

Professional Criteria for the Accreditation of  
Studies in Interior Design

2nd edition (1st English edition)

**ASAP**

Association for the  
Recognition of Studies in  
Architecture and Planning

## Contents

### **1 Guidelines**

- 1.1 Adaptation to European and international standards
- 1.2 Levels of accreditation with reference to the professional qualifications of interior designers
- 1.3 International dimension of the interior design education
- 1.4 Reciprocal recognition of credit points/degrees
- 1.5 Creating university profiles

### **2 General educational goals**

- 2.1 Special educational goals

### **3 Contents and curricular structure of educational programmes in interior design**

- 3.1 Subjects and skills
- 3.2 Abilities to be taught and trained by the curriculum

### **4 Degrees/diplomas**

- 4.1 Bachelor's and Master's programmes
- 4.2 Single-phase diploma courses
- 4.3 Immatriculation criteria
- 4.4 Educational modules and ECTS

### **5 Practical training**

- 5.1 Work placements prior to immatriculation
- 5.2 Practical training in between terms
- 5.3 Training on the job
- 5.4 Further education and training
- 5.5 Study excursions

### **6 Research and teaching**

### **7 Faculty structures**

- 7.1 Professors
- 7.2 Assistant professors, lecturers
- 7.3 Visiting professors/lecturers and guest critics

### **8 Infrastructure**

- 8.1 Usable floor space
- 8.2 Drafting studios, student work spaces
- 8.3 Workshops
- 8.3 Workshops/studios for traditional and new media
- 8.4 Library
- 8.5 Research laboratories

8.6 Spaces for communication and presentations

**9 Funding / Third-party funding**

**10 Quality control**

10.1 Interaction between the profession and society

10.2 Interdisciplinarity

10.3 Educational credits

10.4 Presentations

10.5 Publications

**Appendix: Further applicable documents**

## 1 Guidelines

In this manual (complementing the interdisciplinary criteria established by agencies like ZEvA, ASIIN and AQUIN), ASAP formulates the revised professional criteria for the recognition of studies/graduation in interior design. Parallel to these criteria, ASAP has also published the professional standards required for the recognition of study courses of architecture, landscape architecture and urban/regional planning in their second (German) editions.

It is of special significance that the Association ASAP has, for the first time, brought together representatives from professional practice and the universities who have worked towards the introduction of quality controls into the different study programmes on offer.

In view of the varied educational programmes for interior designers—both existing ones and those to be expected as a result of university deregulation—this creates a reference frame for accreditation designed to ensure the international compatibility of study programmes and to foster the individual and regional profiles of the different universities.

The expert commission on interior design is aware of the fact that, in future, these standards will have to be adapted and up-dated over time. The commission therefore also sees itself as a forum for fruitful discourse about the educational goals in this discipline.

### 1.1 Adaptation to European and international standards

In the academic world, the different subjects of architectural education—and thus also the interior design education—occupies a special place in so far as it prepares students for a profession protected by the architects' laws of the different federal states of Germany. The expert commission considers full-time studies as mandatory also for future interior designers. Such educational programmes should not only follow the criteria listed by the European Diploma Directive, but also comply with the international standards of architecture, such as

in Europe: the European Architects' Directive 85/384 and the Directive of the European Parliament and the Council for the Recognition of Professional Qualifications

world-wide: UNESCO-UIA Charter for Architectural Education and the UIA Accord on Recommended International Standards of Professionalism in Architectural Practice (both form the basis for the WTO's equivalency negotiations).

ASAP co-operates closely with the UNESCO/UIA System for Architectural Education and the UIA Architectural Education Commission, and will have its programme certified by them. This will integrate ASAP-accredited universities into the world-wide network of UNESCO/UIA-recognized higher educational programmes.

In correspondence with their being modelled on the standards defined in the guidelines and directives mentioned, the following framework conditions also apply to study programmes in interior design:

- Curricula leading to a Master's degree or diploma in interior design must include a sufficient number of the subjects listed below (see para 3).
- In analogy to the UIA validation criteria, the minimum consecutive study period in interior design is five years full-time studies at a university, or an adequately longer period of part-time studies parallel to training on the job/professional practice.
- The minimum number of weekly hours of study per semester (in presence of a teacher) should correspond to the standard study period.
- In future, the educational contents should, where applicable, comply with the criteria defined by the European Architects' Directive, the UNESCO/UIA Validation System and the UIA Accord.
- ASAP accreditation should not only set minimum standards, but guarantee a high measure of educational quality.

## 1.2 Levels of accreditation with reference to the professional qualifications of interior designers

Following the valid regulations of the European Diploma Directive, the existing shorter study programmes are also accredited, parallel to validation of the new five-year consecutive study programmes. Based on the different quality levels of these courses and the diplomas they lead to, ASAP accreditation will be marked accordingly.

