Introduction

The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) offers its International Certification (ICert) designation to architecture programs around the world that are interested in receiving a quality assurance credential from a nationally recognized U.S. organization.

International Certification is a collaborative process that helps programs communicate their value to stakeholders, especially prospective students and their parents.

• NAAB International Certification (ICert) is not accreditation and does not lead to an accredited status
• ICert is a way to recognize programs around the world for having completed a peer-review process and met the International Certification criteria.
The NAAB’s View

The ICert program provides an opportunity for program administrators, in collaboration with faculty, staff, and students, to take stock of the program’s ongoing self-assessment and continuous improvement processes and help avoid the experience of assessment as merely an exercise in compliance.
NAAB International Certification Programs

Istanbul Technical University
(İstanbul, Turkey)
Bachelor of Architecture (4 years) plus
Master of Architecture (2 years)
Certified since 2008

Kuwait University
(Kuwait City, Kuwait)
Bachelor of Architecture
Certified since 2010

King Saud University
(Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
Bachelor of Architecture
Certified since 2013

University of Bahrain
(Manama, Bahrain)
B.Sc. in Architecture
Certified since 2015

Universidad Europea de Madrid
(Madrid, Spain)
Bachelor’s Degree in Fundamentals of Architecture;
Certified since 2015

Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
(Madrid, Spain)
Bachelor Degree in Fundamentals in Architecture +
Master’s Degree in Architecture
Certified since 2015

Universidad San Pablo CEU
(Madrid, Spain)
Degree in Architecture (Syllabus 2010);
Certified since 2015

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
(Santiago, Chile)
Licentiate in Architecture and
Professional Title in Architecture
Certified since 2016

Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University
(Dammam, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
Bachelor of Architecture
Certified since 2016

Eastern Mediterranean University
(Famagusta, North Cyprus, Turkey)
Bachelor of Architecture
Certified since 2016

University College Dublin
(Dublin, Ireland)
Master of Architecture
Certified since 2017

Qatar University
(Doha, Qatar)
Bachelor of Architecture
Certified since 2018

Dar Al Uloom University
(Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
Bachelor of Architecture
Certified since 2018

Holy Spirit University of Kaslik
(Jounieh, Lebanon)
Master of Architecture
Certified since 2019

Yildiz Technical University
(Istanbul, Turkey)
Bachelor of Architecture
Certified since 2019

Effat University
(Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
Bachelor of Science in Architecture
Certified since 2019

The Hashemite University
(Zarqa, Jordan)
Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering
Certified since 2021

Jordan University of Science and Technology
(Irbid, Jordan)
Bachelor of Science of Architecture
Certified since 2022
What Is NAAB International Certification?

• Established in 2003; formerly known as Substantial Equivalency
• Quality-assurance credential for international stakeholders
• Establishes comparable education outcomes to U.S. architecture programs
• Is not accreditation
• Demonstrates to all internal and external stakeholders that a program has met the ICert criteria
Five Basic Tools of the ICert Process

- 2019 *Conditions for NAAB International Certification*
- 2019 *Procedures for NAAB International Certification*
- Program Self-Evaluation Report
- Team Room
- Meetings with administrators, faculty, staff, and students
Criteria for International Certification


• Provide fundamental specifications for the ICert process
• All participants in the process must be thoroughly familiar with both documents
• ICert is unique in that its review and credentialing process recognizes and respects cultural differences of programs from around the world
2019 Conditions for International Certification

The 2019 Conditions for NAAB International Certification outline the requirements that a professional degree program must meet in order to demonstrate the achievement of minimum standards.

- Cannot be arbitrary
- Reviewed and revised on a regular basis
- Reviewed and revised in a manner that is transparent
- Reflect current/projected needs of the profession
- Based on input from the profession, the academy, and the public
2019 Procedures for International Certification

2019 Procedures for NAAB International Certification

- Clearly defined
- Include opportunities for the program to respond to key steps in the sequence
- Include provisions for managing conflicts of interest
- Reviewed and revised on a regular basis
- Reviewed and revised in a manner that is transparent
- Based on best practices in quality assurance
The Certification Renewal Process

- Follow the procedures as outlined for visit 3 in section 5 of the 2019 *Procedures for NAAB International Certification*

- Letter from institution’s chief academic officer, requesting a visit for renewal of ICert; include name of degree program to be assessed (e.g., B. Arch., M. Arch.)

