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LAM POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE VALIDATION OF OVERSEAS PROGRAMME IN ARCHITECTURE



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Majlis Akreditasi dan Pendidikan Senibina Malaysia
Council of Architectural Accreditation and Education Malaysia



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Published by Lembaga Arkitek Malaysia in collaboration with
Institut Sultan Iskandar, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

ISBN: 978-983-2466-19-2

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Printed and bound in Malaysia

LAM POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE VALIDATION OF OVERSEAS PROGRAMME IN ARCHITECTURE

INTRODUCTION

This LAM Policy and Procedures for the Validation of Overseas Programme in Architecture outlines the process and procedure for validation of architecture programmes¹ conducted by Architecture Education Providers (AEP)² from outside Malaysia. The term validation is used to describe the outcome-oriented approach of the recognition process, which does not seek to measure the inputs into a course of study. It is acknowledged that the quality monitoring exercises have been well taken care of by the national accreditation body³ under which the AEP has been subjected to. Therefore, the validation exercise for recognition by the Board of Architects Malaysia (the 'Board')⁴ is only applicable to architectural programmes offered by AEP from overseas.

ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION AND ACCREDITATION IN MALAYSIA

The Board adopts a 3-stage architectural education and training system whereby the first two stages are usually conducted by approved Institutes of Higher Education as a 3-year undergraduate degree programme (eligible for exemption from LAM Part I examination), followed by a 2-years postgraduate degree programme (eligible for exemption from LAM Part II examination). At the end of LAM Part II qualification, a candidate is eligible to register as a Graduate Architect. After having obtained a minimum of 2 years of practical experience, the candidate would be eligible to sit for a third stage qualification that is LAM Part III professional examination conducted by the Board.

The Council of Architectural Accreditation and Education Malaysia (CAAEM, or in its Malay acronym – MAPSM) or 'the Council', formed under the purview of the Board is being tasked to advise the Board on issues and challenges that relate to architectural education of which matters on accreditation and validation of architecture programmes are placed directly under the scope and duties of the Council.

1. Programme refers to an arrangement of courses that consists of structured learning volumes within specified duration to achieve the stated learning outcomes and eventually leads to an award of a qualification.
2. Architecture Education Provider (in short, 'AEP') means school, college, institution or university registered under the law of a country offering a formal programme of architecture leading towards the awards of a degree.
3. National accreditation body refers to an agency or organization set up by the government of a country to control and monitor the quality of academic programme run by the universities or other institute of higher learning. In some countries the accreditation body for architecture programme may be placed under the jurisdiction of enacted professional body specific for the architects.
4. In Malaysia, the Board is being referred to as Lembaga Arkitek Malaysia, or known by its Malay acronym 'LAM'.

THE ARCHITECT PROFESSION IN MALAYSIA

The practice of architecture is strictly regulated under the provisions of the Architects Act 1967. The designation 'Architect' and the use of its legal and official acronym – 'Ar.' – is protected by the law constituted under the Act. The responsibility of an Architect covers a wide range of scope of professional services within the context of Malaysian construction industry. Architects in Malaysia are entrusted with the responsibilities of being the Principal Submitting Person (PSP) under the provisions of Uniform Building By-Law (UBBL) in the overall implementation of project pertaining to submission and getting approvals and providing periodic supervision of the project during construction. Being the PSP, the Architects must ensure compliance with 21-stage certifications imposed by the law covering various scopes of works that demand professionalism and integrity entrusted upon them throughout the implementation of a project. In view of the above, the responsibilities of an Architect in Malaysia comes with unlimited liability. Therefore, the enormous responsibility of an Architect practicing in Malaysia as described above requires a rigorous and comprehensive formal education and training to ensure the graduates acquire adequate skills and to function competently.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VALIDATION

There are many Malaysian students studying architecture abroad. Most of these students would eventually return and practice in Malaysia. It is therefore of importance that they enroll into Institutes of Higher Education abroad that would offer them appropriate training and architectural education that are relevant and recognised by their home country.