The joint declaration of the Conference of Interior Ministers and the Conference of Ministers of Culture and Education stipulates that accreditation must determine whether a certain Master's degree certifies the qualifications required for higher civil service. In such cases, on special application, the expert jury commission will include a representative of the federal state government.

This commission will ascertain the following:

- that the educational programme gives students competence in academic/scientific work and methodology
- that the programme trains theoretical and analytical capabilities
- that the programme fosters students' intellectual and social competence.

The accreditation certificate will, in the event, contain the addendum, 'The Master's degree entitles to higher civil service positions.'

Model 1: Study courses 6 and 4

Accreditation of five-year consecutive study courses (three-year Bachelor course, immediately followed by a two-year Master's course, in interior design) as well as of existing five-year diploma courses is effected according to the criteria stipulated by ASAP manuals and in analogy to the UNESCO/UIA directives applicable to architectural education. The three-year Bachelor's course qualifies for work in various fields of the building industry, but precludes professional practice as a registered, or licensed, interior designer.

Model 1 means:

- professional qualification as an interior designer
- the goal: access to the international UIA register and, through this, international recognition and exchangeability of educational modules and degrees
- the goal: inclusion in WTO equivalency negotiations
- generally: qualification for higher civil service positions
- international compatibility of educational modules.

Accreditation is granted with the addendum:

- Entitles to professional practice as interior designer in Germany, in compliance with the rulings of the Chamber of Architects of the respective federal state and the European Diploma Directive as well as, analogously, with the European Architects' Directive.

Model 2: Study courses 8 and 2

Exceptions to Model 1 must be expressly substantiated.

Accreditation of four-year (short) study programmes (according to the European Diploma Directive) and four-year Bachelor's programmes (following the Chamber laws of the respective federal state).

### Diagram of architectural study courses

<b>Model 1</b> Entitles graduates to do a PhD, possible higher civil service	<b>Master</b> 2 years	<b>Dipl.-Ing.</b> Universität degree	10.th Semester	<b>Master</b> 1 year specialization	<b>Modell 2</b> EG directive Entitles graduates to do a PhD, possible higher civil service	
			9. th Semester			
no chamber redistration higher civil service	<b>Bachelor</b> 3 years	main diploma course	8.th Semester	<b>Dipl.-Ing.</b> diploma engineer university of applied sciences	<b>Bachelor</b> 4 years	<b>Modell 2</b> EU directive, higher civil service
			7.th Semester			
			6.th Semester			
			5.th Semester			
		intermediate diploma course	4.th Semester			
			3.rd Semester			
			2. nd Semester			
			1.st Semester			

This diagram is applicable to academies, depending on their status (university or university of applied sciences).

---

This means:

- the four-year Bachelor's course offers all the educational contents necessary for professional qualification
- professional qualification as interior designer according to the architects' laws of the respective federal state
- recognition throughout Europe according to EU Diploma Directive
- limited ECTS-compatibility of educational modules with those of other European universities due to shorter study periods
- 2-semester Master's courses are only possible and accreditable as post-graduate artistic or scientific specialization programmes which enhance and extend the professional profile. This study course is consecutive and generally opens the way to higher civil service positions and to a PhD.

Accreditation is granted with the addendum:

- 'Qualifies for professional practice of interior design in Germany, according to the European Diploma Directive.'

ASAP accreditation certifies that the educational programme run by the applicant university meets and complies with

- the adopted criteria for the respective study course
- the graduation level
- model 1, or model 2.

ASAP is currently working towards the international UIA registration of model 1 study programmes and thus towards their inclusion in WTO equivalency negotiations. ASAP runs and publishes a list of accredited study courses of both models and registers them with the different architects' chambers.

The applicant university must print its status of accreditation on diploma supplements and/or diploma certificates, and include it in its study and examination regulations. Counsellors on study courses must explain the differences in model 1 and model 2 programmes to young people wishing to pursue university studies.

### 1.3 International dimension of the interior design education

The globalization trend creates new opportunities and fields of activity for interior designers, but at the same time also new problems. Far-reaching political and economic developments and changing environmental factors increasingly transform and determine professional traditions, conventions and developments.

These changes have repercussions on the universities and influence the debate about educational goals and contents. Professional activities at home and abroad are of great significance. Increasing graduates' international opportunities must be the aim of every curriculum. This is why every university should regard the international agreements on the licensing/registration of architects as binding also for interior designers, and therefore adhere to such agreements.

The reciprocal transnational recognition of qualifications and academic credits—as opposed to the former separate, national recognition systems—has created a new situation and should be fostered with a view to greater mobility of both interior designers and students of interior design.

The opportunities for increased mobility make it necessary to teach future interior designers how to respect, analyze and protect different cultural backgrounds, how to assume social responsibility and to respond sensitively to local contexts and identities.