- Include a copy of the NAAB decision letter from the program’s last visit and the Program Self-Evaluation Report from that visit

- Consult with the NAAB about desired date of the visit; final decisions about exact dates are decided by the team chair and the program administrator

- The Program Self-Evaluation Report is due 120 days before the visit
Program Self-Evaluation Report (PSER)

- The program’s comprehensive assessment relative to the ICert Conditions
- Serves as a self-study for the program and as the principal source document for conducting the visit

- **Content** – programs describe how a program meets each of the conditions for NAAB International Certification. Photographs, tables, and other evidence may be included. Content must follow the order described in the PSER template available at https://www.naab.org/international/international-certification/

- **Format** – programs must use the prescribed templates and matrices for the PSER. Limited to 150 pages and 7 MBs and must be delivered as a PDF. Supplemental material is to be made available to the team through hyperlinks to materials stored on program, university, or other websites or web portals.
## Sample SPC Matrix

### M.Arch (55 credits)

**Realm A: Critical Thinking and Representation**
- A1 Professional Communication Skills
- A2 Design Thinking Skills
- A3 Conceptual Design Skills
- A4 Technological Design Skills
- A5 Visual Thinking Skills
- A6 Theory and Critical Work
- A7 History and School Criticism
- A8 Cultural Considerations

**Realm B: Integrated Building Practices, Technical Skills and Knowledge**
- B1 Pre-Design
- B2 Site Design
- B3 Codes and Regulations
- B4 Technical Documentation
- B5 Structural Systems
- B6 Environmental Systems
- B7 Building Envelope Systems
- B8 Building Materials

**Realm C: Integrated Evaluations and Decision-Making Process**
- C1 Research
- C2 Integrated Evaluations
- C3 Integrative Decision-Making Process

**Realm D: Professional Practice**
- D1 Stakeholder Roles in Architecture
- D2 Project Management
- D3 Business Practices
- D4 Legal Responsibilities
- D5 Professional Conduct

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<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<td>Thesis Masters Project Planning</td>
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Review Process

- Verifying that the program has in place an assessment process for tracking student learning
- Not stipulating the educational format or the form of student work that may serve as evidence of having met these criteria
- Using peer-review process
- Encouraging innovative methods. Programs are encouraged to develop unique learning and teaching strategies, and methods and materials to satisfy these criteria
Team Rooms
Characteristics of a Team Room

• Provides the team with a secure, reasonably soundproof workspace in which to review and discuss the program’s documentation in confidence.

• Student work must:
  • Be clearly and consistently labeled and easily accessible.
  • Include high-pass and minimum-pass work.
  • Be of sufficient quantity to demonstrate that all graduates are meeting the performance criteria.
  • Have been executed since the previous site visit and span no less than two previous academic years.
Student Work—Objectives

Student work is the only acceptable form of evidence of the program’s compliance with Condition II.1, Student Performance Criteria

• Demonstrates that all graduates have the knowledge and skills defined by the Student Performance Criteria

• Includes examples of both minimum achievement and high achievement

• Provides a representative sample of the approaches and assignments (including studios, classrooms, and seminars)

• Represents at least the past two academic years

• Present high-achievement work and minimum-achievement work so they can be reviewed simultaneously—displayed side-by-side
Course Notebooks

• Provide one notebook for each required and optional course, including studio

• Contents for required courses:
  • A syllabus with weekly activities and assignments
  • A bibliography
  • Graded quizzes and examinations (if applicable)
  • For classroom courses, include samples of student work (at least 3 each of max. & min. achievement – also labeled)
  • Grades or comments should be included on student work

• Contents for optional courses: syllabus

• Notebooks can be provided electronically before the visit (see the 2019 Procedures)
Examples of Labeling Student Work: On-Site Visits

Engaging with Parametricism

Parametricism in architectural design has been prevalent since the 1990’s and gained acceptance throughout the field. This process of using algorithms to define a set of parameters, form-finding for design, is broadly termed a functional process of pen to paper, or even computer mouse to CAD. Relationships between geometries, or parameters. This certain set of

