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Technical Note / Technical Report

Pilot Survey of Architectural Education Systems (2024)

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Abstract

This pilot survey, concluded in August 2024 by the UIA Architectural Education Commission (EDUCOM), offers a preliminary comparative assessment of architectural education systems across 17 countries within the five UIA regions. Drawing on responses from academic leaders, educators, and practising architects, it examines how schools structure their programmes, prepare graduates for professional practice, integrate contemporary challenges into curricula, and maintain standards through accreditation and validation. Findings reveal striking global disparities in professional registration, for example from 375,084 architects in Japan to 200 in Mali, alongside a clear trend toward standardised programme structures modelled on the 3+2 Bologna framework. Professional practice education and internships have become nearly universal, while sustainability, health, and community development are increasingly embedded in curricula. However, the integration of inclusivity, decolonisation, indigenous knowledge systems, and gender equity remains inconsistent, and access to quality practical training varies evidently across regions. The survey identifies future directions including harmonisation of standards, context-sensitive accreditation frameworks, faculty development, and stronger education–industry partnerships. Establishing the methodological baseline for EDUCOM's subsequent global survey, this study provides an early evidence base for informing curriculum reform, accreditation policy, and international collaboration in architectural education.

Keywords: Architectural education systems; Comparative survey; Professional registration; Accreditation; Professional practice education; Curriculum development; International Union of Architects (UIA)

Highlights

- A comparative baseline study of architectural education systems in 17 countries across all five UIA regions.
- Registration numbers vary dramatically across countries, exposing deep disparities in professional infrastructure and educational capacity.
- Programme structures are converging on the 3+2 model, yet inclusivity, decolonisation, and gender equity remain inconsistently addressed.

PILOT SURVEY OF ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS 2023 - 2026

5 UIA Regions - 17 Countries

This pilot survey, concluded in August 2024 by the UIA Architectural Education Commission (EDUCOM), offers a preliminary comparative assessment of architectural education systems across 17 countries within the 5 UIA regions. Drawing on responses from academic leaders, educators, and professionals, it examines how schools structure their programmes, prepare graduates for practice, integrate contemporary challenges into curricula, and maintain standards through accreditation. The survey establishes a baseline for EDUCOM's broader global agenda and provides an early evidence base for informing curriculum reform, accreditation policy, and international collaboration in architectural education.



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**PILOT SURVEY OF ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS
2023 - 2026**
5 UIA Regions - 17 Countries

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› 1 SURVEY INTENT AND PURPOSE

This global survey, conducted in August 2024 by the International Union of Architects (UIA), was designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of architectural education worldwide. The primary intent of this survey was to systematically gather information on how architecture schools across different countries structure their programs, prepare students for professional practice, integrate contemporary global challenges into curricula, and maintain educational standards through accreditation and validation processes. By capturing diverse perspectives from academic leaders, educators, and professionals involved in architectural training, the survey seeks to identify common trends and significant variations in educational approaches, assess how well architectural education responds to pressing societal needs, including climate change, social equity, and public health, and establish a foundation for international dialogue on improving architectural education standards and practices. The survey aims to support the UIA's mission of advancing architectural education globally by documenting current practices, highlighting innovations and best practices that can be shared across institutions, identifying challenges and gaps that require attention from the international community, and facilitating collaboration among schools, professional organisations, and accrediting bodies to strengthen architectural education worldwide. Ultimately, this survey serves as a critical tool for understanding how the profession prepares future architects to address the complex environmental, social, and technological challenges of the 21st century while maintaining the creative excellence and technical rigour that define quality architectural practice.

› 2 SURVEY CONTEXT AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding the demographics and context of survey participants is essential for interpreting the findings and assessing their representativeness across the global architectural education landscape. The survey successfully captured diverse perspectives that reflect the complexity and variety of architectural education worldwide.

› 2.1 Geographical Diversity

The survey captured responses from multiple countries spanning different continents, including representation from Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, South America, and Oceania. This broad geographical representation ensures that the findings capture varied educational practices and professional standards across different cultural and regulatory environments. Diversity is crucial for understanding how regional contexts, economic development levels, and cultural traditions influence architectural education.

The responses represent diverse educational systems, offering a balanced view of both established and emerging practices. Countries with centuries-old architectural education traditions provided insights into mature, well-developed systems, while responses from nations with newer or rapidly evolving programs highlighted innovative approaches and contemporary

challenges. This geographical diversity enables meaningful comparisons and identifies both universal trends and region-specific characteristics.

› 2.2 Professional Roles and Experience

Respondents included a rich mix of academics and practising architects, providing balanced perspectives on both educational and practical aspects of architectural training. Academic respondents included professors, associate professors, lecturers, department heads, deans, and program directors from various institutions. This diversity in academic roles ensured representation from different levels of educational leadership and teaching experience (see Figure 1).

Experience levels ranged significantly, with some participants having over 20 years of expertise in either academia or professional practice, while others brought substantial recent experience that reflects current trends and emerging practices. This range ensures that the survey captures both historical perspective and contemporary insights. The blend of academic and professional viewpoints is particularly valuable, as it bridges the theory-practice divide that architectural education seeks to address.

Responses from both academic and professional contexts enriched the analysis considerably. However, some gaps were noted in certain areas, such as international accreditation processes and detailed faculty training requirements, suggesting that some aspects of architectural education may benefit from more specialised or focused inquiry in future surveys.

