



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

**Special Note MAPS #4-2020:**

**Teaching and Learning of Design Studio Post-MCO for  
Architecture and Interior Design Programme**

**1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 Special Note #4-2020 of MAPS Malaysia (or 'MAPS') is intended to provide **compulsory instructions and guidance** to Architecture Education Providers (AEP) and Interior Design Education Providers (IDEP) during the post-Movement Control Order (MCO) period in the context of teaching and learning (T&L) of **Design Studio** and AEP/IDEP's efforts towards securing and maintaining programme approval and accreditation awarded by the Board of Architects Malaysia (LAM).
- 1.2 This Special Note MAPS #4-2020 was issued in aligned with a Media Statement released by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) on 27 May 2020.
- 1.3 **Failure of the AEP/IDEP to comply with the mandatory guidelines contained in this Special Note MAPS #4-2020 will expose the programme that have received accreditation and recognition from the Board of Architects Malaysia (LAM) to the risk of suspension and revocation.**

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Government through its various enforcement agencies had announced a series of sanctions and control orders known as the Movement Control Order (MCO), Enhanced Movement Control Order (EMCO), and Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) in order to control the movement and expand the implementation of social distancing amongst the people.
- 2.2 Each MCO, EMCO, and CMCO are enforced taking into account the interests of the people and the country where various inputs on health, safety, economy, social, and the likes have been considered holistically.
- 2.3 In addition to allowing the essential services sector, the CMCO period provides flexibility for a number of selected sectors of the economy and services to operate under a tight Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

- 2.4 The basic principle of the SOP during the CMCO is adherence to social distancing, ensuring that the premises are sanitized, maintaining good hygiene, and facilitating contact tracing. Meanwhile, the people are also ordered to avoid 3Cs, which are crowded places, confined spaces, and close conversation.
- 2.5 The Department of Higher Education (JPT) in its letter dated 27 April 2020, issued appropriate measures and actions for the purpose of implementing face-to-face T&L in the Public Universities (UA) / Institutions of Higher Learning (IPT). Additionally, JPT also issued a FAQ on 7 May 2020 on what can and cannot be done during the CMCO period.
- 2.6 The use of online method for all T&L from 18 March 2020 to the end of December 2020 is a very long period of non-face-to-face learning. The longer the **Architecture** and **Interior Design** programmes are exposed to non-face-to-face learning conditions, the more harm can happen to the students' learning, especially in matters relating to the Design Studio.
- 2.7 Criteria 2 and 3 under the heading Curriculum Design and Delivery and Assessment of Students respectively in the Manual of Accreditation for Architecture Programme (MAAP, 2013) and Policy and Procedures for Accreditation of Interior Design Programme (PAID, 2019) and specific priorities for the Design Studio course as described in subsection 4.4.3 is clear in emphasising the importance of Design Studio T&L.

### 3.0 QUALITY CONTROL OF ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES

It is mandatory for all architecture and interior design programmes that have been approved and accredited to comply and fulfil the requirements and quality set by LAM. The emphasis on quality assurance of the programme is governed by three main pillars namely Graduate Attributes (MAAP, 2013: 80-1; PAID, 2019: 70), Knowledge and Skills in Architecture and Interior Design Requirements (MAAP, 2013: 76-9; PAID, 2019: 67-9), as well as Curriculum Integration and Studio Scale of Complexity (MAAP, 2013: 82-4; PAID, 2019: 71-3).

In the context stated in section 2.0 above, article 3.0 outlines several actions, affirmations, and resolutions on the implementation of the Design Studio for all Architecture and Interior Design programmes.

