Annual Academic Assessment Report Cover Sheet
Assessment reports are due the 1st Wednesday after the Fall Term
Email to: assessment@unlv.edu

Program Information:

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<tr>
<th>Program Assessed</th>
<th>Master of Architecture (M. Arch)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Architecture</td>
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<td>College</td>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
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<td>Department Chair</td>
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<td>Date Submitted</td>
<td>Dec. 20, 2017</td>
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Contact Person for This Report

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Please attach a narrative (not to exceed 4 pages, excluding appendices) addressing the following:

- What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list.
- Which learning outcomes were assessed?
- How were they assessed? (Programs must use at least one direct assessment of student learning.)
- Undergraduate programs should assess at least one University Undergraduate Learning Outcome (UULO) each year, which may or may not overlap with a program learning outcome.
- Graduate programs should assess at least one outcome related to one of the following graduate level requirements each year:
  - student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.
  - activities requiring originality, critical analysis and expertise.
  - the development of extensive knowledge in the field under study.
- What was learned from the assessment results?
- How did the program respond to what was learned?

Please limit the narrative portion of your report to no more than four pages. You may attach appendices with data, tables, charts, or other materials as needed. Please explain the relevant conclusions from any appendices in your narrative. Please contact the Office of Academic Assessment if you have questions or need assistance.
Graduate Masters of Architecture Program Assessment
Fall 2017 Report - Narrative

• What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list.

School-wide Student Learning Objectives (SLO SoA)

objective #1
Students will demonstrate critical thinking in design proposals that:
Identify and define a design challenge's opportunities and constraints.
Respond through the integration of relevant theory and method.
Respond through the integration of relevant historical or technological knowledge.
Respond through the integration of relevant interdisciplinary content.

objective #2
Students will be able to develop and communicate design and planning solutions that:
Use fundamental knowledge consisting of visual literacy, precedents, spatial literacy, and ordering systems.
Use systems and components of the built environment.
Use programming
Use Intra and Inter-disciplinary communication and collaboration.

objective #3
Students will be able to construct a critical framework that:
Encompasses the built environment and cultural patterns.
Which analyzes, interprets, and articulates trends and projects relevant design scenarios.

objective #4
Students will be able to:
Be leaders and collaborators in the planning and design of the built environment.
Demonstrate ecological literacy and understanding of natural processes.
Identify and communicate strategies to optimize resource consumption.
Identify and communicate strategies to achieve social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Graduate Program Student Learning Objectives (SLO M. Arch)

objective #1
Students will demonstrate critical thinking and representational skills at a professional level, which includes:
Communication through verbal, graphic, and multi-media presentations,
Use of precedents in rationalizing design decisions, and
Historical and cultural influences inherent in design processes

objective #2
Students will demonstrate technical skills and a knowledge of building processes that address:
Pre-design, site design, codes and regulations, and technical documentation,
Structural, Environmental, Building Envelope, and Service Systems,
Building Materials and Assemblies, and Financial Considerations

objective #3
Students will be able to develop comprehensive design solutions through:
Integrative design, which synthesizes a wide range of variables into a design solution,
Comprehending the importance of research pursuits to inform the design process, and
Developing professional project-based research and/or written thesis initiatives that address issues
important to concentration areas/curricular subplans.

objective #4
Students will demonstrate an understanding of business principles for professional practice
through a combination of courses and clinical internships, which focus on:
Understanding professional conduct, project management, and stakeholder roles, and
Learning business practices and legal responsibilities

• Which learning outcomes were assessed?

Learning outcomes were assessed in the spring through the following studio classes and co-requisite seminar(s):
SLO-M. Arch #1: AAE790
SLO-M. Arch #2: AAE772L, ABS741
SLO-M. Arch #3: AAE772L, ABS741

Learning outcomes were assessed in the fall through the following studio classes:
SLO-M. Arch #1: AAE789
SLO-M. Arch #2: AAE771L

SLO-M. Arch #4 has been assessed through an in-depth process of national accreditation and self-evaluation. In the Spring Semester, the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) reviewed our entire Master of Architecture Program and awarded the School with the longest term of accreditation possible: 8 years. However, it did find that evidence of meeting Student Performance Criteria within our professional practice areas of the curriculum (SLO-M. Arch #4) was not available. As the learning outcomes of this particular area had not been assessed by the faculty in the preceding years, we
recognized it was likely to be an area of concern and were able to provide a plan for continued improvement (this was likely a major contributor to the fact that even without satisfactory evidence of meeting specific learning outcomes, the program earned a commendable re-accreditation… due in part to ongoing assessment efforts).