### 1.4 Reciprocal recognition of credit points/degrees

The principle of reciprocity demands that universities and educational institutions recognize other study programmes of the same accredited levels with all their academic facets. This means, in particular,

- the recognition of study certificates obtained at other universities if the latter have been accredited according to the educational levels achieved in cooperation with ASAP and following the principles laid down by the UNESCO/UIA Validation System. This recognition does not mean that each and every qualification or grade from accredited programmes must be recognized. Every university is autonomous and entitled to recognize or reject qualifications according to its own capabilities or criteria. If, however, a university recognizes certificates from another university accredited to the

above mentioned criteria, it must also accept the achieved academic level of proficiency.

- The principle of reciprocity has been adopted to encourage exchanges of experience between students and teachers, and between universities offering accredited curricula.

### 1.5 Creating university profiles

Bachelor's and Master's programmes are special academic profiling instruments eminently suited for universities to set specialization priorities within the framework of their research-and-practice-oriented educational programmes.

## 2 General educational goals

The practice of interior design has considerable social impact. The educational programmes preparing for this field should therefore not neglect interior designers' responsibility to society and to individuals, parallel to, or as part of, all the other subjects taught.

They are to include and to be geared to the following:

- required professional skills
- social needs
- cultural context
- environmental compatibility (locally and globally)
- educational, scientific, technical and economic demands
- perceptual psychology and ergonomics
- the humanities

In addition, the increasing globalization of the construction industry, the building professions and architecture, as well as the changes in these areas due to new media and technologies, create new contexts.

In any case, educational programmes of interior design should pursue two basic aims, i.e.

- training competent, creative and rationally (critically) thinking experts in planning and building

- fostering the development of intellectually mature, ecologically sensitive, economically aware and socially responsible professionals.

Interior design is created in the field of tension between rationality, knowledge/skills and intuition. Curricula must take this into account.

The educational programmes must train students in

- thinking conceptually
- developing co-ordinating skills
- implementing design ideas.

Like architecture, interior design is an interdisciplinary professional field comprising a number of important elements from the humanities, social and natural sciences, technology and art.

## 2.1 Special educational goals

The decisive basic prerequisites for conceiving and implementing complex and complicated interior design projects, which meet the requirements and wishes of a client, are in-depth expertise and experience, professional competence and a profound sensitivity to man's immediate living environment.

All these require broad interdisciplinary studies and the pursuit of those overall educational aims which fully reflect the varied professional activities of the interior designer and prepare students for the specific tasks of the profession.

Like architects, interior designers work to the recognized rules of architecture and construction technology, adhering to the relevant legislation, as

- solely responsible designers, planners and co-ordinators
- fiduciary representatives of the client
- general managers of implementation
- co-ordinators in the process of 'integrated planning' (co-ordinating the work of all those involved in a project, i.e. structural designers, services engineers, experts on the physics of buildings and making sure that their contributions keep to the design concept).

This entails

- consulting with the client throughout planning and implementation
- co-ordinating and managing planning and implementation
- streamlining all related processes.

The interior designer is therefore the guarantor of/for

- controlled quality inside and outside a building
- technical and constructive perfection

- avoiding damage or loss
- financial viability
- security for costs
- keeping within schedule.

The priority subject of curricula in interior design is the designing of interior spaces—spaces for living. The object is man and his habitat with all its multiple components in terms of art, technology, construction, funding and social factors.

The discipline—and its study programme—is concerned with

- the interior of existing or projected buildings
- interior space in relation to the outer environment
- the function, aesthetics and atmospheric quality of objects
- the physical, psychological and social well-being of man.

University students of interior design should therefore be given a thorough grounding in artistic, scientific, technical, structural, economic, ecological and practical subjects which will enable them, in their careers, to apply new technological and scientific findings optimally, to develop new solutions in the sense of creative designs as well as humane and environmentally friendly projects, and basically to perceive practising interior design as a life-long learning process.

### **3 Contents and curricular structure of educational programmes in interior design**

#### 3.1 Subjects and skills

Curricula must provide a good balance of theoretical and practical subjects and train and teach, in particular

- 1 interior design skills able to meet both aesthetic and technical demands
- 2 adequate knowledge of architectural/interior design history and theory as well as the related arts, technologies and humanities
- 3 knowledge and skills in the creative arts because of their influence on the quality of architectural and interior design
- 4 adequate knowledge of architectural design and planning; planning in general and, specifically, planning techniques

- 5 understanding the relationships between people and buildings as well as buildings and their environment; realizing the need for buildings and intermediate, open spaces on a human scale in relation to human needs
- 6 understanding the profession and its role in society; aiming for designs that take into account social factors
- 7 a sure grasp of the methods that must be applied to the researching and designing of a building programme
- 8 knowledge of the structural and technical problems of architectural design
- 9 adequate knowledge of the physical problems and technologies important for the erection of a functional building—functional in terms of comfort and weather protection
- 10 the design skills needed to meet client building briefs and user requirements within budget and legal constraints
- 11 adequate knowledge of the trades and industries, organizations, regulations and administrative procedures contributing to the practical implementation of architectural plans—and of their integration into masterplans

These are the educational contents that are formulated in

- article 3 of the Directive on the freedom of movement and reciprocal recognition of architectural/interior design diplomas
- the Directive of the European Parliament and Council which recognizes professional qualifications, as well as in
- article II.4 of the UNESCO/UIA Charter for Architectural Education

and should also apply to the education of interior designers.