Multi-Story Housing

Wood has the potential to be a more sustainable building material than concrete or steel, in buildings over five stories, and can negate carbon emissions through the manufacturing process. Research on energy consumption and emissions created by wood during manufacturing and processing of the wood since that process requires less energy compared to fossil fuels. Wood as a structural material and construction time of a project, while being a renewable resource. This thesis will explore how well a structure made from timber (CLT) compares to other common structural systems in multifamily housing, including four over one
Digital Team Rooms

The NAAB encourages, but does not require, the use of digital presentations of student work. Some programs may choose to present all work in digital format, others may use both digital and analog forms; still others may present all the work in hard copy. The NAAB has established guidelines for conducting digital visits, available on the NAAB website.

- Viewers must be able to enlarge or zoom into sections of the file
- Programs may also choose to present course notebooks in digital format before the visit. These can be available either by USB drive or on a digital portal like Dropbox, Google Docs, or through a site set up by the school.
- Teams are advised to be open to the format(s) suggested by the program.
File Structure for Digital Team Rooms

- SPC Number (e.g., B.4)
- Course Number and Title (e.g., ARCH 210)
- Item (use consistent identifiers, e.g., Spring_2021_MinAchieve)
A Team Room…

Is

• A private, secure workroom in which evidence is presented
• Well-organized space with signage and labels

Is Not

• A museum-quality exhibit of the best work by the best students in the program
• An open workspace available to anyone
Team Rooms:
Analog

Digital
What’s New in the 2019 *Conditions and Procedures for NAAB International Certification*

- New editions of the Conditions for NAAB International Certification and the Procedures for NAAB International Certification were published in 2019.

- The program formerly known as Substantial Equivalency has been changed to NAAB International Certification.

- Digital team rooms are encouraged. However, programs must notify the NAAB early in the planning process of their intention to conduct a digital visit; consult the NAAB’s guidelines for digital visits, available at [https://www.naab.org/accreditation/publications/](https://www.naab.org/accreditation/publications/).

- As far as possible, teams review the 12 conditions in Part One of the Conditions before the visit begins, thereby allowing the team to focus its attention during the visit on student learning, educational outcomes and curriculum, and progress since the previous visit.
What’s New, continued

• Teams do not assess the 12 conditions in Part One as Met or Not Met. Instead, they simply confirm whether the program has “demonstrated” or “described” the resources in support of student learning and continuous improvement.

• Programs are required to submit Interim Progress Reports to the NAAB in the third year of a six-year term of International Certification. These reports address how a program is working to correct deficiencies identified in the previous visit.

• The number of Student Performance Criteria has been reduced from 32 to 26.

• A new “realm,” Integrated Design, has been added to the Student Performance Criteria.

• Substantive changes to a program or institution that may affect the certified degree program must be reported to the NAAB.
Distance Education Quality Assessment

Students
• Students are able to access all courses and course materials easily.
• Student identity verification protocols are in place and reviewed periodically to ensure on-going integrity.
• Technology requirements for online study are clearly disclosed and verified before students enroll.
• The program ensures that all costs, participation requirements, schedule for synchronous activities, and other disclosures are provided before enrollment is finalized.
• Prerequisite requirements and any other competencies are disclosed and verified prior to enrollment.

Faculty
• Faculty are academically and professionally qualified to convert to and deliver courses in an online format.

Resources
• Program ensures necessary academic resources (on-line library, etc.) to support online learning.
• Program has in place necessary technological resources to support online learning. Student data and other confidential information is secured and protected.
Distance Education Quality Assessment

Curriculum

• The curriculum and teaching/learning practices are grounded in distance education instructional design principles.

• The curriculum is reviewed and revised to ensure that it allows student to achieve learning outcomes and develop program-established competencies.

• Program has in place an online assessment process to ensure that learning outcomes and program-established competencies are being achieved.

• Student progress is tracked and feedback to students is provided.

• The program has in place a process to review quality and consistency of online offerings.

• The institution publishes clear, specific, policies related to student integrity and academic honesty. The institution affirms that the student who takes an assessment is the same person who enrolled in the program.
Thank You

Please contact Dr. Terron Scott with questions at international@naab.org