Validation is a voluntary exercise that becomes legitimate only if and when the AEP decides to have its programme recognized by the Board. The importance of validation is as follows:

- i. Upon obtaining the recognition by the Board, such programme of architecture provided and conducted by the AEP outside Malaysia shall be included in the List of Recognized Programme published by the Board.
- ii. Graduates with a degree from recognised programme of architecture will be eligible for registration as Graduate Architects with the Board.
- iii. Sponsoring body or agencies and financial institutions in Malaysia will be closely guided by the List of

- iv. Recognised Programme published by the Board in giving out awards of scholarships and educational grants for Malaysian students studying at universities or institutions in other countries,
- v. The intention to encourage mobility of students between programmes recognised by the Board would be enhanced and gradually realized. For instance, students who have graduated from a programme recognised by the Board (at LAM Part I level) at universities or institutions in Malaysia should be able to continue to the second part of the education in LAM recognised programmes (equivalent to LAM Part II level) at other countries. Similarly, graduates from recognized programmes of architecture from overseas would be eligible to further their education at LAM Part II level in any recognised programme in Malaysia.

The following sections explain the process and procedure for validation for foreign architectural programmes:

A APPLICATION PROCESS AND PROCEDURE OF VALIDATION

There shall be actions and procedures to be observed before a visit could be carried out.

1. Submission of Application

- . AEP seeking validation of a programme must submit an official written application to express intent to the Council at least three (3) months prior to the planned Validation Visit, and submit the full set of validation documents one (1) month before the visit.

2. Confirmation of the Visit

- . The Council shall inform the AEP of the outcome of its application for validation within eight (8) weeks after receipt of the application. Should the Council accept the application, it will then appoint a Visiting Panel for the proposed visit.

3. Stages of Activities

- . The general flow of the process and procedure of application can be briefly categorized into four (4) stages, namely:

Stage 1: Condition Precedent

Stage 2: Submission of Validation Document

Stage 3: Validation Visit

Stage 4: Validation Report (for internal circulation only)

B. STAGE 1: CONDITION PRECEDENT

Condition Precedent (CP) is a state of obligation that the AEP is expected to have upon submission of Letter of Intent (LOI). CP outlines five (5) pre-requisites as follow:

- i. The programme has been through the accreditation process and is included in the list of recognised programme by their respective national accreditation body;
- ii. The programme or programmes is/are conducted within a minimum total duration of five (5) years of a full-time study⁵;
- iii. The programme has been conducted for at least one (1) graduating cohort (for LAM Part I, or LAM Part II, or both LAM Parts I and II, or equivalent⁶);
- iv. It is a *bona fide* programme of architecture with exclusive intent towards producing graduate architect; and
- v. A system of advanced standing (e.g. credit transfer) is being imposed on foreign and/or Malaysian students (if any).^{7 8}

Upon fulfilment of CP, the AEP is advised to write an official LOI to the Board expressing its interest to seek for validation of the architectural programme.

5. The minimum total of five years of formal architectural education could be a degree programme conducted in the form of a continuous five-year duration, or the most common in a two-tier degree programmes such as a Bachelor of Science in Architecture for the first three years, followed by a Master of Architecture for the subsequent two years of study.

6. In Malaysia, the Board adopted a two-tier architectural education system consisted of three-year study at undergraduate level (being equivalent to LAM Part I professional qualification) and followed by an additional two-year professional degree at postgraduate level (being equivalent to LAM Part II professional qualification).

7. In Malaysia, student entering an undergraduate programme of architecture (equivalent to LAM Part I level) with prior qualification that is not recognised by the Board -- a credit transfer of not more than 33.0% of the total credit hours, or a residency of a minimum of two years, is imposed so that such degree is recognised by the Board. Hence, similar standards are applied to overseas graduate during registration as Graduate Architect with the Board.

8. In Malaysia, student entering a postgraduate programme of architecture (equivalent to LAM Part II level) must possess a degree recognised as LAM Part I and have undergone a minimum of 6 months of practical experience to ensure that such degree is recognised by the Board. Hence, similar standards are applied to overseas graduate during registration as Graduate Architect with the Board.