### 3.2 Abilities to be taught and trained by the curriculum

Up to completion of their studies, students of interior design should develop their design and construction capabilities and acquire the theoretical knowledge and practical skills which will enable them, during their careers, to play their role as generalists, to co-ordinate interdisciplinary programmes or to work in a team of specialists. This comprehensive quality of their professional competence distinguishes interior designers from other contributors to man's built environment.

This means that, in the course of studies in interior design, integrative skills will gain increasing importance.

## **A Design competence means the ability**

- to think creatively, to control and integrate the services of others involved in the planning process
- to gather information, define problems, apply analyses, judge critically and formulate strategies for action
- to think three-dimensionally and to develop designs methodically in terms of science, technology and artistic quality
- to reconcile divergent factors, integrate different bits of knowledge and to apply one's skills to finding the best design solution.

## **B Theoretical knowledge**

### **Studies in art and culture:**

- how to make use of information on the historical and cultural roots of international architecture and interior design
- how to apply the knowledge of the influence of the creative arts on the quality of architectural and interior design
- understanding the heritage represented by our built environment and the intricacies of monument preservation
- awareness of the interconnection between architecture on the one hand, and philosophical or political currents, as well as the cultural developments in other creative disciplines, on the other.

### **Social studies, humanities**

- applying the knowledge of social factors, clients and users
- the ability to develop programmes tailored to specific building briefs and, in doing so, to identify the needs of clients, the public and users alike
- identifying and defining the functional conditions for different environmental areas
- understanding the social context of a building/interior design project
- understanding the ergonomic and space requirements of man's environment: at the workplace, at home and during leisure activities; environments

in sickness and health, i.e. all the spaces and furnishings designed and fitted to human scale and human needs

- knowledge of the laws, regulations and standards of the planning, design, construction, health protection, safety and use of buildings
- knowledge of the philosophy, political theory and ethics relevant to architecture/interior design.

### **Environmental studies**

- applying theoretical knowledge to natural systems and man's built environment
- knowledge of ecological sustainability, energy-saving design and the impact of building interventions on the environment; knowledge of passive systems and their management
- awareness of the consequences of techniques and technology application
- knowledge of the history and practice of architecture and of the environment

### **Technical studies**

- implementing the knowledge of structural behaviour, materials, services and waste management
- understanding the processes of technical, structural design and the integration of structure, construction technology and technical installations
- understanding the issues of infrastructure and circulation as well as communications, maintenance and security systems
- awareness of the importance of technical infrastructure for design implementation; knowledge of cost estimation and budget control
- knowledge of physical problems and of the technologies with which to ensure balanced interior climates and to protect interior spaces from the weather

### **Design studies**

- application of design theory and methodology

- understanding design techniques and processes; analyzing and interpreting framework conditions
- knowledge of architectural and interior design history and critique

### **Construction economics and management**

- knowledge and application of professional, business, financial and legal standards and regulations
- awareness of the procedures and processes operating in the construction and furniture-manufacturing industry; understanding the financial aspects of the property market, of developer investments, alternative methods of contracting and facility management
- knowledge of crafted and factory-made structures/furnishings as well as their manufacturing processes
- awareness of the potential role of interior designers in traditional as well as new fields of the profession and in an international context
- understanding market mechanisms and their influence on the development of man's built environment; knowledge of project management and development as well as of client consultancy
- understanding professional ethics and behaviour in the practice of interior design, as well as the legal duties of interior designers in relation to their registration according to German architects' laws, professional practice and contracting.

### **C Other skills**

- team spirit and the ability to render ideas in the media of language/text, drawing, statistics and models
- analogous, digital and graphic representation and model-building skills and the ability to use these in investigating, developing and presenting a project by means of technical and artistic forms of representation
- knowledge of the existing evaluating systems for surveying man's built environment by manual and/or electronic means.

The above list of required areas of competence refers to para V.3.3. of the UNESCO/UIA Accreditation System for Architectural Education, with some amendments specially relating to interior design.

## **4 Degrees/diplomas**

The amendment of the German 'Basic University Law' of 19 January 1999 allowed the introduction of Bachelor's and Master's degree study programmes at universities and universities of applied sciences.

