



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

**Special Note MAPS #2-2020:**

**Implementation of Teaching and Learning and Evaluation of Architecture and Interior Design Programme at Higher Learning Institutions during Movement Control Order Period in conjunction with the outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic.**

**1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This Special Note # 2-2020 by MAPS Malaysia is intended to provide advice and guidance to assist Architecture Education Provider (AEP) and Interior Architecture Education Provider (IAEP) in maintaining the quality of teaching and learning (T&L) and assessment of architecture and design studies throughout the duration of the Movement Control Order (MCO) in conjunction with the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 This Special Note should be read in context of Special Note #1-2020 published by MAPS Malaysia on 18 March 2020 (Wednesday).
- 1.3 This note explains in further detail the specific aspects of architecture and interior design education that need to be understood in the context of instructions and guidelines issued by the Malaysian National Security Council (NSC), Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH), Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and Institutions of Higher Learning, both public and private.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 MAPS Malaysia paid close attention to the extension of the MCO to April 14, 2020 as announced by the Prime Minister on March 25, 2020 (Tuesday).
- 2.2 It is known that teaching and learning across all Higher Learning Institutions will be handled fully online from April 1 to 14, 2020. During this or subsequent extended periods, students may undergo for online teaching and lecture whether from home or from their respective location. The expiry date for this period is subject to change according to the latest MCO directive by the Government.
- 2.3 The 'Frequently Asked Questions' document regarding the Implementation of the Education Programme during MCO published by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) is also related and has been aligned by MAPS.

- 2.4 In Special Note #1-2020, MAPS is aware of developments and directives issued by the Public University (UA) and Public and Private Institutions of Higher Learning (IPT) regarding on-campus activities, particularly those involving teaching and learning via face-to-face and in groups such as lectures, lab work, fieldwork, and studios have to be cancelled.
- 2.5 In addition to 2.4 above, lectures, meetings, and learning can be carried out online through various platforms and means depending on the circumstances and needs of the relevant T&L session.

### **3.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATION**

- 3.1 Most architecture and interior design programmes do not have formal and written examination elements. Only about 15 to 20 percent of the architecture curriculum has formal and written final exam elements. The rest are non-examinable courses.
- 3.2 Conducting assessment and examination of all non-design courses during MCO period must comply with any guidelines and directives issued by the MOHE, MQA, and the respective Institution of Higher Learning. MAPS may authorize the substitution of formal examinations into other assessment methods such as online home exams, time-specific home examinations, or as special assignments with specified duration and deadlines (provided that the score distribution complies to the course information).
- 3.3 Meanwhile, conducting the assessment of all design courses shall be guided by the standard provisions set out in the Manual of Accreditation for Architecture Programme (MAAP), 2013 and Policy and Procedures for Accreditation of Interior Design Programme (PAID), 2019.
- 3.4 MAAP (2013: 21) and PAID (2019: 21) as stated in item (ii) of sub-section 3.2.3, that the evaluation of all major Design Studio projects are carried out by at least two (2) qualified academic staff collectively.
- 3.5 Flexibility is given to the AEP / IAEP where at least one (1) final assessment at the end of the main project can be accepted as sufficient and this must be done collectively online by at least (2) academic staff.
- 3.6 T&L sessions on the aspect of one-on-one consultation between lecturers and students as regularly held in design studios can be done online. Various methods can be used, either synchronous or asynchronous. Some known synchronous platforms that can be used include WhatsApp video, Facetime, Skype and Zoom. While asynchronous platforms include email, messaging platforms like WhatsApp, Google Chat and Messenger, various online learning platforms such as e-Learning, MOOC, Moodle, and more. The suitability of a platform used must take into account the capabilities of the equipment, accessibility and dependability required in the relevant online T&L activities. Most asynchronous platforms are capable of providing online discussion sessions for group works.

