

A Guide to the 2014 Conditions for Accreditation and Preparation of an
Architecture Program Report

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BACKGROUND TO THE 2013 NAAB ACCREDITATION REVIEW CONFERENCE (ARC13)

What's Past is Prologue – The 2008 ARC

In 2008, the NAAB acknowledged that architecture education and practice had become more complex and therefore it was appropriate “to revise its accrediting process in response to the advice of its various constituencies.”¹

In their 2008 white papers and issue briefs, the NAAB’s constituent partners were relatively consistent in much of the advice they offered. For example, nearly all the papers submitted by the collateral organizations, as well as those prepared by the NAAB’s own task groups, included the following recommendations:

Include a specific and comprehensive commitment to environmental sustainability in the Student Performance Criteria (SPC).

Prepare graduates for global practice through cross-cultural and cross-curricular experiences in other disciplines.

Prepare graduates who are able to practice ethically and professionally with an understanding of the centrality of the client to their work.

Include a specific and measurable commitment to increasing the diversity of student and faculty populations in accredited programs relative to gender, race/ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, and physical ability.

Strengthen the connection between planning and self-assessment by programs and demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement.

As the NAAB directors reviewed these outcomes, as well as the Board’s own practices and procedures, several things became clear.

The Board agreed that the *2004 Conditions for Accreditation* (13 conditions, including SPC), generally speaking, contained all the critical requirements and expectations for a professional degree in architecture. However, within several of conditions 1-12, expectations for student learning or achievement were embedded with expectations for institutional commitment or assessment.

Next, as a matter of practice, the *Architecture Program Reports* (APRs), and the visits tended to treat all conditions as equal, and deserving of a “Met/Not-Met” designation, when, in reality, certain parts of the *2004 Conditions* could not be assessed in this way. Likewise all SPC were treated as equal when in practice some were “more equal than others.” Thus, the NAAB Board agreed it was not only appropriate to revise the content of SPC to be relevant in light of current practice and professional concerns, but also to group both conditions and SPC in a way that reflected their relationships to one another and their relative importance overall.

Finally, the Board agreed that it was time to implement processes for internal and external assessment and review of the NAAB itself both in terms of the effectiveness of its procedures and its compliance with best practices as defined

¹ *1998 Conditions and Procedures for Professional Degree Programs in Architecture*. National Architectural Accrediting Board. p. 3

by independent organizations. Today, this effort is led by the NAAB's Assessment and Evaluation Committee.

In developing the model that drove development of the 2009 Conditions, the Board was able to address all of these matters:

The result of the process in 2008 was described as the Fusion Model:

The 2009 Conditions for Accreditation, while based initially on the 2008 Fusion Model,

Major procedural review and overhaul (continuous since 2008).

Significant revisions to team training protocols (continuous since 2009).

Investment in technology for visit management (initiated in 2010).

The Assessment and Evaluation Committee (established in 2009).

- Internal evaluation (visit practices, board self-evaluation).
- ARC13 preparation
 - NAAB Study of Accredited Architectural Education
 - NAAB-commissioned studies
 - NAAB director reviews
- External evaluation of NAAB processes (Canberra Accord).

2010–2013: A Process for Preparing

Beginning in 2010, the NAAB's Assessment and Evaluation (A&E) Committee focused on preparation for ARC13. In addition to setting the timeline for preparation, the committee also oversaw the completion of the *NAAB Study of Accredited Architectural Education*. This study represented one of the first NAAB-directed efforts to prepare a baseline of information and analysis for ARC13. The purpose of the study was to set a foundation against which the NAAB could evaluate the proposals and recommendations of other organizations and individuals.

The NAAB retained McKinley Advisors to conduct the study and to complete the final report. McKinley is a DC-based consulting firm specializing in research, consulting, and outsourced services for associations and other nonprofits.

The study began in August 2010 with interviews of the NAAB directors. The second stage of research consisted of eight focus groups conducted at various meetings of the collateral organizations during late 2010 and early 2011.

The final stage consisted of an electronic survey designed to capture feedback on the changing field of architecture, the future of accredited architecture education, and the impact of past changes to the NAAB *Conditions for Accreditation* on architecture education. The survey was developed based on the findings collected during the prior stages; it combined quantitative questions with open-ended, essay-style queries to provide a comprehensive look at architecture education.

The final report was released on May 1, 2012, and can be downloaded from www.naab.org.

The A&E Committee also identified additional areas of study:

Analyzing data collected in the NAAB's ARS to identify trends in enrollment, graduation rates, finances, and faculty.

Analyzing the following trends in higher education: funding models, collaboration with community colleges, online education, student learning assessment, and changes in faculty work life.

Considering the implications for the use of co-curricular activity to meet certain SPC.

Calls to increase the rigor of the accreditation process without increasing expense (time, people, space, and money).