These new programmes facilitate the interchangeability of different subject combinations, even among different types of schools, while ensuring international exchanges.

The critical distinction is between strictly interior design subject combinations and interdisciplinary combinations (interior design and other subjects). The latter are expressly encouraged. ASAP has to check to what extent such programmes match the professional profile of the interior designer or define new professional fields. ASAP jurors will ascertain whether such 'hybrid' study programmes make sense.

Parallel to these programmes, the usual single-phase diploma courses are being continued.

### **4.1 Bachelor's and Master's programmes**

A Bachelor's degree requires

- knowledge and understanding of the different subjects taught following completion of the educational programme. Apart from having acquired advanced in-depth knowledge of standard subjects, bachelors must be thoroughly knowledgeable about individual special subjects way beyond the average levels of proficiency.
- implementation of educational content in view of future professional activities; proof of competence in the analysis and synthesis of problems and in the development of design solutions
- competence in the scientific identification of every relevant bit of information and its interpretation
- Bachelor's courses should offer a broad education and teach the basics of architectural, structural and interior design, the construction and building services technologies, and construction economics—both in terms of theory and practical application. In addition, bachelors should be made aware of

the intricacies of co-ordinating and implementing projects. To achieve this, the basic profile of every course and class must be clearly defined.

- the ability to present and explain every piece of information, every idea, problem and solution to an expert or amateur audience
- a level of proficiency which enables bachelors to continue their studies for a Master's degree.

With the successful completion of the first three-year study period, students receive a bachelor's degree. This qualifies them for various professions in the construction/design industry and for taking up a Master's course at a German or foreign university.

## Master

A Master's degree requires

- knowledge and understanding of the subjects taught following the completion of a bachelor's degree to lay the foundations for developing and implementing design ideas, often in connection with innovative research
- application of acquired knowledge and proof of competence in solving problems in new, unusual contexts
- competent integration of every aspect of a project, and consideration of its social and ethical repercussions
- Master's courses deepen the knowledge of the core fields of interior design, complemented by specializations and research and development priorities. At this level, students should be given the opportunity to choose their own priority subjects while continuing with interior design as their main subject.
- the ability to present and explain clearly articulated hypotheses, problems and solutions to an expert or amateur audience
- a level of proficiency that qualifies masters for independent postgraduate studies (PhD).

With the successful completion of this second, five-year theoretical, study period at a university, students receive a Master's degree and thereby qualify to practise interior design.

Postgraduate master's degrees are accredited according to the same scientific and professional criteria as consecutive Master's study periods.

#### 4.2 Single-phase diploma courses

Dipl.-Ing. (Univ.)  
(university graduate with diploma in engineering)

University 'diplomas' in interior design are subject to the 'Rahmenprüfungsordnung', or 'Basic Regulation for the conduct of Examinations', in force since 2000, which is non-modular and therefore internationally non-compatible.

The regional Ministries of Education verify and recognize the individual study courses on this basis.

Exceptions to the adopted Basic Regulations may be accredited by special independent agencies, in line with the criteria listed in the ASAP Manuals.

Dipl.-Ing. (FH)  
(or engineering graduates from a university of applied sciences)

In its session on 23 September 2002, the Joint Commission of the 'Conference of Ministers of Culture and Education' and the 'Conference of University Vice Chancellors' (Gemko) decided to cancel the joint basic exam regulations for architectural and interior design study programmes at universities of applied sciences. This enables the individual departments to work out their own regulations on the conduct of study courses and examinations on the basis of their specific profiles.

The current German laws on higher education stipulate a maximum study period of four years for diplomas acquired at universities of applied sciences so that their diplomas do not correspond to international UNESCO/UIA standards. At international level, they equal bachelor's degrees.

Accreditation by ASAP is subject to the corresponding criteria listed in the manuals.

#### 4.3 Immatriculation criteria

Bachelor

The criteria for admission to a bachelor's study programme correspond to the general regulations governing university entrance of the federal states.

## Master

The admission to the consecutive master's course presupposes

- a bachelor's degree in interior design or
- a bachelor's degree in a related subject such as architecture or product design. For this, applicants are required to pass an aptitude test reviewing, in particular, their scientific and artistic talent and to catch up on compulsory subjects specific to interior design. Such courses must be completed in addition to the regular curricular courses and will, in any case, prolong study periods.

The entrance criterion for a one-year master's course is the completion of a minimum four-year bachelor's course of interior design.

Admission to a postgraduate master's study programme presupposes qualification as a bachelor or a Dipl.-Ing. (FH or Univ., see above). Additional aptitude tests are possible.

Both the UNESCO and the UIA and federal-state legislation regarding chambers of architecture require consecutive study periods in interior design education, in particular, i.e. exclusively, study programmes leading to bachelor's or master's degrees.