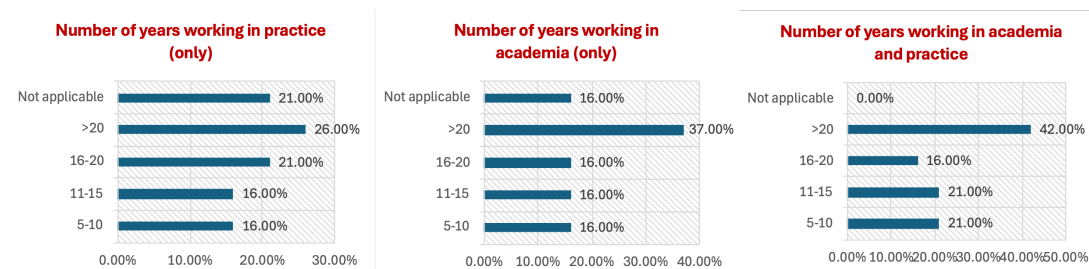


Figure 1. Distribution of Professional Experience Among Survey Respondents.

› 2.3 Institutional Representation

Responses reflected diverse educational institutions, ranging from large research universities with extensive architectural programs and multiple degree offerings to smaller specialised schools or newly established programs. This diversity ensures that the survey captures the realities of architectural education across different types of institutions, from those with long-standing traditions dating back centuries to those still developing their curricula and establishing their standards.

The survey included both public and private institutions, which is essential for understanding the different pressures, opportunities, and constraints in each sector. Public institutions may be more influenced by national education policies, government funding mechanisms, and broader social objectives. Private institutions might have greater flexibility in curriculum design,

student recruitment, and program specialisation, though they face different challenges related to financial sustainability and market positioning.

Participants represented schools with varying degrees of international validation and accreditation, from globally recognised programs holding multiple international accreditations to those still seeking initial accreditation or operating primarily within national frameworks. This variety helps to highlight the different levels of global engagement and standards adherence within the architectural education community, as well as the challenges institutions face in achieving and maintaining international recognition.

› 2.4 Response Quality and Depth

The depth and quality of responses varied considerably across the survey. Many responses offered comprehensive information on program structure, duration, professional practice education, and internship requirements, providing detailed insights into how these fundamental elements are organised and implemented. These thorough responses were particularly valuable for understanding the operational details of architectural education programs.

However, some responses were more superficial, particularly on critical contemporary topics like inclusivity, diversity, sustainability implementation, and gender equity. This variation in depth may reflect different levels of institutional development in these areas, varying priorities across regions, or perhaps limitations in available data or institutional awareness of these issues.

There was also a lack of uniformity in addressing themes like decolonisation and indigenous knowledge systems, with some institutions providing detailed descriptions of how these topics are integrated into curricula, while others offered minimal or no information. In some cases, ambiguous or incomplete information was provided, suggesting potential data gaps or areas where institutions are still developing their approaches. These variations highlight opportunities for future research and institutional development in emerging areas of architectural education.

› 3 KEY FINDINGS

The findings from this global survey reveal a complex and multifaceted landscape of architectural education that reflects both remarkable convergence and significant diversity across countries and regions. While the data demonstrates clear global trends toward standardisation in program structures, increasing emphasis on sustainability and professional practice education, and growing recognition of architecture's social responsibilities, it simultaneously highlights persistent disparities in resources, infrastructure, and thematic integration that shape educational experiences and outcomes for students worldwide.

› 3.1 Global Disparities in Professional Registration

The number of registered architects varies dramatically across countries, reflecting fundamental differences in the scale and development of the architectural profession,

population size, level of urbanisation, and the maturity of professional registration systems. Japan leads significantly with 375,084 first-class architects, a figure that reflects the country's highly developed infrastructure, extensive urban development, and a large professional community supporting the built environment. This substantial number also indicates a well-established registration system and a strong professional organisation (see Table 1).

Brazil follows with 215,000 registered architects, indicating a robust architectural industry serving a populous and geographically diverse country with significant urban development challenges and opportunities. The large number reflects both the country's size and the important role architects play in addressing housing, infrastructure, and urban planning needs in a rapidly developing economy.

Other nations show proportionally smaller numbers that generally correspond to their population sizes and economic scales. Australia reports 14,000 registered architects, reflecting a well-established but proportionately smaller professional body appropriate to its population. Hungary presents an interesting case with 11,420 architects registered in the Hungarian Chamber of Architects (MEK) database, though only 7,000 are actively practising. This discrepancy suggests a system where architects may maintain registration while not actively practising, or it may reflect different categories or levels of registration.

Nigeria (6,500), South Africa (4,331), and Ireland (3,531) show smaller numbers that reflect their respective economic scales, development patterns, and the historical evolution of their architectural professions. China presents a particularly interesting case with 46,989 first-level registered architects, a relatively modest figure given the country's massive population and unprecedented urban development over recent decades. This comparatively low number might be due to stringent qualification standards for first-level registration, how architectural services are categorised and reported, or the existence of multiple tiers of architectural professionals.

Table 1. Country Demographics.