C. STAGE 2 : SUBMISSION OF VALIDATION DOCUMENT

1. Documents for Submission

The documents required for submission for application stage must include the following articles:

- i. Copy of the latest Accreditation Report⁹ produced by the national accreditation body.
- ii. The most recent External Examiners report preceding the Validation Visit
- iii. Complete curriculum content of the programme.
- iv. Specific demonstration of curriculum mapping, course distribution, curriculum composition and studio programmes across the years of study.
- v. Copy of a letter, or may be in the form of certification, issued by the national Accreditation Agency certifying the recognition of such programme.
- vi. Prospectus of Programme made available to students especially upon registration.
- vii. Record of statistics of intake, enrolment, and graduation.
- viii. Specific steps towards addressing appropriate needs of the Malaysian students (if any).

2. Visiting Panel Preparatory Meeting

A preparatory meeting will be held prior to the Visit where the Visiting Panel shall evaluate the content of the documents and determine the adequacy of the submission. The meeting will deliberate on four (4) aspects as follow:

- i. Inspection of Completeness of Documents
- ii. Inspection of the Validation Document
- iii. Issues for Further Clarification
- iv. Assignment of Specific Tasks among Visiting Panel Members

9. It is acknowledged that each national accreditation body may name the report differently than what is being mentioned here.

D. STAGE 3 : VALIDATION VISIT

Validation Visit is necessary only when the AEP's application for Validation has met all the requirements in the pre-qualifying stage referred to as condition precedent set out by the Council. Thereafter, a Validation Panel (or the Panel) appointed by the Board shall carry out the Validation Visit.

1. Pre-Visit

Itinerary of Visit shall be prepared by the AEP based on the requirements of this procedure. The itinerary of the Visit shall clearly state the date and, time of the visit and flow of assessment activities. AEP is expected to observe the times and activities stated in the itinerary of Visit.

2. Activities in the itinerary of the Visit

The activities in the itinerary shall follow the requirements briefly outlined below:

- i. Welcoming address and introduction by AEP
- ii. Opening address by the Visiting Panel
- iii. Briefing by the Head of Department/Programme
- iv. Viewing of exhibition of students' works (design portfolios)
- v. Inspection of students' academic portfolio and other documents (course syllabus, coursework/assignments/reports, examination scripts, etc.)
- vi. Visiting teaching and learning facilities and others resources or building/sites of interest to architectural education
- vii. Closed door meeting with Malaysian students (if any)
- viii. Closed door meeting with the Management of the AEP
- ix. Visiting Panel closed meeting
- x. Exit meeting

3. General Aspects of Exhibition

In selecting the works for the exhibition, the AEP is required to display a cross-section of the students' works rather than just the works of the best students.

The AEP is required to make available all studio programmes, project briefs and grading throughout all stages of assessment. The AEP must arrange for a member of the staff to explain briefly the work of each semester. The Panel is interested in the content of each year of study and their relation with the preceding year and progression to the following year of study.

4. Exhibition of Design Courses

The Design and Academic Portfolios of three (3) students from each passing band, i.e. excellent, average, and lowest pass achievement (i.e. altogether nine (9) samples), must be exhibited for every semester or term of the programme. The grading should be indicated clearly on the portfolios.

However for graduating cohorts, all current works produced by no less than five (5) students must be displayed. The Design and Academic Portfolios that include works that they have done in preceding semesters must also be made available so as to build up a total picture of their learning experience.

5. Exhibition of Non-Design Courses

Each set of course documents consisting of course syllabus, teaching schedule, instruction for the assignments, and synopsis of lecture series should be made available together with samples of coursework and assignments.

A set of three (3) samples of examination papers, answer scripts, coursework, assignments, projects reports or dissertations of non-design courses each to represent the highest, average, and lowest pass categories (i.e. altogether 9 samples) shall be displayed for inspection according to course groupings namely Design, Technology and Environment, Cultural Context, Communication, and Management Practice and Law.

6. Visit to Educational Facilities

The AEP shall make available to the Visiting Panel all educational facilities related to the teaching and learning of architecture during the Visit.