A Master's course of only two semesters—consisting of one study term and one in which the Master's thesis is completed—is generally not part of the basic degree course, but a post-graduate period of further education.

### 4.4 Educational modules and ECTS

The new study programmes are designed to promote the internationalization of specialized higher education. This is why ASAP demands modular study programmes and accreditation according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), in order to guarantee the interchangeability/transferability of qualifications at national and international levels.

Educational modules must define minimum contents and form logically correlated 'teaching blocks'. Credit points should be awarded for completion of each module.

## 5 Practical training

Practical training—possibly including further education seminars—parallel to studies at university is an important part of interior designers' education. However, it should not and cannot replace or revise, even in part, what is taught at schools of interior design. It aims to enable students to experience what they cannot learn academically.

### 5.1 Work placements prior to immatriculation

Periods of practical training on building sites and in workshops prior to entering university—with carpenters, furniture-makers, upholsterers, interior decorators or metal-working firms—are essential. Such practical work will help students to become certain of their choice of profession and give them an empirical grounding for what they will learn at university.

### 5.2 Practical training in between terms

Work placements in workshops, on building sites or with interior design firms or public departments, under the guidance of an experienced interior designer, help students to check their knowledge of their priority subjects and may be stipulated by regulations on the conduct of examinations.

According to the international agreements on the admission to interior design schools, periods of practical work must not result in shorter periods of academic education. This applies also to studies in interior design. Terms of practical training should take place during semester breaks or, optionally, in the period between bachelor and master courses.

### 5.3 Training on the job

Practical training periods following graduation are not subject to accreditation, but must still be seen as part of an interior designer's education. The laws regulating the professional practice of interior designers in the different federal states prescribe practical training under the guidance of an experienced designer immediately after graduation as a prerequisite for official registration—on formal application—on the list of practising interior designers entitled to this job title. The term of practical training in most federal states is two years, in some up to three years.

## 5.4 Further education and training

Graduation marks the start of a lifelong learning process.

To a large extent, professional knowledge and skills cannot be studied academically, because they develop and redevelop in cycles and must be studied and trained parallel to professional practice. The fact that lifelong learning is indispensable for sustaining high job and product quality is uncontested.

It is recommended that universities run suitable courses as part of co-ordinated curricula.

## 5.5 Study excursions

Study trips are an important educational tool and form an essential link to the practice of the profession. They are therefore an indispensable part of both bachelor and master programmes in interior design. Depending on the subject content, excursions should be organized as day trips or over several days.

# 6 Research and teaching

For the academic education in urban/regional planning to reach high quality levels it must ensure its own permanent renewal and adjustment to new developments and keep abreast of developments in the professional sector. This requires university teachers to carry out research projects in the field and to practise themselves. Professional activities should, of course, be closely related to the subject(s) the respective lecturer/professor teaches.

Research is, generally speaking, the sum of all systematic efforts at acquiring knowledge in every field of science and the humanities. Research in architecture, interior design, landscape architecture and urban/regional planning deals with the entirety of man's habitat, with its design, planning, history and development. Due to the complex nature of buildings, human settlements and cities—and the related processes—a great number of different scientific and artistic disciplines are involved with these fields.

There is no single, interdisciplinary scientific method of research. The term 'research' is interpreted in different ways by the various natural, engineering and social sciences, the humanities or the performing and visual arts. Architectural research investigates fields of natural science like the physics relating to construction; structural aspects in building; space-forming interior arrangement; furniture-making (ergonomics); lighting design and technology; technical

building services; ecological architecture; social research relating, for example, to housing; settlement and urban sociology; building and planning laws; humanistic aspects and economics relating, for example, to the history of individual buildings, to the history and theory of architecture, interior design, furniture design; aesthetics in theory and practice; artistic research in terms of forming and designing, representing/rendering, perceiving.

This being said, co-operations between different disciplines are, of course, possible and do happen. A special research problem of interior design is the value of our 'experience' and 'perception' of spaces and spatial objects. People spend a large part of their lives in interior spaces, inside buildings, and this indicates part of their quality of life constantly subject to changing criteria. Maintaining the quality of life and—with it—the health of society as a whole through developing best possible solutions using new technologies and materials represents the primary future challenge to interior designers.

As there is no specifically architectural scientific method, interior design uses research methods from other disciplines. Other than these, i.e. in particular artistic processes, will also produce new knowledge about the design of interiors, objects and mobile elements. In terms of work methods, such processes must, however, be in line and combinable with the following tenets and criteria:

- the primary aim is increased knowledge
- the problem, the object and the brief have been defined
- the working hypotheses have been formulated
- the applied methods have been listed and appear logical
- the solution approach is innovative
- the results and the path to achieving them have been published.

The designing process may be the object of academic research.

