made available in both digital and hard copy, organized as follows:

- Brevity and concise writing is appreciated and encouraged.
- The total report (excluding appendices) should not be more than 100 double-sided or two hundred single-sided typed pages.
- Pages should be letter-sized (8 1/2" x 11"), numbered, and generally single-spaced.
- Use the exact heading, numbering, and sequence for the standards as outlined herein.

- For ease of reference, place an extended tab numbered to correspond to the seven accreditation standards, on each of the sections.
- Some parts of individual sections may also be presented in tabular form if the program deems this useful and may, if necessary, be submitted on fold-out pages.
- Respondents are also encouraged to be mindful that ancillary information that is not critical to the SER does not facilitate an effective review by the visiting team.

One digital copy and one hard copy of the SER must be submitted to the LAAC and each visiting team member. Provide digital copies only of all other required submission materials (i.e. examples of student work, full academic resumes, important program policy and strategic planning documents, etc.). Within the SER and appendices note any applicable links to relevant departmental and/or institutional websites, as well as any sites on the institution website dealing with important university tenure and promotion policies, etc.

INTRODUCTION

History of Program

Provide a brief chronological history of the program being reviewed, concentrating on events since the last review.

Response to Previous LAAC Review

Describe the progress that has been made towards resolving the Recommendation Affecting Accreditation from the previous accreditation visit (not applicable to those seeking initial accreditation).

- List each prior Recommendation verbatim and provide a brief overview of the responses made on annual interim reports.
- List each of the Suggestions for Improvement and provide an update on progress.

Describe Current Strengths and Opportunities of the Program

Describe Current Weaknesses and Challenges

Describe any Substantial Changes

Outline all Substantial Changes made in the program since the last accreditation review.

Describe who Participated in SER Preparation

Outline the faculty, administrators, students, alumni, outside professionals, etc. involved in developing the self-evaluation and briefly state their roles. The LAAC recommends involving as many people as possible in preparing the SER, as the process of self-evaluation can be one of the greatest benefits of the accreditation process.

Note: Insert a tab between this Introduction and each subsequent Standard.

STANDARDS

1. PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Standard 1: The program shall have a clearly defined mission supported by goals and objectives that are appropriate to the profession of landscape architecture and shall demonstrate progress towards their attainment.

INTENT: Using a clear and concise mission statement, each landscape architecture program should define its core values and fundamental purpose for faculty, students, prospective students, and the institution. The mission statement summarizes the intent, the objectives, and the needs that the program seeks to fulfill and provides a benchmark for assessing how well the program is meeting the stated objectives.

A. Program Mission

1. State the current program mission and date adopted.
2. Describe how the mission statement reflects the purpose and values of the program and how it relates to the institution's mission statement.

B. Educational Goals

1. State the academic goals of the program.
2. Describe how the academic goals relate to the program's mission.
3. Describe how the program regularly evaluates its progress in meeting its goals.

C. Educational Objectives

1. List the educational objectives of the program.
2. Describe how educational objectives fulfill the academic goals.

D. Strategic Planning Process

1. Describe the program's long-range planning process?
2. Does the long-range plan describe how the program mission, goals, and objectives will be met and does it document the review and evaluation process?
3. Describe how the long-range plan is reviewed and revised periodically and how it presents realistic and attainable methods for advancing the academic mission.

E. Program Disclosure

1. Describe how program information is disseminated to the public and prospective students.
2. Is the program's accreditation status accurately described?
3. Provide a link to material on the internet and copies of other relevant promotional materials to the visiting team.

2. PROGRAM AUTONOMY, GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Standard 2: The program shall have the authority and resources to achieve its mission, goals and objectives.

INTENT: Landscape architecture should be recognized as a discrete professional program with sufficient financial and institutional support and authority to enable achievement of the stated program mission, goals and objectives.