Country	Registered Architects	Architecture Students	First School Established	Number of Schools (2024)
Australia	14,000	7,251	1852	22
South Africa	4,331	1,760	1922	11
Mali	200	20	2007	2
Nigeria	6,500	20,800	1952	35
Japan	375,084	80,000	1904	180
Philippines	50,000	100,000	1925	110
Italy	151,000	12,000	1919	35
Cabo Verde	360	120	2006	1
Ukraine	7,000	6,200	1632	30
China	46,989	34,663	1925	303
Romania	8,000	4,500	1864	5
Hungary	11,420	2,950	1871	8

Ireland	3,531	N/A	1912	5
Austria	6,200	6,350	1815	8
Tunisia	6,409	1,750	1968	11
Uruguay	6,500	2,500	1915	5
Brazil	215,000	110,000	1816	840

› 3.2 Educational Infrastructure and School Distribution

Countries with long-established educational systems and robust professional infrastructure report large numbers of registered architects and high densities of architecture schools. These nations typically have multiple institutions offering architectural education at various levels, from undergraduate to doctoral programs, with well-developed research capabilities and strong connections to professional practice.

In contrast, countries with emerging or less developed educational systems have fewer registered professionals and fewer institutions offering architectural education. These nations often face challenges related to limited resources, difficulty attracting and retaining qualified faculty, and developing the infrastructure necessary to support high-quality architectural education. However, newer programs sometimes demonstrate innovative approaches and greater flexibility in curriculum design, potentially offering valuable lessons for more established institutions.

Architecture school establishment dates span from the early 19th century to the 21st century, reflecting the historical development of architectural education as a formal discipline. The number of schools varies significantly, from single institutions serving entire countries to over 300 in some regions, demonstrating vast differences in educational infrastructure and capacity to train architects. Some schools operate independently as dedicated architecture faculties within universities, while others are integrated within engineering faculties, art schools, or multidisciplinary design departments, each arrangement bringing different advantages and challenges.

› 3.3 Standardisation of Educational Structure

Despite geographical and cultural differences, a clear trend emerges toward a standardised educational framework across countries. Most nations follow a similar structure, with programs typically comprising a Bachelor's degree followed by a Master's degree, commonly known as the Bologna Process model in Europe and increasingly adopted globally. The most common structure involves a 3-year Bachelor's program followed by a 2-year Master's program, totalling 5 years of study.

However, variations exist to accommodate local educational policies, professional requirements, and institutional traditions. Some countries offer integrated 5-year Master's programs where students proceed directly from admission to a professional Master's degree without a distinct Bachelor's degree endpoint. Others maintain a 4-year Bachelor's degree

followed by either a 1-year or 2-year Master's program. A few countries still operate 6-year programs or include mandatory foundation years that extend the total duration.

This trend toward standardisation reflects the increasing globalisation of architectural education, driven by multiple factors. International accreditation standards from bodies such as RIBA, UIA, NAAB, and others encourage alignment of program structures. The need to facilitate student mobility through exchange programs and study abroad opportunities favours compatible degree structures. Additionally, as architectural graduates increasingly seek employment opportunities across borders, aligned educational frameworks help ensure consistency in the quality of education and professional preparation, making qualifications more readily comparable and transferable.

However, while structural standardisation is evident, local adaptations remain essential to meet specific national needs, reflecting unique cultural contexts, economic realities, and regulatory requirements. These adaptations ensure that architectural education remains relevant to local building traditions, climate conditions, regulatory frameworks, and societal needs while maintaining global competitiveness and standards.

› 3.4 Professional Practice Education and Internships

Professional practice education (PPE) and internships have become essential, nearly universal components of architectural education worldwide. This reflects a fundamental recognition that architecture is both a theoretical and practice-based discipline that cannot be fully mastered through academic study alone. PPE is widely integrated into architectural curricula through various mechanisms, including placements in architectural offices, supervised internships, structured training programs within academic institutions, and hybrid models combining multiple approaches (see Table 2).

Internship structures and requirements vary considerably across countries. Durations range from several months to two years, with some countries requiring internships during academic programs, others mandating post-graduation experience before licensure, and some employing both approaches. These experiences are often mandatory for professional licensure or registration, ensuring that graduates have practical experience before assuming full professional responsibility.

Table 2. Professional Practice Education & Internships.

Country	PPE Offered	Internship Required	Internship Duration	Post-Graduation
Australia	Yes	No	N/A	Yes
South Africa	Yes	Yes	1 year	Yes
Mali	Yes	Yes	18 months	Yes
Nigeria	No	Yes	24 months minimum	Yes
Japan	No	No	N/A	No
Philippines	Yes	Yes	600 hours	No

Italy	No	Optional	6-12 months	No
Cabo Verde	No	Yes	2 months	No
Ukraine	Yes	Yes	N/A	No
China	Yes	Yes	3+ months	Yes
Romania	Yes	Yes	24 months	Yes (after graduation)
Hungary	Yes	Yes	3 months	No
Ireland	No	No	N/A	Yes (24 months)
Austria	No	No	N/A	No
Tunisia	Yes	Yes	11 months total	No
Uruguay	Yes	No	N/A	No
Brazil	Yes	Yes	1+ year	No

The focus on practical experience reflects growing institutional and professional recognition that effective architectural practice requires competencies that can only be developed through direct experience. Internships provide students with hands-on exposure to real-world challenges, including the complexities of project management, construction administration, client relations, consultant coordination, regulatory compliance, and the business aspects of architectural practice. They help students understand the professional context in which their design skills will be applied.

Internships serve as critical bridges between theoretical education and practical application, helping students develop technical skills, professional judgment, and practical problem-solving abilities. They expose students to office culture, professional standards, ethical considerations, and the realities of working within teams on complex projects. This practical grounding complements academic education by demonstrating how design concepts translate into built reality and how theoretical knowledge applies to real projects with real constraints.