Projects, buildings, spaces and objects (e.g. furniture) always represent objects of research in so far as they help to assess the quality and effect of architectural or planning interventions. Research on interior design may also investigate questions relating to the design and planning process itself. Design activities constantly raise questions which could be studied and analyzed systematically.

## 7 Faculty structures

Applications for accreditation should list the academic faculty members, their teaching subjects and activities, research projects, publications, independent professional work, as well as their social commitments, e.g. service in the university's self-administration or other voluntary work.

Applications for accreditation should describe the relationship between students and professors and contain data on the number of first semester students, total number of students and number of graduates.

Documents should also describe the management structure of the respective department and give information on how the different commissions prepare for and run the decision-making processes.

### 7.1 Professors

Professors—usually called to a chair from among practising professionals—must be involved in the entire 'breadth and width' of their subject, both in research and teaching. They must not only be able to give evidence of the reputation they gained in previous positions, but also of their scientific and/or artistic achievements and pedagogic qualifications. For the quality of their teaching to be guaranteed, professors must not neglect, least of all give up entirely, their research and practice.

Dealing with practical problems is necessary so that research and teaching activities do not 'drift off' into theory alone. Curricula of urban/regional planning should be conceived in close connection with professional practice and therefore have to rely heavily on the professional qualifications of the faculty.

The high qualification of university teachers will only be maintained consistently, if they are given the time—parallel to teaching—to carry out research as well as planning projects. The employing university administration regards such activities as a side line and urges professors to apply for special permission. Notwithstanding, faculty members should by all means practise independently within the limits of the occupational regulations they are subject to.

A qualified university teacher is expected to give lectures; to publish papers and books on his/her subject(s); to act as competition juror or advisor to the organizers of such competitions; to participate in competitions himself/herself, and to be active as a planner or consultant.

## 7.2 Assistant professors, lecturers

Assistant professors and lecturers at universities and universities of applied sciences support the senior professors in their research and teaching duties. Applicants for such positions should have gathered practical professional experience in the field following their graduation. The minimum requirement for those teaching planning and design subjects is that they are already eligible, in terms of professional experience, for registration by an architects' chamber.

## 7.3 Visiting professors/lecturers and guest critics

Visiting professors/lecturers and guest critics (external practising interior designers and architects) support research projects and assume teaching duties. They are able to introduce practical problems from the field into the academic education. Applicants for such posts (which entitle them to hold examinations) should possess the same qualifications as full professors.

Seminars and lectures offered by these specialists, as well as those to which external experts contribute—including interdisciplinary curricular events—should be clearly marked in the published plan of studies for each term.

# 8 Infrastructure

Data on the applicant university's infrastructure mainly concern information which helps validators to assess the quality of its teaching and research.

## 8.1 Usable floor space

Applications for accreditation should include statistic material on the university's usable floor space, its teaching facilities (lecture halls, seminar rooms, project and design studios), offices (department secretariat, central administration).

## 8.2 Drafting studios, student work spaces

Documents should list the floor areas available for student workplaces and quote the ratio of workplaces/drafting tables/CAD workstations to the number of students. Another aspect relevant for accreditation is how the project studios and design workstations are assigned to students and at what times they are available to them (opening hours).

Studios are the essential spaces for studies in interior design, studios for design exercises or studios for students' self-motivated work.

### 8.3 Workshops/studios for traditional and new media

Applications for accreditation should specify the room sizes, equipment and supervision structure of the various workshops or studios. Workshops for traditional media are reserved for woodwork and metalwork, while studios for new media accommodate PC or CAD pools. Other workshops are equipped for sculptural design, acoustic or lighting tests, etc.

Application documents should distinguish between workshops integral to the teaching of specific subjects, and those available to every student for self-motivated study.

### 8.4 Library

Applicant universities must state whether the library named is a general university library with publications on all subjects—and if so, where it is located in relation to the faculty building(s)—and whether it also has a specialized library. The information should include the following: shelf space for books, holdings (number of books and international specialized journals), number of reading desks, type of catalogue, and staffing.

### 8.5 Research laboratories

Documents should list the research labs, which either belong to a specific department or are used by different departments, and specify the research projects carried out there.

### 8.6 Spaces for communication and presentations

Spaces for communication are the areas and rooms available to and used by faculty and students alike in between lectures and seminars. Spaces for presentations are used mainly for exhibitions of study and graduation projects. Application documents should inform about the availability of such spaces.

## **9 Funding / Third-party Funding**

Applications for accreditation must include the budget figures (if known) for permanent academic staff (professors, assistant professors, lecturers), non-academic employees (secretaries, workshop supervisors, etc.) as well as the sums available for materials and external/temporary lecturers, student tutors, etc.

Applicant universities must give proof that their budget is sufficient for implementing their educational goals and for providing the necessary spaces. The list of research projects should include third-party funding administered/accounted for by the university's central accounts department. Other third-party funds, administered directly by the department may also be listed.