Understanding the implications of shifting demographics in education. There is a large population of first-generation college students (e.g., non-English speakers), many of whom are differently-prepared for postsecondary education than their legacy classmates. With their gradual movement into postsecondary and higher education come related expectations within professional programs for teaching or developing basic skills.

Looking at the role of community colleges in preparing students for preprofessional and professional education, particularly those individuals less-well-prepared for traditional college and university settings.

Acknowledging the increasing use of online and distance learning delivery models, which in turn call for online and distance learning achievement/assessment models.

Increasing calls for colleges and universities to demonstrate the civic engagement of students in professional degree programs.

The SPC must balance conventional and emerging visualization skills, while still using drawing and modelling as a method of learning and communication.

Calls to increase the quality of building sciences education (broadly-defined).

Defining student learning outcomes that go beyond general education and apply directly to professional competencies (e.g., communication skills, collaborative ability and, investigative skills).

Calls from programs and team members to be explicit about the expectations for student achievement in comprehensive design.

Colleges and universities are being asked to provide more public information on student debt.

The 2013 Accreditation Review Conference (ARC13)

The conference took place July 18-19, 2013, at the Snowbird Resort in Utah. It was by invitation-only and was attended by delegations from the AIA, AIAS, ACSA, NCARB, the Canadian Architectural Certification Board-*Conseil canadien de certification en architecture* (CACB-CCCA), and the National Organization for Minority Architects, as well as the NAAB directors and directors-elect. In total, 44 people participated.

The agenda provided participants with multiple opportunities to interact with one another, to discuss and evaluate the SPC, to consider new forms of evidence of student achievement, and to consider procedural issues.

ARC13 generated nearly 50 flip-chart-sized pages of notes and graphics and over 300 images. These materials were used by the writing team to support their early conclusions and proposed language.

As the NAAB directors considered the outcomes of ARC13 during their meeting, which immediately followed the conference, they reached the following conclusions:

The five perspectives (I.1.3.A-E) must be revised in order to

- Remove the language that binds the perspectives to one of the five organizations in architecture.

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE FINAL EDITION AND THE FIRST READING

The *2014 NAAB Conditions for Accreditation – Final Edition* represents the NAAB's effort to evaluate and synthesize the comments received February 25-June 24, 2014. The NAAB

the visit workload so that more verification and review takes place in advance of the visit, while onsite work can focus on student learning and progress since the previous visit.

There are five new perspectives. These identify values and core principles held in common throughout the profession and the academy relative to both the practice and discipline of architecture. SPC have been culled out of these five statements and either applied to specific SPC in Condition II.1 or deleted as redundant. The five, new perspectives are:

- Leadership and Collaboration
- Design
- Professional Opportunity
- Stewardship of the Environment
- Community and Social Responsibility

Condition I.3, Institutional and Program Characteristics, has been eliminated. All the material requested under Conditions I.3.1 and I.3.3 has been moved to the instructions for providing supplemental material in the APR. This material will no longer be assessed as part of a visit. Instead it will be used to inform the team's

Instructions for Preparing Architecture Program Reports

This section provides information, definitions, and specifications for the content in each section of the APR.

The Architecture Program Report (APR) serves both as a self-study for the program and as the principal source document for conducting the visit.

1. **Content.** The *APR* is a narrative document that is comprehensive and self-analytical. It is expected to succinctly describe how a program meets each of the conditions for accreditation. To the extent that photographs, tables, or other types of information support the program's narrative, they may also be included, but not to the detriment of the narrative.
2. **Format.** Programs must use the prescribed template for the *APR*. Each part is intended to allow a program to describe how its unique qualities and its students' achievements satisfy the conditions that all accredited programs must meet.

APRs are limited to 150 pages and to 7 MBs. Supplemental material is to be made available to the team through hyperlinks to materials stored on program, university, or other websites or web portals.

Programs are further required to use the standard templates and matrices found in the appendices to this document for course descriptions and faculty credentials. These materials must also be stored online and accessed by the team through a hyperlink or portal.

The *APR* is to be delivered either in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF formats and, in addition to the page limit, is also limited to 7 MBs.