7. Meeting with the Management

The AEP shall arrange for a meeting of Validation Panel with the leadership or top management of the School. The Board places due significance of this meeting as firm gesture of commitment of the institution and its leader. Matters of higher-level decision-making on academic policy, human resources, logistic, and financial commitment to the programme may be raised in this meeting.

a. Meeting with Head of School and Academic Staff

The AEP shall arrange for a meeting with the Head of School and members of the academic. This meeting is an important aspect of the visit where the Panel shall be briefed on: structure of the programme, management and conduct of programme, projects in each studio, and how supporting courses are integrated in the design studio. Where relevant, the Panel shall also be briefed on the changes, improvements, and response towards previous reports (if any). This meeting is an opportunity for the Panel to meet the staff and to clarify certain aspects in the running of the programme.

b. Meeting with Students

The School shall arrange for a closed-door meeting with Malaysian students of various years or levels of studies. This meeting is an important aspect of the visit to gather feed back from students' collective view on the programme and School. Preferably the School has given prior briefing to the students of the purpose of this meeting. The session with the students should be effective and constructive and becomes as meaningful as possible to them for they are the main and direct recipients of the programme. Sponsoring body, study grant provider, and financial institution in Malaysia are continuously and consistently relying on the feedback and reports from the Board to which this dialogue with students forms a part of it.