A. Program Administration

1. Is the program a discrete and identifiable program within the institution?
2. Does the program title and degree description incorporate the term "Landscape Architecture"?
3. Does the Program Administrator hold a full academic appointment in landscape architecture?
4. Describe how the Program Administrator exercises the leadership and management functions of the program?

B. Institutional Support

1. Are student/faculty ratios in studios typically not greater than 15:1?
2. Is funding available to assist faculty and other instructional personnel with continued professional development including support in developing funded grants, attendance at conferences, computers and appropriate software, other types of equipment, and technical support?
3. Is funding adequate for student support, i.e., scholarships, work-study, etc.?
4. Are adequate support personnel available to accomplish program mission and goals?

C. Commitment to Inclusiveness and Diversity

1. Does the program demonstrate a commitment to diversity in the recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff?
2. Does the program demonstrate this commitment to diversity throughout its student's full academic progress?

3. PROFESSIONAL CURRICULUM

Standard 3. The first-professional degree curriculum shall include the core knowledge, skills, and applications of landscape architecture.

- a. In addition to the professional curriculum, a first-professional degree program at the bachelor's level shall provide an educational context enriched by other disciplines, including but not limited to: Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences, as well as opportunities for students to develop other areas of interest.*
- b. In addition to the professional curriculum, a first-professional degree at the master's level shall provide instruction in and application of research and or/scholarly methods.*

INTENT: The purpose of the curriculum is to achieve the learning goals stated in the mission and stated learning outcomes. Curriculum objectives should relate to the program's mission and specific learning outcomes. The program's curriculum should encompass coursework and other opportunities intended to develop students' knowledge and abilities in landscape architecture.

A. Mission and Learning Outcomes

1. Does the program's curriculum address its mission, goals, and objectives?
2. Does the program identify the knowledge, abilities and values it expects students to possess at graduation?

B. Professional Curriculum.

1. How does the program curriculum include coverage of?

History, theory, philosophy, principles, and values

- design history, including: landscape architecture, urban design and garden design in a global and a Canadian context
- design theory and criticism
- environmental ethics and aesthetics (in a landscape architectural context)

Design processes and methodology

- critical thinking
- analysis
- ideation
- data acquisition, management and interpretation
- synthesis
- site programming
- iterative design development
- design communication
- landscape design, planning and management at various scales and applications (e.g. planting design, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, grading and drainage)

Natural and cultural systems and processes (related to design, planning and management)

- ecosystems sciences including soils and hydrology, and plants
- built environment, urban systems and infrastructure
- social and cultural influences on landscape
- urban-rural relationships and linkages

- storm water management, ecosystem protection, resource management, natural system restoration and rehabilitation
- human health and well being

Communication and documentation

- written and oral communication
- visual and graphic communication
- design and construction documents
- numeracy and quantitative problem-solving, and communication
- public and client engagement

Computer applications and advanced technologies

- computer-aided design
- 3D modeling and visualization
- publishing, word processing and spreadsheets
- geospatial analysis

Assessment and evaluation

- site assessment
- visual and scenic assessment
- landscape performance
- post-occupancy evaluation

Operational context of landscape architecture

- land use planning
- regional planning
- public policy and regulation
- sustainability, resiliency, low-impact design, stewardship
- health, safety, human welfare
- professional certification and licensing
- building codes and accessibility legislation
- principles of contract law

Project Implementation

- basic principles of surveying and layout
- Site materials
- use and management of plants and vegetation
- construction technologies, site engineering and applications
- construction related policies and regulation

Professional practice

- values
- ethics in professional practice
- business planning
- marketing and social networking
- specification writing and contract preparation
- scheduling
- cost estimating
- forms of contract delivery

- construction administration

Research and scholarly methods (for Master of Landscape Architecture programs)

- quantitative and qualitative methods
 - establishing a research hypothesis
 - framing research questions
 - review of literature, case studies and precedents
 - research integrity and protection of human subjects
 - communication of research
2. Does the curriculum provide a balanced coverage of the designated subject matters and introduce the subject matter in a sequence that supports its goals and intended learning outcomes?
 3. Does student work and other accomplishments demonstrate that the curriculum is providing students with the appropriate content to assume an entry-level position in the profession?
 4. Do curriculum and program opportunities enable students to pursue personal academic interests consistent with institutional requirements and entry into the profession?