## **10 Quality control**

In addition to infrastructural and financial data, the following aspects are important for assessing the quality and quality control—regarding didactics and research—of the new (Bachelor's and Master's) educational programmes:

### 10.1 Interaction between the profession and society

Applications for accreditation should include the following important prerequisites:

- a brief university profile including information on its national, regional, or urban contexts if these affect the educational profile
- a short description of the programme's history and (where possible) its development into a multi-stage course of studies
- information on the department's theoretical and didactic approaches, educational tasks and visions
- information on students' backgrounds in so far as these affect the nature and goals of the courses in question
- a self-evaluation regarding the university's educational policy and the existing in its equipment with educational 'tools'—or required changes to these—as well as a critical assessment of the courses' and entire programme's overall educational goals
- data on contacts with alumnis and their feedback on how successful they are in their careers.

Evaluations carried out in the past should be quoted, distinguishing between external and internal evaluations.

## 10.2 Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinarity is an essential part of the professional activities of interior designers and must therefore form an equally essential part of the respective educational programme and research. In particular, projects involving the co-operation of a great number of professional disciplines are suitable fields of activities. Documents should give proof of how interdisciplinarity is taken into account in the curriculum, and should specify the teaching 'imports' and 'exports' beyond and between professional subjects.

## 10.3 Educational credits

The required credits (from educational modules) should be listed.

This entails a comprehensive description of the academic programme, the curricula and schedules, lecture timetables (with explanatory comments), exam regulations, details of the design/planning projects and their organizational structures.

## 10.4 Presentations

Applications for accreditation should include public exhibitions at external venues as well as university-internal presentations.

Accreditors should also be provided with a cross-section of student papers and projects such as

- semester projects
- excursions
- examination questions and answers, i.e. projects
- design questions and answers, i.e. projects
- examples of projects produced during courses
- research projects.

## 10.5 Publications

Publications from and by the different university departments should be listed in the reports sent in with the application, including regular/serial publications by the applicant department.

### **Appendix: Further applicable documents**

European Diploma Directive.

European Architects' Directive (no. 85/384/cee, 10 June 1985).

Directive of the European Parliament and the Council for the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, Brussels, 7 March 2002, COM (2002) 119 final appendix V.7.

UNESCO/UIA Validation System for Architectural Education, 27 July 2002.

UNESCO/UIA Charter for Architectural Education, July 1996.

UIA Accord on Recommended International Standards of Professionalism in Architectural Practice, 28 June 1999.

UIA and Architectural Education – Reflections and Recommendations, 27 July 2002.

Access to careers in the higher civil service echelon; resolution of the Conference of Ministers of the Interior of 6 June 2002 and the Conference of Ministers of Culture and Education of 24 May 2002.

German university framework law (HRG) of 19 January 1999, *Bundesgesetzblatt I* (BGBl. I/Federal Law Gazette I), p. 18), latest amendment following article 1 of the law passed on 8 August 2002 (BGBl. I, p. 3138).

Joint Declaration of European Ministers of Education, 19 July 1999, Bologna.

Statements by ASAP, ZEvA and KMK on the length of BA and MA study periods (in architecture) of 8 December 2003.

The university laws of the different federal states.

The architects' laws of the different federal states.

© ASAP  
Akkreditierungsverbund für Studiengänge  
der Architektur und Planung  
c/o Bund Deutscher Architekten  
Köpenicker Strasse 48/49  
D—10179 Berlin  
phone +49 (30) 27 87 99–0 fax +49 (30) 2787 99–15  
email <info@asap-akkreditierung.de>

ASAP is a registered association of the following member organizations:

- BDA – Association of German Architects
- BDIA – Association of German Interior Designers
- BDLA – Association of German Landscape Architects
- SRL – Union for Urban, Regional and National Planning
- AK BW – Chamber of Architects of Baden Wuerttemberg
- AIK SH – Chamber of Architects and Engineers of Schleswig-Holstein
- FBTA – Conference of Faculties of Architecture
- DARL – Conference of German University Deans and Heads of Departments
- IFR – Information Circle for Regional Planning
- ARL – Academy of Regional Research and Planning
- HKL – University Conference Landscape

Chairman: Professor Jürgen Bredow

Deputy Chairman: Rainer Hilf

This brochure is based on the criteria formulated by the ASAP expert commission on interior design. It was authored by the following members of ASAP's Committee on Interior Design:

Speaker of the Committee on Interior Design:

Rainer Hilf, Dipl.-Ing. interior designer BDIA

Ludwig Kindlbacher, Dipl.-Ing. architect and interior designer BDIA

Manfred Kovatsch, Professor Dipl.-Ing. architect BDA

Rudolf Schricker, Professor Dipl.-Ing. architect BDIA

Speaker of the Committee on Interior Design:

Rainer Hilf

2nd German edition: January 2004