However, significant challenges exist regarding internship availability and quality. In countries with smaller architectural industries, emerging economies, or regions where the construction sector is underdeveloped, students may struggle to find quality internship opportunities that provide meaningful professional experience. Smaller markets may have fewer architectural firms, limiting placement opportunities and potentially forcing students to accept positions that offer limited learning experiences or inadequate supervision.

This discrepancy in internship quality and availability can lead to unequal outcomes for graduates from different regions. Students from countries or regions with robust architectural sectors, diverse project types, and established mentorship traditions are often better positioned to transition smoothly into professional practice with comprehensive practical skills. Those from less developed markets may face disadvantages despite equivalent academic preparation, potentially affecting their career trajectories and professional confidence.

Additionally, while the requirement for post-graduate internships before licensure ensures thorough professional preparation, it can also delay graduates' entry into full professional

practice and economic independence. In countries facing shortages of qualified professionals or where economic conditions make extended unpaid or low-paid internships financially challenging, these requirements can create barriers to professional advancement, particularly for students from disadvantaged economic backgrounds.

› 4 CURRICULUM FOCUS

The survey reveals significant variation in how contemporary themes are integrated into architectural curricula worldwide, reflecting different institutional priorities, regional contexts, and stages of curricular development. As shown in Table 3, while certain topics such as sustainability and community development have achieved broad adoption across most countries surveyed, others, including decolonisation, indigenous knowledge systems, and health-focused design, demonstrate more uneven integration. This diversity in curricular emphasis highlights both the global nature of architectural education's response to contemporary challenges and the continued influence of local contexts, institutional capacities, and cultural frameworks in shaping how emerging themes are incorporated into educational programs. The following sections examine key thematic areas that are reshaping architectural education and their varying patterns of adoption across different educational contexts.

Table 3. Curriculum Focus Areas (Yes/No).

Country	SDGs	Health	Community Dev	Design-Build	Decolonisation	Diversity/Inclusion
Australia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Africa	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mali	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nigeria	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Japan	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
Philippines	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Italy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Unsure
Cabo Verde	No	No	No	Partial	No	No
Ukraine	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
China	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Romania	No	No	No	No	No	No
Hungary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ireland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Austria	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Tunisia	Partial	Partial	No	No	Yes	Partial
Uruguay	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Brazil	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

› 4.1 Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainability has emerged as a central, increasingly dominant theme in architectural education worldwide, reflecting the profession's response to climate change, environmental degradation, and global sustainability challenges. Many institutions are embedding the principles of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into their curricula, particularly those related to sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), climate action (SDG 13), and responsible consumption and production (SDG 12).

Environmental responsibility, energy efficiency, renewable energy integration, water conservation, sustainable materials selection, and sustainable urban development are becoming recurring topics across design studios, technical courses, and theoretical seminars. Many programs now require dedicated courses in sustainable design, environmental systems, or building performance, moving sustainability from an elective speciality to a core competency expected of all graduates.

This trend reflects the global shift toward environmentally conscious design and the increasing recognition of architects' crucial role in addressing climate change. The building sector accounts for approximately 40% of global energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, making architectural decisions fundamentally important to achieving climate goals. Schools are preparing future architects to design buildings and urban spaces that not only serve their intended social and functional purposes but also minimise environmental impact, promote biodiversity, enhance resilience to climate change, and contribute actively to sustainable development.

The integration of sustainability represents architectural education evolving to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for environmentally responsible practice. This includes technical competencies in energy modelling, life cycle assessment, and passive design strategies, as well as a broader understanding of ecological systems, circular economy principles, and the social dimensions of sustainability. The goal is to produce architects who view sustainability not as an add-on consideration but as a fundamental driver of design decisions.

› 4.2 Health and Well-being in Architectural Education

Health-related topics are increasingly included in architectural education, though the depth, breadth, and integration of this focus vary considerably across institutions and countries. Some programs explicitly address health and well-being as core curriculum components, offering dedicated courses on healthy building design, evidence-based design for healthcare, therapeutic environments, or the relationship between the built environment and public health.

These programs often include design studios focused on healthcare facilities, wellness centres, or therapeutic spaces, allowing students to explore how architectural design can promote physical and mental well-being. Topics covered may include daylighting and circadian rhythms, indoor air quality, biophilic design principles, accessibility for diverse abilities, acoustic comfort, thermal comfort, and the psychological impacts of spatial design.

Other institutions include health as a secondary focus, integrated into broader design studios, building science courses, or technical modules rather than as dedicated health-focused curricula. This integration approach recognises health considerations as one of many factors influencing design decisions, addressed alongside functional, aesthetic, economic, and sustainability concerns.

The integration of health topics is driven by multiple converging global trends. Ageing populations in many countries increase demand for age-friendly design, accessible housing, and healthcare facilities. Rapid urbanisation raises concerns about air quality, noise pollution, access to nature, and the mental health impacts of dense urban environments. The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically highlighted the importance of building design in disease prevention, ventilation, flexible space use, and supporting remote work and learning.

Additionally, there is growing recognition of health inequities related to housing quality, neighbourhood design, and access to healthy environments, making health considerations relevant to social justice dimensions of architectural practice. Architects are increasingly expected to design environments that actively promote physical and mental well-being rather than merely avoiding harm, making this an area of growing importance for preparing students to contribute meaningfully to public health through design.

› 4.3 Community Development and Social Responsibility

Many architectural programs are placing stronger emphasis on community development and social responsibility, recognising that architects must serve not only individual clients but also broader communities and society. This shift reflects evolving understanding of the architect's role as a social agent and the profession's potential to address inequality, promote social cohesion, and improve quality of life for underserved populations.