C. Syllabi

1. Are syllabi readily accessible and do they include the intended learning outcomes, course content, and the criteria and methods that will be used to evaluate student performance?
2. Do syllabi and related assignments identify the various levels of accomplishment students shall achieve to complete the course successfully and advance in the curriculum?

D. Curriculum Evaluation

1. Does the program demonstrate and document ways of?
 - Assessing students' achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the course and program?
 - Reviewing and improving the effectiveness of instructional methods in curriculum delivery?
 - Maintaining currency with evolving technologies, methodologies, theories and directions of the profession?
2. Do students participate in evaluation of the program, courses and curriculum?

E. Augmentation of Formal Educational Experience

1. Does the program provide opportunities for students to participate in internships and exchange programs, off-campus studies, public service, research assistantships, or practicum experiences?
2. How does the program identify the learning outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of these opportunities?
3. Do students report on these experiences to their peers? If so, how?

F. Coursework (Bachelor's Level)

1. Do students take a broad range of courses in the Humanities, Natural and Social Sciences?
2. Do students receive an introduction to Investigative and Scholarly Methods appropriate to an undergraduate education?

G. Areas of Interest (Bachelor's Level)

1. Does the program provide opportunities for students to pursue independent projects, focused electives, optional studios, certificates, minors, etc.?
2. Does student work incorporate academic experiences reflecting a variety of pursuits beyond the basic curriculum?
3. Assessment 3: Does the curriculum provide an introduction to investigative and scholarly methods?

H. Research and Scholarly Methods (Master's Level)

1. Does the curriculum provide instruction in Research and Scholarly Methods and their relation to the profession of landscape architecture?
2. Does the program demonstrate that theses or terminal projects exhibit creative and independent thinking and contain a significant research/scholarly component?

4. STUDENT AND PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Standard 4. The program shall prepare students to pursue careers in landscape architecture.

INTENT: Students should be prepared – through educational programs, advising, and other academic and professional opportunities – to pursue a career in landscape architecture upon graduation. Students should have demonstrated knowledge and abilities in creative problem-solving, critical thinking, communications, and design implementation to allow them to enter the profession of landscape architecture.

A. Learning Outcomes

1. Does student work demonstrate the competency required for entry-level positions in the profession of landscape architecture?
2. Do students demonstrate their achievement of the program's intended learning outcomes, including: critical and creative thinking and their ability to understand, apply and communicate the subject matter of the professional curriculum as evidenced through project definition, problem identification, information collection, analysis, synthesis, conceptualization and implementation?
3. Are alumni satisfied with the academic experience and preparation for professional practice?

B. Student Advising

1. How are students effectively advised and mentored regarding their academic development?
2. How is the advising and mentoring aspect of the program carried out?
3. Are students made aware of professional opportunities, licensure, professional development, advanced educational opportunities and continuing education requirements associated with professional practice?
4. Are students satisfied with the academic experiences and their preparation for the landscape architecture profession?

C. Participation in Extra Curricular Activities

1. Does the institution provide opportunities for students to participate in institutional organizations, community initiatives, or other activities?
2. Does the program provide opportunities for students to participate in events where they are exposed to the profession, such as: CSLA Annual Meetings; Component Association meetings and events; other associated professional societies or special interest groups; Construction Industry-related organizations; public lectures?

5. FACULTY

Standard 5. *The qualifications, academic position, and professional practice activities of faculty and instructional personnel shall promote and enhance the academic mission and intended learning outcomes of the program.*

INTENT: The program should have qualified experienced faculty and other instructional personnel to provide the knowledge and abilities that students will need to pursue a career in landscape architecture. Faculty workloads, compensation, and overall support received for career development contribute to the success of the program.