#### 3.1 Design Studio as Core Pedagogy

- 3.1.1 Any institution of higher learning in the world offering programmes in architecture and interior design would certainly categorise its curriculum content into two main groups, namely non-design courses and design courses. Design courses are the heart, core, and foundation of the study of architecture and interior design. Design courses are conducted every semester throughout the course of the study through the design studio. The content of studio learning is integrated, progressive, and incremental.
- 3.1.2 Article 3.1 in Special Note MAPS #1-2020 clarifies that: *'studios' refer to learning pedagogy for students driven project-based problem, often developed from issues or problem-based conditions as a medium for design studies where activities such as input lectures, exemplary studies, talks, discussions, critique sessions between lecturers and students at desks, presentations, and critiques for learning sharing purposes, portfolio*

*review, exhibitions, site visits and studies, final presentation sessions, and assessments. Studios in physical terms also refer to or be understood as a dedicated studio space to accommodate the activities described above, including providing individualized workspaces for students and academic staff. If or when it is needed, the operating hours of a studio can run for 24 hours a day (Source: Manual of Accreditation for Architecture Programme (MAAP, 2013: 7) and Policy and Procedures for Accreditation of Interior Design Programme (PAID, 2019: 8)).*

- 3.1.3 In context of subsection 3.1.2 above, design studio learning (also referred to or referred to as 'design studio' or 'architecture studio' or 'interior design studio') is based on cross-learning and peer-learning under the guidance of the studio lecturer.
- 3.1.4 Approaches using themes, issues, challenges, or problems presented by the studio lecturer will be the focus of the creative and critical thinking process that is often driven within a collective, collaborative, and competitive learning environment.
- 3.1.5 Logically, Bloom's taxonomy of learning for Design Studio often involves high levels of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation as design tasks always require such higher order of thinking.
- 3.1.6 As the core and pedagogy of design studio learning for architecture and interior design, it is necessary to control the ratio between guided learning time (GLT) and independent learning time (ILT) in the context of total student learning time (SLT). GLT also includes face-to-face (F2F) and non-face-to-face (nF2F) learning. It is well known by the AEP/IDEP that in GLT F2F activity is often more dominant than nF2F. At the same time, GLTs for more intensive studio variations can allow the whole GLT to be attributed as 'contact hours'.
- 3.1.7 In reference to subsection 3.1.6, for the undergraduate programme (for the Bachelor of Science in Architecture - LAM Part I and Bachelor of Interior Design) the total GLT must be specified not less than 60% of the total design studio SLT.
- 3.1.8 In reference to subsection 3.1.6, for the postgraduate programme (LAM Part II) the GLT amount must be specified not less than 50% of the total design studio SLT.
- 3.1.9 The ratio between lecturers and students for the Design Studio has been set in MAAP (2013: 24) and PAID (2019: 23) as between 1:10 and 1:15 for the Bachelor of Science in Architecture (LAM Part I) and Bachelor of Interior Design; while not exceeding 1:10 for the Master of Architecture (LAM Part II) programme and the Final Year Studio for Bachelor of Interior Design. Any resolution of the SOP for the implementation of the Design Studio that does not exceed this ratio factor will be accepted by MAPS.
- 3.1.10 Critique sessions (a term specific to architecture education and interior design used globally; often abbreviated as 'crit' or in Bahasa Malaysia as 'krit') are very important in design studio learning. Critique is a pedagogical tool for guiding, arguing, provoking, discussing, and the like in the pursuit of consultation and helping students shape their design. Each problem in a student design project is unique and always requires an individual

consultation process in a collaborative setting. Studio lecturers must be prepared for the many issues and design challenges brought forward by each student.

- 3.1.11 Critique session can also be used as an evaluation platform, where during the design process the critique session also becomes a **formative evaluation** tool; while at the end of the process and product design, the critique session will be transformed into a **summative evaluation** tool. All these critique sessions are one of the primary face-to-face T&L activities in the design studio that must be attributed as GLT-F2F. AEP/IDEP **cannot compromise in matters of both the formative and quantitative aspects of the Design Studio.**

### 3.2 Prioritizing Group Design Courses

- 3.2.1 The MAPS urges each AEP/IDEP to restructure the content delivery so that inputs from the non-design courses are given at the beginning of the semester, before any design courses related to them are implemented. In these difficult situations, integration between non-design courses might not always be possible to be done directly, so it is considered sufficient if it is executed diagonally. However, it should be noted that integration between non-design courses with the Design Studio is important - so any restructuring here should not compromise the T&L of the Design Studio.
- 3.2.2 In the context set out in subsections 3.1 and 3.2.1, it should be understood that in developing the strategy and rescheduling of T&L activities, priority should be given to the Design Studio. In all cases, AEP/IDEP should never neglect the core course of the Design Studio and it must be prioritised in protecting it from any harm.
- 3.2.3 If the impact arising from this post-MCO period cannot be resolved and is expected to have a detrimental effect on the programme, the AEP/IDEP must ensure that a compromise is made on the non-design courses group first.