Design-build studio projects, in which students engage directly with real communities and work on projects with tangible social impacts, have become increasingly common pedagogical tools. These projects typically involve partnerships with community organisations, non-profits, local governments, or grassroots groups, allowing students to apply their skills in real-world contexts while fostering a deep sense of social responsibility and civic engagement.

Through community-based projects, students learn to conduct participatory design processes, engage meaningfully with community members, understand diverse perspectives and needs, navigate complex stakeholder relationships, and design solutions that are contextually appropriate and culturally sensitive. These experiences teach students that effective community-oriented design requires listening skills, empathy, cultural competence, and the ability to balance professional expertise with community knowledge and preferences.

This trend is driven by growing recognition that architects must be equipped to work collaboratively not only with clients and consultants but also with community members who will use and be affected by designed spaces. The ability to design contextually appropriate, socially responsible buildings and environments is becoming recognised as a core professional competency, essential for practice in increasingly diverse, democratic societies where community engagement is expected or required.

Programs emphasise understanding community needs through ethnographic research, social mapping, and participatory methods. They teach students to design solutions that have direct positive community impact, whether through affordable housing, community centres, public spaces, social infrastructure, or urban interventions that address specific community-identified needs. This approach teaches both technical design skills and broader capacities for social responsibility, ethical practice, and civic contribution.

› 4.4 Inclusivity, Diversity, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems

While inclusivity, diversity, and indigenous knowledge systems are increasingly important topics in global architectural discourse, their integration into architectural education remains inconsistent and uneven across countries and institutions. This represents both a significant challenge and an important opportunity for the field to evolve toward more equitable, culturally responsive practice.

Some countries and institutions are making significant, systematic efforts to incorporate these themes comprehensively into their curricula. These efforts may include dedicated courses on decolonising architecture, indigenous design principles, gender and space, critical race studies in architecture, or disability and design. Cultural studies components may examine how race, gender, class, and other identity factors shape spatial experience and access. Design studios may explicitly address inclusive design principles, universal design, or culturally specific approaches to placemaking.

In other regions, these topics remain underdeveloped or receive limited, superficial attention. They may be addressed briefly in history courses, mentioned in passing in design reviews, or left to student interest groups rather than being systematically integrated into required curricula. This limited integration may reflect institutional inertia, lack of faculty expertise in these areas, resistance to curricular change, or insufficient recognition of these topics' importance to contemporary practice.

The uneven focus on these issues reflects broader disparities in how different societies address topics such as decolonisation, gender equality, racial justice, disability rights, and the inclusion of minority and indigenous perspectives. Countries with significant indigenous populations or active decolonisation movements may give greater curricular attention to indigenous knowledge systems and decolonial approaches. Nations with strong equality legislation or active social movements around gender and race may more readily integrate these topics into architectural education.

Some institutions have made these issues a core part of their curricula, viewing them as essential to ethical, socially responsible practice in diverse societies. These programs recognise that architects shape environments that profoundly affect people's lives and that failure to consider diverse perspectives and needs can perpetuate exclusion, inequality, and harm. They teach students to question dominant assumptions, recognise their own positionality and biases, and design for people whose experiences differ from their own.

As architectural education continues to evolve, there are growing opportunities to deepen the integration of these themes and ensure that students are prepared to design for diverse,

multicultural, inclusive communities. This requires moving beyond tokenistic inclusion to deeply embedding principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout curricula. The goal is creating spaces that are accessible and equitable for all people, regardless of race, gender, ability, age, cultural background, or socioeconomic status, while respecting and learning from diverse cultural and indigenous knowledge traditions.

› 4.5 International Accreditation and Validation

A clear trend evident from survey responses is the increasing demand for international accreditation and validation of architectural programs. Many institutions actively seek accreditation from globally recognised bodies such as the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the International Union of Architects (UIA), the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) in the United States, or the Canberra Accord signatories. This trend is particularly strong in countries aiming to align their educational systems with global standards and enhance international recognition of their degrees.

International accreditation serves multiple important functions. It provides external validation that architectural programs meet internationally recognised educational standards, ensuring quality and comprehensive coverage of essential knowledge and skills. Accreditation facilitates the mobility of graduates by making their qualifications more readily recognised across borders, easing pathways to licensure or employment in other countries. It increases graduates' employability in global markets by signalling to employers that degree holders have met rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards.

For institutions, international accreditation can enhance reputation, attract international students and faculty, facilitate exchange partnerships, and provide valuable external feedback for continuous improvement. The accreditation process itself, with its requirements for self-evaluation, documentation of learning outcomes, and demonstration of resources and processes, can strengthen institutional quality assurance and strategic planning.

However, obtaining and maintaining international accreditation can be resource-intensive, demanding significant institutional effort and investment. The process typically requires extensive documentation, self-study reports, visits from international review teams, and ongoing compliance with accreditation standards. Not all institutions have the administrative capacity, financial resources, or infrastructure to meet stringent international requirements, particularly in developing countries or newly established programs.

This creates a need for more flexible, context-sensitive accreditation frameworks that can accommodate diverse educational contexts while upholding meaningful quality standards. There are ongoing discussions within the international architectural education community about how to balance the benefits of standardisation against the need to respect regional variations, local building cultures, and different educational philosophies. The challenge is creating accreditation systems that ensure quality and comparability while remaining accessible and relevant to institutions operating in vastly different contexts.