A. Credentials

1. Are faculty qualifications appropriate to the responsibilities of the program as defined by the institution?
2. Are faculty assignments appropriate to the course content and program mission?
3. Are faculty actively engaged in scholarly pursuits and/or professional activities and external service activities?
4. Do faculty members have a variety of areas of academic focus so that a range of viewpoints is maintained?
5. Is there a balanced mix of professors at different stages of career development?
6. Does the faculty have a balance of professional practice and academic experience appropriate to the program mission?

B. Faculty Participation and Recognition

1. Do faculty members have voting privileges, academic freedom, and tenure opportunities consistent with the principles of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC)?
2. Does the faculty have the ability and responsibility to develop, implement, evaluate, and modify the program's curriculum and operating practices?
3. Does the faculty make recommendations on the allocation of financial resources for capital improvements and up-grades?
4. Does the program or institution adequately communicate and mentor faculty regarding policies, expectations and procedures for annual evaluations, and for tenure and promotion to all ranks?
5. Are faculty salary levels commensurate with those of other similar departments in the institution?

C. Faculty Number¹

1. In the case of an academic unit that offers a single first-professional degree, does the program meet the following minimum standard:
 - a) an FTE of at least five instructional faculty,
 - b) at least four of the five hold a professional degree in landscape architecture, and
 - c) at least three of the five are Full-time.
2. In the case of an academic unit that offers first-professional degrees at both the bachelor's and master's levels, does the program meet the following minimum standards:
 - d) an FTE of at least seven instructional faculty,
 - e) at least five of the seven hold professional degrees in landscape architecture, and
 - f) at least five of the seven shall be Full-time,
3. Beyond achieving the specified minimums, is the faculty number adequately matched to student enrollment and is it of sufficient size to achieve the program's overall mission and goals and promote individual faculty development?

¹Applies to programs that have achieved "Continuing Full Accreditation Status" and are seeking a routine renewal. New Programs applying for their Initial Accreditation have modified/reduced faculty standards as described in Section 3.2 of the CSLA Manual of Accreditation Standards.

4. Are the majority of the faculty members of the CSLA or an equivalent professional institution?
5. Does the strategic plan or long-range plan include action item(s) for addressing the adequacy of the number and qualifications of faculty?

D. Faculty Development

1. Are faculty activities such as scholarly inquiry, research, professional practice, and service to the profession, university and community documented and disseminated through appropriate media such as journals, professional magazines, community, college and university media?
2. Do faculty teaching and administrative assignments allow sufficient opportunity to pursue advancement and professional development?
3. Are the development and teaching effectiveness of faculty and instructional personnel systematically evaluated by peers and students and are the results used for individual and program improvement?
4. Do faculty seek and make effective use of available funding for conference attendance, equipment and technical support, etc.?
5. Are the activities of faculty recognized by faculty peers?
6. Do faculty members participate in university and professional service, student advising and other activities that enhance the effectiveness of the program?

E. Faculty Retention

1. Do faculty salaries, academic and professional recognition promote faculty retention and productivity?
2. Is the faculty turnover rate at a pace that supports and does not undermine the mission and goals of the program?

6. COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Standard 6. *The program shall have a plan for and a record of interaction with its alumni, the larger institution, the professional community, the local community, and the public at large.*

INTENT: Each landscape architecture program shall establish an effective relationship with the larger institution, its alumni, practitioners, the local community and the public at large in order to provide a source of service-learning opportunities for students, scholarly development for faculty, and professional guidance and financial support. Documentation and dissemination of successful outreach efforts shall enhance the image of the program and educate its constituencies regarding the program and the profession of landscape architecture.