The APR must follow this outline:

- I. Cover page
 - a. Degree title(s) including any prerequisites
 - b. Names and contact information for program administrator, head of the academic unit, chief academic officer, and president of the institution
- II. APR – Section 1- Program Description
 - a. I.1.1 History and Mission
 - b. I.1.2 Learning Culture
 - c. I.1.3 Social Equity
 - d. I.1.4 Defining Perspectives
 - e. I.1.5 Long-Range Planning
 - f. I.1.6 Assessment
- III. APR – Section 2 – Progress Since the Previous Visit
- IV. APR – Section 3 – Compliance with the Conditions for Accreditation
 - a. I.2.1 Human Resources and Human Resource Development
 - b. I.2.2 Physical Resources
 - c. I.2.3 Financial Resources
 - d. I.2.4 Information Resources

- e. I.2.5 Administrative Structure and Governance
 - f. II.1 Student Performance Criteria
 - g. II.2.1 Institutional Accreditation
 - h. II.2.2 Professional Degrees and Curriculum
 - i. II.3 Evaluation of Preparatory Education
 - j. II.4 Public Information
 - k. III.1.1 Annual Statistical Reports
 - l. III.1.2 Interim Progress Reports
- V. APR – Section 4 – Supplemental Material

The NAAB may choose to modify file size, page limits, and the format of *APRs* in succeeding editions of the *Procedures for Accreditation*. Please consult the current edition of the *Procedures* for the most current information before preparing or submitting an *APR*.

More specific instructions for preparing each section of the *APR* follow (see also the template on the NAAB [website](#)):

Cover Page

The program must list the degree program(s) being evaluated using the standard NAAB nomenclature. This nomenclature includes the degree title (e.g., M. Arch.), the total number of credits in the degree program (e.g., 60 semester credits), and any prerequisites (e.g., preprofessional degree in architecture). A sample follows:

Master of Architecture (preprofessional degree + 60 semester credits)

If the program has more than one track for completion of the NAAB-accredited degree, these must also be listed using the same schema. For example:

Master of Architecture (preprofessional degree + 60 semester credits)

Master of Architecture (nonpreprofessional degree + 95 semester credits)

The degree program must also list the names and contact information, including mailing addresses², for the program administrator, the head of the academic unit in which the program is located, the chief academic officer, and the president of the institution.

APR – Sec6-2.2(o)-.000-3.3(i2.9e3(idem Des-2.2(ripti)5.JJl45gh1Tw)unit inf Archi168 Tc-.0023 Tw[

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include examples of public and community projects/programs outside of coursework, or as structured elements within coursework.

The APR must include the following:

A description of the program's approach to each of the five perspectives.

Identification of individual courses, curricular and co-curricular activities, or learning experiences/opportunities available to students to develop the knowledge,

I.1.6.B. Curricular Assessment and Development

A chart identifying all the parties in the curricular assessment process, their membership (if necessary), and the roles and responsibilities of each.

A description of the results of faculty, students', and graduates' assessments of the accredited degree program's curriculum and learning context.

A description, if applicable, of institutional requirements for self-assessment.

APR – Section 2 – Progress Since the Previous Visit

In this section the program must document all actions taken since the previous visit to address Conditions Not Met and Causes of Concern cited in the most recent VTR.

The APR must include the title of the *Condition*, the **exact** text quoted from the previous VTR, as well as the summary of activities. The format is specified in the template.

Further, if the *Conditions* have changed since the previous visit, the APR must include a brief description of changes made to the program as a result of changes in the *Conditions*.

This section is limited to 5 pages, total

APR – Section 3 – Compliance with the Conditions for Accreditation

In this section of the APR, the program must describe how it meets the conditions for accreditation found in Part I.2-Part II.4. These conditions will be assessed and evaluated by the team in advance of and during a visit. The team's findings and assessments will form the core of the Visiting Team Report.

Many of the reports, tables, or graphics requested as part of the APR may be provided as links to documents or materials stored in easily accessible digital formats or portals (e.g., Dropbox). Many of these materials will be reviewed by the team in advance of the visit.

I.2.1 Human Resources & Human Resource Development:

The APR must include the following

A resume, using the required template, for each full-time member of the instructional faculty who teaches in the professional degree program.

A matrix for each of the two academic years prior to the preparation of the APR, that identifies each faculty member, including adjuncts, the courses he/she was assigned during that time and the specific credentials, experience, and research that supports these assignments.

- *In the case of adjuncts or visiting professors, only those individuals who taught in the two academic years prior to the visit must be identified. (The required template is available on the NAAB [website](#)). Also, the matrix must be updated for the current academic year showing the semester during which the visit takes place. This supplemental matrix should be available to the team 30 days in advance of the visit and also placed in the team room.*

A description of the manner in which faculty members remain current in their knowledge of the changing demands of the discipline, practice and licensure.

A description of the resources (including financial) available to faculty and the extent to which faculty teaching in the program are able to take advantage of these resources.

A list of past and projected faculty research (funded or otherwise), scholarship, creative activities by full-time instructional faculty since the previous visit.

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A description of student support services, including academic and personal advising, career guidance, and internship placement where applicable.

- *Pending reductions or increases in funding and plans for addressing these changes.*
- *Changes in funding models for faculty compensation, instruction, overhead, or facilities since the last visit and plans for addressing these changes (include tables if appropriate).*
- *Planned or in-progress institutional development campaigns that include designations for the program (e.g., capital projects or endowments).*

I.2.4 Information Resources:

The APR must include the following

A description of the institutional context for library and information resources.