› 4.6 Teaching Practices and Faculty Development

Teaching practices in architectural education vary widely across regions and institutions, but a common and enduring trend is the central emphasis on the studio-based model. Design studios remain the pedagogical heart of architectural education, providing spaces where students develop creative and technical skills through intensive, hands-on project work. The studio model emphasises learning by doing, iterative design processes, visual and verbal communication of ideas, and critique-based learning through desk reviews, peer discussions, and formal presentations.

The staff-student ratio in design studios is crucial for educational quality. Lower ratios, commonly around 1:15 or better, allow for more personalised instruction, frequent individual feedback, close mentorship relationships, and detailed attention to each student's work. Higher ratios compromise the ability to provide individualised guidance and can reduce opportunities for meaningful dialogue between instructors and students. However, maintaining optimal ratios requires significant resources, and many institutions face pressures to increase class sizes for economic reasons.

Beyond studios, lecture-based courses typically accommodate larger class sizes, often ranging from 1:50 to 1:100 or higher for introductory courses, history lectures, or technology classes. These courses employ different pedagogical approaches suited to larger groups, including traditional lectures, online learning components, and discussion sections or tutorials with smaller groups.

Faculty development is receiving increasing attention in many institutions, though approaches and requirements vary considerably. Some institutions require continuous professional development, pedagogical training, and regular updating of teaching practices. This may include workshops on teaching methods, assessment design, educational technology, inclusive pedagogy, or discipline-specific topics. Such training is essential for ensuring that faculty members can deliver high-quality education, employ effective teaching strategies, and remain knowledgeable about the latest developments in both architectural practice and educational theory.

However, faculty development requirements are not universal. In many countries and institutions, this remains an emerging area of concern rather than an established practice. Some faculty, particularly those hired primarily for practice expertise rather than teaching credentials, may receive little formal preparation for teaching roles. This can result in variable teaching quality and missed opportunities to employ evidence-based pedagogical practices.

While teaching is the primary focus for academic staff, typically consuming 51-70% of their time, research and consulting also play significant roles in faculty activities. Research occupies approximately 31-40% of the time for many faculty members, particularly in research-intensive universities. Consulting and knowledge exchange activities generally account for 11-30% of time, though this varies widely based on institutional expectations, individual faculty choices, and local professional contexts. Management and administration responsibilities usually remain below 20% of faculty time, but can be substantial for those in leadership positions.

The balance between teaching, research, and practice varies across institutions and countries, with some placing stronger emphasis on research productivity, particularly in countries with well-established research traditions and competitive research funding systems. Others prioritise teaching excellence or value faculty members' active engagement in professional practice as essential for maintaining contemporary, practice-relevant education. Finding an appropriate balance among these competing demands while ensuring that faculty have adequate time and support for each role remains an ongoing challenge.

› 4.7 Admission Criteria and Student Selection

Admission into architectural programs typically involves a combination of assessment methods designed to evaluate both academic potential and creative capacity. Common criteria include high school academic records demonstrating strong performance in relevant subjects, aptitude tests assessing spatial reasoning or general academic abilities, language proficiency tests for international students or programs taught in languages other than students' native languages, portfolios of creative work demonstrating artistic ability and design thinking, and interviews allowing assessment of motivation, communication skills, and suitability for the demanding nature of architectural study. The relative weight given to these different criteria varies by institution and country, reflecting different educational philosophies and priorities in student selection.

› 5 ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The analysis of responses from diverse institutions across multiple continents illuminates how architectural education is simultaneously shaped by universal professional imperatives and deeply influenced by local contexts, cultural traditions, economic realities, and regulatory frameworks. This analysis provides critical insights into how the profession is evolving to address contemporary challenges including climate change, public health, social equity, and technological transformation, while also revealing areas where progress remains uneven and where concerted international effort may be needed to ensure that all students, regardless of geographic location or institutional resources, receive preparation adequate for meeting the complex demands of 21st-century architectural practice.

› 5.1 Bridging Theory and Practice

The universal recognition of the importance of professional practice education across the surveyed countries reflects a fundamental understanding that architectural competence requires both theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Architecture cannot be learned solely from books, lectures, or even studio projects; it requires direct engagement with the messy realities of practice.

Internships and PPE serve as critical bridges between academic learning and professional application, exposing students to aspects of practice that cannot be adequately simulated in academic settings. These include working within the constraints of real budgets and schedules, navigating complex client relationships and expectations, coordinating with contractors and

consultants, responding to site conditions and construction challenges, understanding regulatory approval processes, and experiencing the collaborative nature of architectural production in professional office environments.

This practical experience is crucial for developing technical skills such as construction detailing, specification writing, and construction administration. It also cultivates professional judgment, ethical decision-making under real-world pressures, and practical problem-solving abilities that emerge from confronting authentic constraints and challenges. Students learn to understand the organisational and business contexts in which their design skills will be applied and develop realistic expectations about architectural practice as a career.

However, the survey reveals significant variations in how well different regions can provide quality practical learning experiences. Addressing these inequities requires stronger partnerships between educational institutions and the architectural industry, potentially including industry investment in training programs, structured mentorship initiatives, and shared responsibility for professional development. Government support may be necessary in regions where the profession is still developing, possibly through subsidies for internship programs, support for small firms taking on interns, or creation of alternative pathways to gain practical experience.

› 5.2 Responding to Contemporary Challenges

Survey responses highlight increasing emphasis on integrating contemporary global challenges into architectural curricula, representing a positive evolution of architectural education toward greater social and environmental responsibility. This integration reflects recognition that today's architects must be prepared to address complex, interconnected challenges that previous generations did not face with the same urgency.