### 3.3 Implementation of Design Studio throughout post-MCO period

- 3.3.1 The latest Media Statement by MOHE dated 27 May 2020 regarding the conduct of academic activities on campus during the post-MCO period which states that all T&L activities should be carried out online and face-to-face by 31 December 2020, with the exception of certain categories of students form the basis of Special Note MAPS #4-2020.
- 3.3.2 In the context of the post-MCO period referred in subsection 3.3.1, MAPS emphasises the AEP/IDEP to strategise and reprioritise to ensure the successful implementation and maintain the quality of T&L. Some implementation criteria are outlined below for reference and guidance.

### 3.4 Face-to-Face T&L of Design Studio for Final Year Students

- 3.4.1 Programme studies especially for **Final Year** students' supervisions and assessments are of paramount important especially in the future of graduating students.

- 3.4.2 T&L for design studios (on-campus) for **Final Year** students is an important pedagogical instrument that involves intensive, 3-dimensional multidisciplinary debates using a variety of physical mediums (such as handmade models), laboratory simulation tests, progressive crit sessions, and so forth involves a diverse group of lecturers.
- 3.4.3 **Final Year** Students (graduating students) must be able to face the highest level of creative thinking and critical thinking in a competitive learning environment for all three programmes; Bachelor of Science in Architecture (LAM Part I equivalent), Master of Architecture (LAM Part II equivalent) and Bachelor of Interior Design.
- 3.4.4 Before they pass this **graduating year** and join practice and the professional world - their skills, efficiency, toughness, and resilience must be carefully tested. The construction industry cannot be burdened with the production of graduates who pose a risk to the business at the workplace. As such, the aspects of rigorousness and the intellectual intensity of the students become very important.
- 3.4.5 The critical skills and aspects mentioned above can only be successfully tested through detailed design process from start to finish in the design studio, which can provide a robust creative environment through peer-learning, competitiveness, cross-learning, as well as active and interactive involvement of lecturers and experts in selected fields.
- 3.5 **Face-to-Face T&L of Design Studio for First Year Students.**
- 3.5.1 Face-to-face T&L in the design studio (on-campus) for **First Year** students (freshmen) is an important pedagogical instrument that cannot be replaced with the online learning environment.
- 3.5.2 Learning the basics knowledge of design combines affective, cognitive, and psychomotor aspects integrally and simultaneously through the implementation of various 2- to 3-dimensional design tasks. Online teaching instructions cannot take over the role of guiding and developing hands-on skills, seeing and visualisation, and development of sensorial faculty in exploring the validity of a decision in the design process.
- 3.5.3 Formulating and mastering basic communication and comprehension in terms of design and architecture is required in advance to enable any online communication to be carried out efficiently and smoothly.
- 3.5.4 Therefore, these **new students** need to be guided in the face-to-face setting of the T&L in the **First Year** Design Studio for the Bachelor of Science in Architecture (LAM Part I) and Bachelor of Interior Design programmes.
- 3.6 **Face-to-Face T&L Design Studio for First Year Master of Architecture (LAM Part II)**
- 3.6.1 The architectural education programme is carried out in two professional stages, which is equivalent to the LAM Part I professional qualification examination (for the Bachelor of Science in Architecture programme) and the LAM Part II (for the Master of Architecture programme). This

subsection 3.6 is specific for the Master of Architecture degree programme (LAM Part II - a postgraduate programme for professional courses).