## 4.0 PRACTICAL TRAINING AND MINIMUM WORK EXPERIENCE

One of the key elements in the education system of interior design is the 'practical training' included in the curriculum; and for architecture is the 'minimum working experience' as a condition for entry into Part II LAM studies. The explanation regarding both are as follows:

- 4.1 Practical Training for Interior Design programme:  
Subsection 3.2.2 (iii) in PAID (2019) establishes the following: Practical training give students the opportunity to gain practical experience in interior design and construction industry. It is preferred that the Practical Training requirements in the construction industry are no less than 6 months, administered by the IAEP, which include the scope of interior design works, supervised by an Interior Designer or an Architect, and are mandatory for all students before they proceed into the graduating semester (final semester). This Practical Training must be completed after the end of Second Year and shall be completed before the students' final semester. Some of the possibilities that can be explored by IAEP such are the following examples:
- 4.1.1 Conduct Practical Training for a reasonable period of time as possible, taking into account the limited situation; or
  - 4.1.2 Substituting Practical Training by having students prepare a research paper or 'topical study' focusing on issues and challenges in the practical world of interior design and its relationship to the construction industry; or
  - 4.1.3 Conduct Practical Training for any registered Interior Designer or individual from within or outside the country through formal home-based workplaces with their appointments legally recorded and daily work activities logged and work portfolios stored systematically; or
  - 4.1.4 Combination of methods described between any two of subclasses 4.1.1, 4.1.2, and 4.1.3; or
  - 4.1.5 Postpone and compensates the placement of Practical Training to a more convenient time to the respective IAEP and students, and where required, the IAEP allows them to implement it during the final semester of study; or
  - 4.1.6 In addition to those described in subsections 4.1.1 to 4.1.5 above, the IAEP is welcomed to use their discretion in redefining Practical Training requirements involving clients, patrons, community, and community empowerment efforts (example: Crisis Project for Interior Design or ID Special Project).
  - 4.1.7 In any of the above situations, the supervision and endorsement of an Interior Designer or registered Architect is a must.
  - 4.1.8 Practical Training approaches mentioned above can also be applied to the 'Industry Training' activities in any architectural education programme.

## **4.2 Work Experience as LAM Part II Entry Requirements:**

In MAAP (2013) subsection 3.2.4 established at least six (6) months working experience in registered Architecture firms, approved architecture-related organizations, or practice in the construction industry as one of the key conditions for entry into LAM Part II education programmes.

4.2.1 MAPS recommends that these entry requirements be provided with reasonable flexibility in accordance with the requirements and capabilities of the AEP.

4.2.2 Students (applicants) who are proven to be excellent and if found eligible can be admitted directly to the LAM Part II programme. The recruitment of less successful applicants can be determined subject to their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) supported with work experience of no less than three (3) months and aligned to the CGPA.

4.2.3 In accordance with subsection 4.2.2, the AEP is required to provide a table of entry qualification categories based on CGPA results and the duration of work experience according to the applicant's ability level. Interview sessions need to be thoroughly holistic in the applicant's ability to integrate academic and work experience.

4.2.4 In addition to subsections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3, students who have been exempted or have their work experience requirement to qualify for education at LAM Part II level reduced, they are required to complete this requirement upon graduation and before they can register as Graduate Architects with the Board Architects Malaysia (LAM).

## **5.0 DESIGN STUDIO PEDAGOGY AND ICT FACILITIES**

5.1 In MAAP (2013: 7) and PAID (2019: 8) documents, the studio is described as a system and pedagogical instrument in T&L for architecture and interior design programmes.

5.2 The replacement of a design studio in the form of online or virtual studio should be viewed as a temporary action (until situations return to normal). It is known that virtual studios will be unable to replace design studios that are integrative, cooperative and consensual. This dynamic studio learning environment cannot be simulated through a virtual studio or any online medium. However, as we all know in these harsh conditions, this T&L method is the best at the moment.

5.3 The implementation of the design studio and the assessment of students' works can and should continue even though the T&L mode is unconventional. Efforts to standardize T&L should be taken into account in terms of equality without creating any disadvantage for any student.

5.4 The preparation of the studio programme should also take into account the constraints of site visits using hypothetical sites or any sites where background information is already available to the studio lecturer. Lecturers may also choose to use any design competitions as one of several alternatives to be considered.

## 6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 This Special Note provides further clarification to the AEP/ IAEP in the context of the earlier resolutions presented in Special Note #1-2020 in addition to providing guidance on additional matters related to architectural studies and interior design programmes.
- 6.2 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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**Prof. Adj. Ar. Mustapha bin Hj. Mohd Salleh**  
Chairman,  
Council of Architectural Accreditation and Education Malaysia  
Board of Architects Malaysia

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