Beyond sustainability, which has become relatively mainstream, health is emerging as a critical focus area, given global challenges of pandemics, ageing populations, and the need for resilient healthcare infrastructure. The COVID-19 pandemic particularly highlighted how building design affects disease transmission, the importance of adaptable spaces, and the health impacts of housing quality. Schools are responding by offering courses and projects exploring the intersection of architecture and health, preparing students to contribute to designing environments that actively promote well-being rather than merely avoiding harm.

Community development has gained prominence as awareness grows that architects must engage meaningfully with diverse communities and address social inequities through design. Many programs now emphasise participatory design processes, understanding community needs and assets, and creating contextually appropriate solutions that genuinely serve community interests. This shift represents architecture education embracing a broader, more socially engaged understanding of professional responsibility.

Despite these positive developments, integration of topics such as decolonisation, indigenous knowledge systems, race, gender, and diversity remains less consistent across surveyed countries. This represents an important area for continued development, as preparing architects to practice ethically and effectively in diverse societies requires engaging seriously

with questions of power, representation, cultural difference, and social justice. The challenge is moving these topics from margins to mainstream, ensuring all graduates develop cultural competence and critical awareness of how architectural decisions affect different groups differently.

› 5.3 Quality Assurance and Global Standards

The process of accreditation and validation of architecture programs varies significantly across countries, reflecting different national approaches to quality assurance, varying resources available for evaluation processes, and different levels of engagement with international standards. While national bodies accredit many schools, providing important quality oversight within domestic contexts, fewer have obtained international validation from organisations such as RIBA, UIA, or NAAB.

This disparity reflects different levels of global engagement among institutions and the challenges some countries face in meeting international standards. Institutions in developed countries with long-established architectural education traditions and substantial resources find it easier to meet international accreditation requirements. Schools in developing countries or newly established programs may struggle with documentation requirements, resource standards, or alignment with international expectations that may not fully reflect their local contexts or constraints.

Accreditation is crucial for ensuring that architectural programs maintain high educational standards and that graduates possess the knowledge and skills necessary for competent practice. It provides external validation, facilitates international mobility of graduates, enhances institutional reputation, and creates mechanisms for continuous improvement through periodic review processes. However, the process can be resource-intensive, requiring significant staff time for self-study reports, site visit preparation, and ongoing compliance monitoring.

This highlights the need for more flexible, context-sensitive accreditation frameworks that recognise the diversity of educational contexts while maintaining meaningful quality standards. The international architectural education community faces an ongoing challenge of balancing the benefits of global standardisation against the need to respect regional variations, different educational philosophies, and local relevance. The goal should be creating systems that ensure quality and enable meaningful comparison while remaining accessible to institutions operating in vastly different contexts and avoiding one-size-fits-all approaches that may not serve all contexts equally well.

› 6 FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The findings from this comprehensive analysis suggest several key directions for the future evolution of architectural education. These directions represent both immediate opportunities for improvement and longer-term strategic developments that will shape how the profession prepares future practitioners.

Greater Harmonisation of Standards: There is a clear need for greater harmonisation of educational standards globally, which could help reduce disparities between countries and regions while ensuring that all graduates are adequately prepared for international practice in an increasingly globalised profession. This harmonisation should not mean rigid uniformity but rather agreement on core competencies, shared understanding of essential knowledge areas, and mechanisms for recognising equivalent but different approaches to architectural education. More flexible, context-sensitive accreditation frameworks that recognise the diversity of educational contexts while maintaining quality expectations could facilitate this harmonisation. These frameworks might allow for multiple pathways to demonstrate competence while ensuring graduates meet fundamental standards regardless of where they studied.

Curriculum Evolution and Innovation: Architectural education must continue evolving in response to global challenges such as climate change, health crises, social inequality, technological transformation, and shifting demographics. This requires ongoing, systematic curriculum development to integrate these pressing issues into every aspect of architectural training, not merely as add-on topics but as fundamental considerations shaping how students learn to think about architecture. Innovation in pedagogical approaches, including expanded use of digital tools, interdisciplinary collaboration, community-based learning, and integration of research into teaching, will be essential for preparing graduates to address complex, multifaceted challenges that cannot be solved through traditional approaches alone.

Faculty Development and Support: There is a significant opportunity to further develop faculty training and professional development initiatives to ensure that educators can effectively teach the next generation of architects. This includes not only maintaining and updating technical and design skills but also developing pedagogical competence, learning to teach emerging topics like sustainability and social equity effectively, and cultivating abilities to engage constructively with contemporary social issues. Faculty development programs should address teaching methods, assessment strategies, inclusive pedagogy, integration of technology, and research supervision. Supporting faculty in maintaining connections to practice while developing teaching excellence represents an ongoing challenge requiring institutional commitment and creative solutions.

Advancing Inclusivity and Diversity: The architectural education community must strive for greater inclusivity and diversity at all levels, ensuring that the profession reflects the societies it serves and that designed environments meet the needs of all people. This involves multiple dimensions: diversifying student bodies and faculty to include people from underrepresented racial, ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds; transforming curricula to address issues of equity, justice, and inclusion systematically rather than superficially; creating more inclusive educational environments where all students feel welcome and supported; and examining and challenging the canon of architectural knowledge to include diverse voices, perspectives, and traditions. These changes require institutional commitment, resources, and willingness to question and change established practices that may perpetuate exclusion.