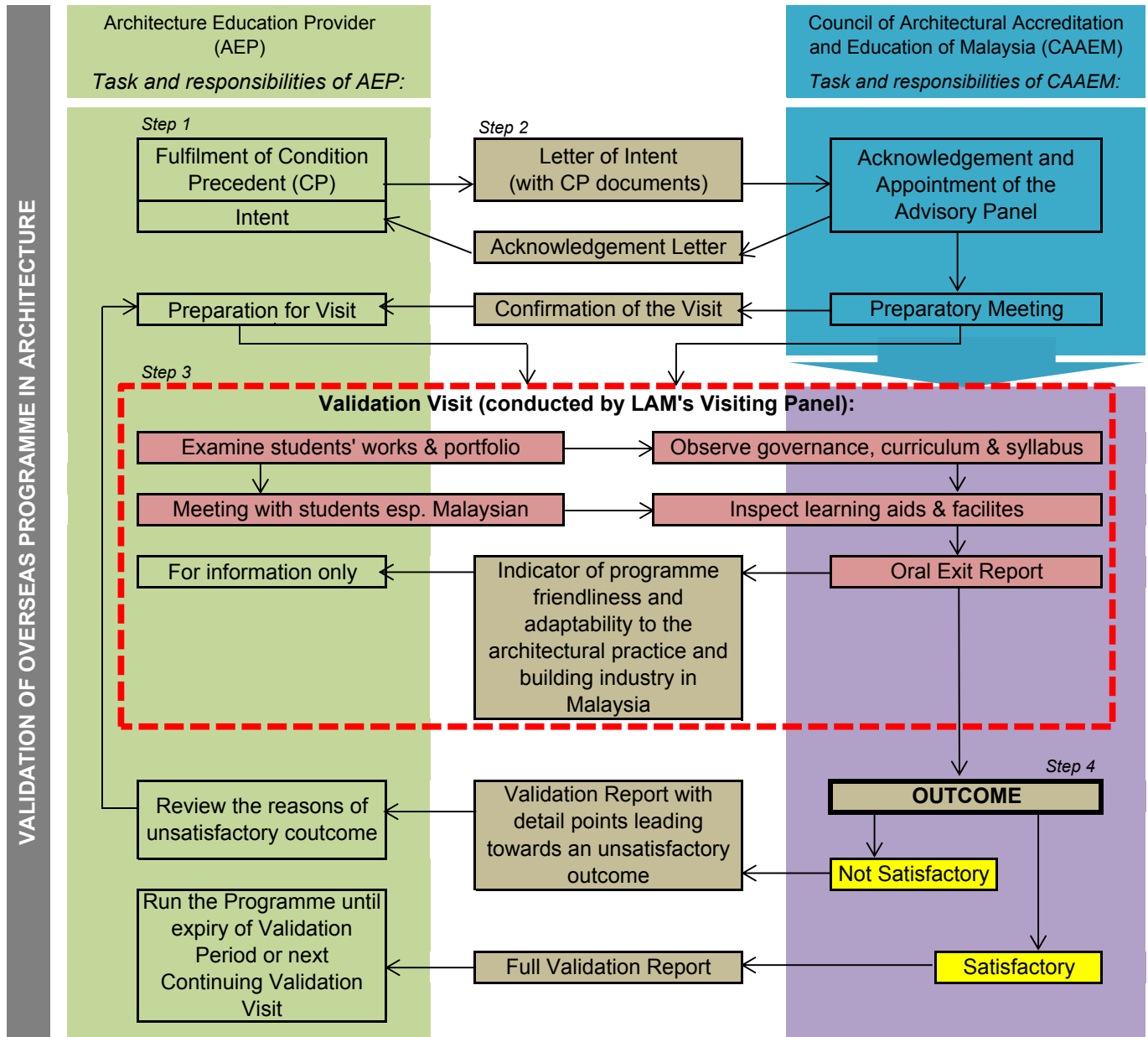
c. Validation Panel Summary Meeting

Before ending the visit, the Validation Panel shall convene in a private meeting to deliberate and summarize all observations and comments before delivering the Oral Exit Report to the AEP.

d. Oral Exit Report

At end of the Visit, the Panel shall deliver an oral Exit Report. The purpose of the Exit Report is to give an indication to the AEP as to the strengths and weaknesses of the programme based on the evidence exhibited, facilities inspected and students' feedback during the Visit. However, the oral Exit Report serves only as preliminary observations or comments and shall not be treated as the final or concluding assessment report. The Visiting Panel is not mandated to deliver the outcome of the validation visit without prior approval by the Council and endorsement by the Board.

E PROCESS FLOW OF OVERSEAS VALIDATION VISIT



F. STEP-BY-STEP OF THE VALIDATION PROCESS

This section explains the step-by-step guide of the validation process:

Step 1:

AEPs intent on seeking LAM's recognition should make sure that their programmes have fulfilled the prequalifying criteria set in the Condition Precedence or 'CP' explained in Stage 1 (see page 8). Upon fulfilment of the CP, the AEP should officially write a letter to express interest in applying for Validation Visit from LAM. This Letter of Intent (LOI) should mention name of the programme, the awards, the duration of study, and most importantly the dates the AEP wish to have the Validation Visit. All documents listed in Stage 2 (see page 9) some of which related to CP must be submitted accompanying the LOI. The LOI shall be addressed to

Honorary Secretary,
Board of Architects Malaysia,
17th Floor, Block F, Head Office of Jabatan Kerja Raya Malaysia,
Jalan Sultan Salahuddin,
50582 Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.

The AEP should receive an acknowledgement letter from LAM within two weeks.

Step 2:

A 3-person Review Panel appointed by LAM will examine the application and all submitted documents. Upon completion of the evaluation LAM will inform AEP of the outcome delivered by the Review Panel. Should the outcome be favourable, LAM will send out a letter to confirm the date of Validation Visit.

Step 3:

Upon confirmation of the Validation Visit, the Secretariat will communicate with the AEP to detail out preparation for the Validation Visit. Land and air travelling costs and accommodations for all members of the Panel of Validation Visit shall be borne by the AEP. A sum of fees shall be disbursed to LAM by the AEP within not more than two (2) months after the visit

Step 4:

The Validation Visit usually takes a total of 3 days with activities conducted in the sequence described in item 2 of Stage 3 (see page 10). The Oral Exit Report (see item 7(d), page 13) delivered by the Chairman of the Panel of Validation marks the end of the Validation Visit.

Step 5:

The full Validation Report shall be delivered to the AEP within three (3) months. In addition a Certificate of Validation will be issued. It is recommended that the certificate be displayed at appropriate place for easy reference by students (particularly Malaysian) and other interested parties.

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