A description of the library and information resource collections, services, staff, facilities, and equipment that includes the following:

- *A brief description of the content, extent, and formats represented in the current collection including subject areas represented.*
- *A brief description of any significant problem that affects the operation or services of the libraries, visual resources collections, and other information resource facilities that support the accredited program and plans for addressing them.*

I.2.5 Administrative Structure & Governance:

The APR must include the following:

A description of the administrative structure for the program, the academic unit within which it is located, and the institution.

A description of the opportunities for involvement in governance by faculty, staff, and students in the accredited program, including curriculum development.

A chart or graphic that illustrates the description.

II.1.1 Student Performance Criteria:

The APR must include:

A matrix for each accredited degree program offered and each track for meeting the requirements of the professional degree program, which identifies each required course with the SPC it fulfills.

- *Where appropriate, the top section of the matrix must indicate those SPCs expected to have been met in preparatory or preprofessional education prior to admission to the NAAB-accredited program (see also Condition II.3).*
- *The bottom section of the matrix must include only criteria that are demonstrated in the accredited degree program or track.*

In all cases, the program must limit the designations to the 2-3 cells that point to the courses in which the greatest evidence of student achievement is expected to

“low” pass).

Notes on Student Performance Criteria:

A.3 Investigative Skills: This SPC refers specifically to investigative skills rather than to the broader definition of research or scholarship. The intent is to ensure that students are able to identify, find, select, and use the full range of information resources available to them.

B.3 Codes and Regulations: It is not the intent of this SPC to be a complete checklist of codes that students have mastered. Rather, students must demonstrate the ability to incorporate the fundamentals of multiple codes.

C.1 Research: The purpose of the SPC is for students to demonstrate their understanding of the many methods of research and study that may be used in the course of identifying and selecting solutions to the problems encountered in a complex architectural project.

C.3 Integrative Design. This SPC requires students to demonstrate the integrative thinking and application of technical knowledge and design skills that shape complex design and technical solutions.

The student work must demonstrate the ability to resolve the multiple demands of site, program, codes, environmental stewardship, and building systems through a rigorous process of decision making and then to document or represent their choices accurately.

Programs are not required to demonstrate evidence of integration of all issues (i.e., environmental stewardship, technical documentation, accessibility, site conditions, life safety, environmental systems, structural systems, and building envelope systems and assemblies) simultaneously in single projects. However, students should carry out projects of sufficient complexity to achieve the learning outcomes of this SPC.

Integrative design may be taught in single studios, or over multiple courses (e.g., a

studies, and optional studies.

- *A list of the minors or concentrations students may elect to pursue for each accredited degree offered or track for completing the NAAB-accredited degree.*
- *A list of the minimum number of semester credit hours or the equivalent*

III.1.2 Interim Program Reports:

These are NOT to be included in the APR. The

A Brief History of Accreditation in Architecture Education

The first step leading to architectural accreditation was taken in Illinois where the first legislation regulating the practice of architecture was enacted in 1897. Following that enactment, in 1898 the Illinois Board of Examiners and Regulators of Architects gave its first examination. By 1902 they had established a rule restricting the examination to graduates of the state's approved 4-year architecture curriculum. In 1903, the board expanded this policy to include graduates from Cornell, Columbia, and Harvard Universities, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Pennsylvania. That action demonstrated the need for national standards of architectural education.

In 1972, the membership of the NAAB Board of Directors was expanded to include one student representative nominated by "the Association of Student Chapters/ AIA⁴" and one graduate student nominated by schools accredited by the NAAB. In 1999, this representation was further refined to be two individuals nominated by the American Institute of Architecture Students.

In that report, the collateral organizations identified two over-arching goals for the NAAB:

Advancement of all phases of architectural education, with a view toward the promotion of public welfare.

Provide guidance, encourage improvement and innovation in the architecture system process, program experience, and product with a view toward serving the public interest and meeting societal needs.

And three objectives for the accreditation process:

To hold a school accountable to its own stated objectives to the student, the profession, the institution, and the public community.

To improve educational programs in schools of architecture by continuing a systematic review and assessment of education programs and resources through the self-evaluation process.

To identify to prospective students, the public community, the profession, educational institutions, governmental agencies and state registration boards and to grant public recognition to those architecture education programs which meet and maintain established qualifications.

Finally, the report identified 13 policies; of which many remain central to the process. Among the thirteen, the following four relate to the continuous review and evaluation of the *Conditions for Accreditation*. The NAAB will:

Accredit professional degree programs in architecture rather than institutions, colleges, departments, or schools.

Accredit only the first professional degree program in architecture.

Avoid rigid standards of curriculum content as a basis for accreditation in order to prevent standardization of programs an