Partnership Development and Practice Engagement: Addressing challenges in internship availability and quality, particularly in regions with developing architectural sectors, requires

stronger, more systematic partnerships between educational institutions and the architectural industry. This might include industry investment in structured training programs, mentorship initiatives pairing students with experienced practitioners, shared responsibility for professional development between schools and firms, and industry participation in curriculum development to ensure practice relevance. Government support may be necessary in regions where the profession is still developing, potentially through subsidies for internship programs, support for small firms taking on interns, tax incentives for training investments, or creation of alternative pathways to gain practical experience, such as community design centres or government-sponsored design services.

Research Integration and Evidence-Based Practice: Strengthening connections between architectural research and education, and promoting evidence-based approaches to design, represents an important opportunity. This includes integrating research findings into teaching, engaging students in research projects, developing research literacy so graduates can critically evaluate claims and evidence, and fostering research mindsets that question assumptions and seek empirical validation. As architecture confronts complex challenges like climate adaptation, health promotion, and social equity, the ability to engage with and contribute to research-based knowledge becomes increasingly important for effective practice.

› 7 CONCLUSIONS

› 7.1 Global Convergence and Local Adaptation

This comprehensive survey reveals both significant commonalities and important differences in architectural education worldwide, providing a nuanced picture of a profession in transition. While there is a clear trend toward standardisation in program structure and duration, driven by globalisation and international accreditation requirements, local adaptations remain essential for meeting specific national needs, cultural contexts, and regional priorities. This tension between global convergence and local specificity represents one of the central dynamics shaping contemporary architectural education.

The integration of professional practice education, sustainability, community development, and health considerations represents positive progress toward more comprehensive, socially responsible architectural education. These developments demonstrate the profession's responsiveness to contemporary challenges and its growing commitment to addressing pressing social and environmental issues through design. However, important work remains in several critical areas.

› 7.2 Inclusivity, Diversity, and Global Recognition

Inclusivity, diversity, and the global recognition of qualifications remain areas requiring sustained attention and development. The inconsistent integration of topics related to decolonisation, indigenous knowledge systems, gender equity, and social justice highlights ongoing challenges in transforming architectural education to be more inclusive and responsive to diverse perspectives and needs. Achieving meaningful progress in these areas will require

institutional commitment, curricular innovation, faculty development, and willingness to question and change established practices.

› 7.3 Diversity as Strength and Challenge

The survey highlights that while shared goals of preparing competent and socially responsible architects unite the profession globally, approaches to achieving these goals vary significantly across countries and institutions. This diversity reflects different cultural contexts, economic realities, educational traditions, and societal priorities. Rather than viewing this diversity as a problem requiring elimination, the international architectural education community might better recognise it as a source of richness, offering opportunities for mutual learning and cross-pollination of ideas.

The diversity documented in this survey is simultaneously a strength and a challenge. It is a strength because different approaches to architectural education can generate innovations, test alternative pedagogies, and demonstrate multiple pathways to professional competence. It is a challenge because this diversity can create confusion about standards, complicate international mobility, and leave some students disadvantaged based on where they happened to study.

› 7.4 Disparities and Ongoing Tensions

Significant disparities persist in resources, infrastructure, and educational frameworks across different regions and institutions. These disparities create challenges that must be addressed to improve architectural education globally while respecting regional variations and local needs. The tension between global standards and local relevance remains a central challenge, as does the balance between generalist education preparing students for diverse career paths and specialised training in emerging areas of practice.

As architectural education continues to evolve, addressing these challenges while seizing opportunities for innovation and improvement will be essential. Continuous adaptation and innovation are crucial for meeting both local needs and global challenges effectively. The profession must ensure it prepares graduates who can address unprecedented pressures from climate change, rapid urbanisation, technological disruption, demographic shifts, and social transformation.

The survey reveals that architectural education stands at a critical juncture, balancing multiple tensions: tradition with innovation, local context with global perspectives, specialised expertise with broad-based knowledge, practice relevance with theoretical depth, and individual creativity with collaborative capacity. Successfully navigating these tensions requires ongoing dialogue among educators, practitioners, students, professional organisations, and accrediting bodies.

› 7.5 International Collaboration

Success in addressing the complex challenges facing architectural education will require ongoing international dialogue, resource sharing, and collaborative learning among institutions worldwide. This might include expanded exchange programs for students and faculty, joint research initiatives, shared curriculum development efforts, collaborative accreditation

frameworks, and platforms for sharing innovations and best practices. Always the goal must be preparing architects who can create built environments that serve all of humanity sustainably, equitably, and beautifully.

› 7.6 Looking Forward

Looking forward, architectural education must continue evolving to prepare graduates for a rapidly changing world. This evolution should emphasise flexibility and adaptability, enabling architects to respond to unforeseen challenges and opportunities. It should develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities that transcend specific technical knowledge. It should cultivate ethical awareness and social responsibility alongside technical competence. And it should foster lifelong learning capabilities, recognizing that architectural education does not end with degree completion but continues throughout professional careers.

The integration of sustainability, health, community development, inclusivity, and professional practice into architectural curricula reflects global trends toward more holistic and socially conscious education. These developments position architecture as a profession capable of addressing complex societal challenges through thoughtful, evidence-based, community-engaged design. By continuing to strengthen these integrations while maintaining design excellence and technical rigor, architectural education can prepare graduates to make meaningful contributions to creating more sustainable, healthy, equitable, and beautiful built environments for all.



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