A. Interaction with the Profession, Institution and Public

1. How are service-learning activities incorporated into the curriculum?
2. How are service activities documented on a regular basis?
3. Other than service learning opportunities, how does the program interact with the institution, practitioners, the community and the public at large?
4. How does the program assess its effectiveness in interacting with the institution and the public?

B. Outreach to Alumni and Practitioners

1. How does the program recognize professional organizations, alumni, and practitioners as resources?
2. Does the program maintain, or have access to, a registry of alumni that includes information pertaining to current employment, professional activities, postgraduate study, and significant professional accomplishments?
3. Does the program engage the alumni and practitioners in activities such as a formal advisory board, career advising, potential employment, curriculum review and development, fund raising, continuing education, design-review panels, design charrettes, student awards, etc.?
4. Does the program document, acknowledge and celebrate the significant professional accomplishments of its alumni and benefactors?
5. How does the program assess its effectiveness in engaging alumni and practitioners?

7. FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, LIBRARIES AND TECHNOLOGY

Standard 7. Faculty, students and staff shall have access to facilities, equipment, library resources, technologies and other supports necessary for achieving the program's mission and intended learning outcomes.

INTENT: The program should occupy space in designated, accessible facilities that support the achievement of program mission and intended learning outcomes. Students, faculty, and staff should have the required tools and facilities to enable achievement of the program mission and intended learning outcomes.

A. Facilities

1. Are faculty, staff, and administrative personnel provided with appropriate office space?
2. Do students have sufficient space and facilities to perform their work?
3. Are the hours of operation supportive of their educational needs?
4. Are program facilities designed in a way that promotes and supports cooperative learning, design inquiry and creative expression?
5. Are facilities maintained to meet the needs of the program?
6. Are program facilities in compliance all applicable legislation regarding building codes and public safety?
7. Are program facilities in compliance with the applicable provincial or federal legislation regarding facilities for persons with disabilities?

B. Technologies and Related Equipment

1. Do students have adequate access to computer equipment, software, technical support, and related instruction?
2. Does the program have a procedure to manage and remain current with evolving technology and hardware?
3. Are the hours of use sufficient to serve faculty and students?
4. How does the program assess the adequacy of equipment needed to achieve its mission and objectives?

C. Library Resources

1. Are collections adequate to support the program and how is this assessed?
2. Do courses integrate library and other resources into the curriculum?
3. Are the library hours of operation convenient and adequate to serve the needs of faculty and students?

APPENDICES

- **Request for Accreditation Review Form** (to be submitted to the Chair of the LAAC at least four (4) months prior to the anticipated visit)
- **Institutional Organization Summary and Contacts** (to be submitted with the SER)

REQUEST FOR REVIEW FORM

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

Date

Invitation to review is extended by: _____

Identify the program in Landscape Architecture to be reviewed and the name of the institution.

This landscape architectural program certifies that it has been in operation since
(date)
and is legally entitled to confer the following first professional degree:

Preferred Dates for Review: Indicate first, second, and third preferences.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Please give complete address for the program requesting review. Include the name, phone number, and e-mail address for the Program Administrator.

INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION SUMMARY AND CONTACTS

Note – adapt this chart as needed to reflect the appropriate institutional structure and titles

Institution Name _____

Program Name _____

Degree Title/Degree Length _____

Chief Administrative Official
of the Institution

NAME TITLE

ADDRESS

EMAIL ADDRESS PHONE NUMBER

Chief Administrative Official
of the College

NAME TITLE

ADDRESS

EMAIL ADDRESS PHONE NUMBER

Chief Administrative Official
of the Division or School
(if applicable)

NAME TITLE

ADDRESS

EMAIL ADDRESS PHONE NUMBER

Chief Administrative Official
of the Department

NAME TITLE

ADDRESS

EMAIL ADDRESS PHONE NUMBER

Chief Administrative Official
of the Program

NAME TITLE

ADDRESS

EMAIL ADDRESS PHONE NUMBER

Report Submitted by _____

NAME DATE