- 3.6.2 **First-Year** design learning for the Master of Architecture (LAM Part II) programme requires a collaborative, non-individualistic learning approach. Various social and municipal housing issues are discussed and explored through site and field studies that are later shared and presented in the studio. The involvement and input of specialists in the relevant fields further enhances the learning process. The scope of the issues, challenges, and constraints of planning and designing expand across residential and municipal areas. Such an intensive postgraduate and professional learning environment can cause a cultural shock to the students regarding the intent, needs, ethics, and professionalism towards playing their role as future Architects.
- 3.6.3 Face-to-face learning (on-campus) in the Design Studio described in subsection 3.6.2 is intended to provide **new students in the First Year** the challenge of creative and critical thinking in high-level environments in a competitive learning environment that contributes to a sustainable and highly beneficial outcome to the community, the people and the nation.

### 3.7 **Pass/ Fail Grade Result of the Design Studio**

- 3.7.1 The authority and power of the Senate in determining what is best for their respective institutions/universities including teaching and learning (T&L) and assessment and grading are intrinsically acknowledged.
- 3.7.2 MAPS does not impinge on the intent or possibility of any particular institution/university to implement a Pass/Fail-only assessment system.
- 3.7.3 In the event that subsection 3.7.2 is implemented, the passing grades/ marks must not be less than 50% or any passing marks prescribed by the institution/ university that is more than 50%.
- 3.7.4 If the institution/ university is applying subsection 3.7.2 to the Design Studio course, the institution/university is required to perform a ranking of students' works based on the highest achieving group (top), the middle, and minimum pass (lowest) on each of the work and keep this rating record for future accreditation purposes. Students should be informed of their position and achievement as outlined in Criterion 3 in MAAP (2013) and PAID (2019).

## 4.0 **DETERENCE FROM PARTICIPATING IN FACE-TO-FACE DESIGN STUDIO**

- 4.1 The disruption of the online T&L environment due to various infrastructure and internet coverage issues at home or abroad has created a disparity that impedes accessibility, especially among students. Any online T&L activity becomes obstructed and limited, which affects the quality of the T&L and if not addressed, will be detrimental to the student's performance and the overall quality of the programme.
- 4.2 Under subsection 4.1, the Design Studios in the First and Final Years of the three programmes mentioned in this Special Note, particularly the activities covered by the GLT component, cannot be implemented online.

- 4.3 Under subsections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 above, for any student facing this situation (for example: students who face travel restrictions, local students in rural areas, or foreign students who have returned to their home countries), it is advisable that they defer from taking Design Studio course for that semester.

## **5.0 T&L FACILITIES RELATED TO DESIGN STUDIO**

- 5.1 Criteria 6 in MAAP (2013: 25-6) lists various facilities and equipment to fulfil the delivery of syllabus to students particularly related to the Design Studio.
- 5.2 Under the provisions and guidelines outlined in article 3.0, AEP/IDEP is advised to provide any services normally provided and supplied to the students based on the requirements set out in sub-section 5.1 (for example: CAD lab, laser-cutting machine, 3D printers, carpentry workshops, and so on).

## **6.0 IMPLEMENTATION ENFORCEMENT**

- 6.1 The ruling in this Special Note is temporary in nature for the purpose of assisting all AEP/IDEP bound to it, and will be rescinded as and when appropriate. It is also a form of mitigation to avoid any adverse effects to the quality of the education by balancing the requirements of health and safety as well as the teaching and learning needs of professional programmes.
- 6.2 This Special Note MAPS #4-2020 is effective beginning 1 July 2020 for all architecture and interior design programmes approved or accredited by LAM and will remain in force throughout the post-MCO period until the contagious outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic became under control.
- 6.3 The implementation of the Special Note MAPS #4-2020 may be exempted to students who are currently still studying for the second semester of session 2019/20 beyond 1 July 2020 at the respective AEP/IDEP. However, MAPS yields the discretion to the AEP/IDEP in implementing this Special Note MAPS #4-2020 to affected students.
- 6.4 MAPS will issue a special notice announcing the effective expiry date of this Special Note MAPS #4-2020.
- 6.5 Summary of this Special Note MAPS #4-2020 is included in a page as Appendix 1.

**Council of Accreditation and Architectural Education Malaysia  
BOARD OF ARCHITECTS MALAYSIA**

**11 June 2020 (Monday)**