



**MAPS MALAYSIA**  
(Council of Architectural Accreditation and Education Malaysia)  
**Board of Architects Malaysia**

**Special Note MAPS #1-2020:**

**Prevention of Infectious Disease COVID-19 and Its Impact on the Architecture and Interior Design Programme at Higher Education Institutions**

**1.0 PURPOSE**

This Special Note from MAPS Malaysia is intended to assist Architectural Education Provider (AEP) and Interior Architecture Education Provider (IAEP) in maintaining the quality of the architecture and interior design education programme as it seeks to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak amongst those involved for both programmes.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

2.1 MAPS Malaysia advises all AEP/IAEP to take the Government's instructions seriously and adhere to the directions and advice issued by the Malaysian Government from time to time so that the well-beings of each academic staff and students is maintained to the best of ability. In this context, the health and safety of academic staff, students, and everyone involved should be the utmost priority.

2.2 MAPS also follows the developments and directives issued by the Institutions of Higher Learning, both public and private on campus-specific activities involving direct teaching and learning (T&L). LAM understands that most meetings, lectures, lab-works, and studios have been cancelled and replaced with online meetings and learning through various platforms such as e-Learning, MOOC, ZOOM, YouTube, video conferencing through Skype, Facebook and other social media platforms, including blended learning method and immersive learning depending on the circumstances and needs of the relevant T&L session.

**3.0 DESIGN STUDIO PEDAGOGY**

3.1 The Documents, Manual of Accreditation for Architecture Programme (2013: 7) and Policy and Procedures for Accreditation of Interior Design Programme (2019: 8) define 'studio' as follows:

'The Studio' refers to a student centred project-based problem-solving learning pedagogy that is often developed from an issue or problem-based condition. It is

a medium for design education in activities such as input lectures, precedent studies, lectures, discussions, lecture sessions with professors and students at desks, presentations, and critiques for learning sharing, portfolio review, exhibitions, site visits and studies, final presentation sessions, and assessments. The studio in its physical sense also refers to or is understood as a studio space specifically designed to accommodate the activities described above, including the provision of individual workspace specifically for students and academic staff. If or when it is needed, the operating hours of a studio may run for 24 hours a day.

- 3.2 In context of subparagraph 3.1 above, design studio learning (design studio or interior design studio) based on cross-learning pedagogy and peer learning which is embedded under the guidance of the studio's lecturers.

#### **4.0 INFRASTRUCTURE AND ICT FACILITIES**

- 4.1 There is a disparity on the availability of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure between one AEP/IAEP to another. Some AEP/IAEP may be better equipped to handle virtual studio learning. However, it may not be possible for any AEP/IAEP to conduct comprehensive virtual studio learning involving all students and academic staff of a particular studio for long durations.
- 4.2 Therefore, the replacement of the design studio in the form of the online or virtual studio should be viewed as a temporary action. It is known that virtual studios are unable to replace integrative, cooperative and consensual. This dynamic studio learning environment could not possibly be simulated through a virtual studio or any online medium.

#### **5.0 STRATEGY OF QUALITY WORK MANAGEMENT**

In light of subsections 4.1 and 4.2 above, MAPS hopes that the AEP/IAEP can devise strategies in planning the T&L by prioritizing the use of online methods involving one-to-one meetings between lecturers and students, cross-lecture by lecturers, and the likes. Furthermore, the proposed strategy will need to reorganise of group meetings such as critique sessions and interim presentation sessions of each student's design work (involving the attendance of all students and academic staff in the studio) by delaying their schedule towards the end of the semester until COVID-19 is expected to decline.

#### **6.0 CONTROLS ON THE IMPACT OF LEARNING QUALITY LEARNING**

- 6.1 Notwithstanding the steps taken to customize the T&L activities within the context and constrained environment, although intending to do their best, MAPS expects a decline in quality of student achievement due to T&L time, deterioration of supervisory intensity, and reduced face-to-face meetings and group learning.
- 6.2 In the event of a decline in quality as set out in subparagraph 6.1, the AEP/IAEP is indeed advised to take follow-up actions aimed at ensuring that individual student's works achieve at least to the minimum and the overall quality of the programme is not affected. This remedial action should be taken wisely and responsibly given the current learning load of the students. The complete remedial action must be completed within a reasonable period until the AEP/IAEP is prepared to confidently go through the accreditation process and procedure

especially during the Advisory Visit or Accreditation Visit by the Board of Architects (LAM).

- 6.3 Students in individual capacities are also encouraged to make sure their design studio work portfolios are always well-prepared and each work meets the minimum quality requirements set by LAM so that they can be registered as Graduate Architects and Graduate Interior Designers with LAM and at the same time be admitted into the workforce with confidence. In this regard, AEP/IAEP is advised to guide their students towards creating the best design portfolio.

## 7.0 IMPLEMENTATION

- 7.1 This Special Note applies to all architecture and interior design programmes that have been approved and / or accredited by LAM from time to time where the COVID-19 outbreak is under control.



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Chairman  
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