The faculty has since met to determine next steps toward continued improvement in the curricular area of professional practice. On October 13, 2017 the architecture faculty noted that the deficiencies identified by NAAB were primarily based on lack of documentation. There are numerous strategies being planned to ensure student learning outcomes will be better recorded moving forward (ex. exams/quizzes, written log, summaries of Q&A with guest speakers, etc.). The consensus was that the learning environment that was created and the ones being planned for the course are commendable. The instructor of the Design Practice Management course, AAE756, is also making recommendations for moving some learning objectives to other courses. The approach for confirming our continued assessment has been in part prescribed by NAAB. An interim progress report due November 30, 2018 will include documentation of our faculty discussions or assessment strategies and of peer review of the revised syllabus solicited by Prof. Strain by colleagues teaching professional practice at other institutions. The ongoing University Assessment efforts (this report) may also make there way into our report to NAAB. A second interim progress report will be due in the fifth year of our eight year term of accreditation. Finally, a more inclusive and rigorous end-of-semester review of student work with University Assessment and accreditation deliverables in mind shall be pursued. Much of the fall 2017 student work is on display throughout the School of Architecture at this time (semester break), with the opportunity for more coordinated assessments moving into the Spring semester.

The SLOs (student learning outcomes) for the School of Architecture M. Arch program were developed through an integrated look at the SPCs (Student Performance Criteria) used to evaluate student work for the program’s NAAB-accreditation (National Architecture Accreditation Board). By revising the school’s NAAB matrix (below) in 2016, the twenty-six criteria covered are translated into four main learning outcomes: critical thinking/representation, building practices/technical skills, integrative/comprehensive solutions, and professional practice. Realms A through D in the matrix specifically translate into the SLOs for the M. Arch encompass:
• How were they assessed? (Programs must use at least one direct assessment of student learning.)
Following in-house assessment of student work saved over the course of two-plus years and local professional’s assessments of selected work, the NAAB Visiting Team (national team of educators, practitioner, and student representative) assessed the student work in the team room for its ability to evidence specific learning outcomes. In many of the assessments, the design works of the students are on display without immediate indication of what learning outcomes were met by the student (or intended to be met by the faculty overseeing the projects); instead, the assessors look to find direct evidence of students’ works meeting professional accreditation criteria.

- Undergraduate programs should assess at least one University Undergraduate Learning Outcome (UULO) each year, which may or may not overlap with a program learning outcome.

N/A

- Graduate programs should assess at least one outcome related to one of the following graduate level requirements each year:
  - student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.
  - activities requiring originality, critical analysis and expertise.
  - the development of extensive knowledge in the field under study.

The Graduate M. Arch program assessment recognized the high-level of student engagement in research, scholarship and creative expression evidenced through multiple graduate-level studios that integrated national/international-level design competitions, local community partnerships, and/or funded research. Courses AAE712L, AAE714L, AAE772L, AAE789 among others were among those engaged in such high-level initiatives as the Department of Energy Solar Decathlon, The Origen Museum at the Springs Preserve, and the United Nations World Tourism Organization’s Sustainability & The Future of the Integrated Resort Symposium (all featured events within the program this fall).

- What was learned from the assessment results?

One of the most exciting things learned in the assessment process was that while the M. Arch program proved it was delivering a professional education at the highest accreditation standard (8-year term), the visiting team found that we were delivering it in ways that we might not have expected. The faculty’s assessment of the curriculum might have pointed to evidence of a learning outcome in “Course X”, but if the visiting team found evidence for that same learning objective in “Course Y”, then they would recognize the program as delivering on that particular criterion. The team could then stop looking for additional evidence of the same learning objective in other courses. Course “X” would hopefully still contain evidence, and it became apparent that courses “A, B, C, and Z” might also reinforce the same learning outcomes. We learned that many classes provide educational experiences in excess of what is stipulated in our NAAB Matrix or even defined as the objective in the course syllabi.

For instance, several classes that were not originally intended to address learning outcomes related to “Professional Practice” in fact delivered significant educational experiences that integrated those areas of
the discipline. It would make sense to document those experiences as formal components of the courses’ content as a means of re-evaluating our curricular alignments with NAAB criteria.

- How did the program respond to what was learned?

The program may consider ways to assess all SLOs more frequently, more publically, and more collaboratively. The faculty has expressed interested in the idea of maintaining a permanent gallery space for student work. Underutilized wall space throughout the building has been coordinated for displaying completed student projects. This is enabling the assessment as described above (more frequent, public, and collaborative), and it could also help us celebrate the process of assessment. The process of assessing can still be further formalized. Simulating the same kind of direct assessments conducted by NAAB visiting teams with each semester’s work could be an invaluable experience. While many students and faculty see glimpses of each course’s outcomes and some participate in more formal reviews (offering verbal critiques following student presentations) their direct assessments are not typically recorded.