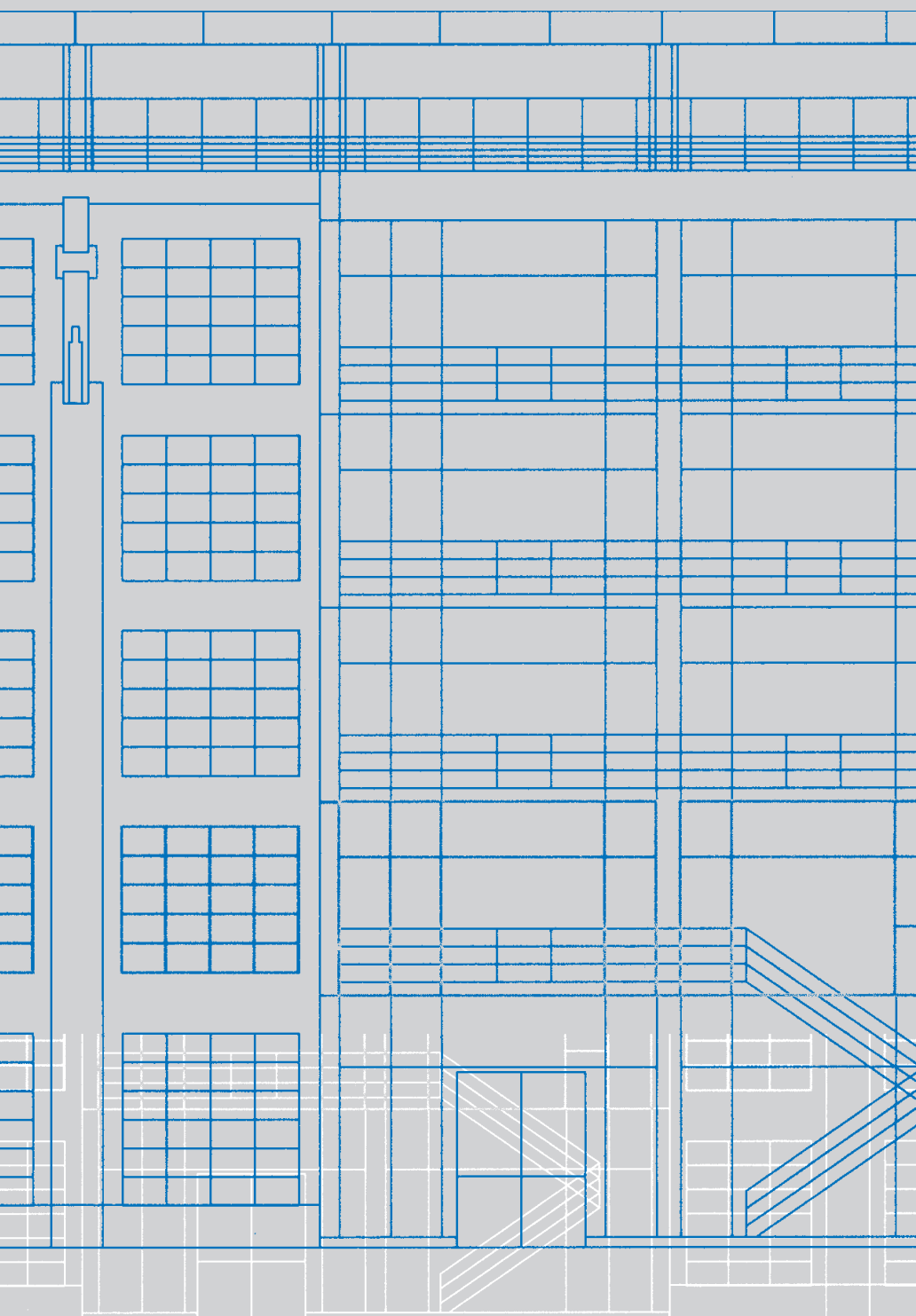


# Criteria for the accreditation of courses of study

## Interior architecture

Third edition – 2018



**ASAP**

Validation Organisation  
for Study Programmes  
in Architecture and Planning

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## Documents

This document uses the terms 'interior architect' and 'interior architecture' as the common description in most of Europe for the profession. In some European countries the title 'interior architect' is regulated (Germany, the Netherlands). Some other countries (Great Britain, Italy) restrict the use of the title 'architect', including all prefixes. In those countries the general description for the profession is 'interior design' and where applicable 'interior architect(ure)' should be read as 'interior design(er)' or vice versa.

# 1 Guidelines

In this manual, the Validation Organisation for Study Programmes in Architecture and Planning ASAP sets out the professional criteria for accreditation of degree courses in interior architecture, which are in addition to the cross-disciplinary standards of the accreditation agencies.

In parallel to these criteria, ASAP has also published the professional standards required for the recognition of study programmes in architecture, landscape architecture and urban/regional planning.

It is of special significance that the Validation Organisation ASAP has brought together representatives from both the professional field and institutions of higher education that have launched and developed procedures for the improvement and securing of quality for the various study programmes.

In view of the great diversity in study programmes offered, these professional criteria provide a reference framework for accreditation that ensures international compatibility whilst promoting the institutions of higher education's willingness to exchange students and lecturers as well as maintain their individual and regional characteristics. It will focus on the specific requirements for accreditation of the regulated profession.

The Expert Commission on Interior Architecture is aware of the fact that these standards will have to be adjusted and updated over time. With this in mind, it also considers its role as providing a forum for fruitful discussion on the objectives of education in interior architecture.

## 1.1 Conformity with European and international standards

In the academic world, the different subjects of architectural education – and thus also interior architectural education – occupy a special place in so far as they prepare students for a profession protected by the architects' laws of the different federal states of Germany.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the admission requirements for interior architecture graduates to the professional institutes, the chambers of architects, vary in the different federal states regarding the requisite duration of study courses. Most require four years at an institution of higher education whereas some federal states only require three years. Notwithstanding this, ASAP and the Federal Chamber of German Architects require five years at an institution of higher education for all subjects.

While the education of interior architects is not based on the European and international requirements for architects, ASAP considers full-time studies with a training programme and requirements to be obligatory for the complex profession, as described for the education of architects in the directive on the recognition of professional qualifications (2005/36/EU last amended by directive 2013/55/EU) as well as the worldwide valid UNESCO/UIA Charter for Architectural Education (2011) and the UIA Accord on Recommended International

Standards of Professionalism in Architectural Practice (2014).

- The requirement for a Bachelor's or Master's degree in interior architecture, which should prepare for admission to the chamber of architects, is that the curriculum must teach a sufficiently high number of the following qualifications (see 3).
- The proper duration of study in a consecutive study programme in interior architecture should, according to ASAP, be analogous to the European directive on the recognition of professional qualifications and the UIA Accord on Recommended International Standards of Professionalism in Architectural Practice. This is five years of full-time studies at an institution of higher education or an adequate time in part-time education while working.
- The minimum number of weekly hours of study per semester in the presence of the teachers for a study programme must correspond to the standard study period.

## 1.2 Professional qualification as an interior architect

Working as an interior architect, within the associated rights, requires joining the chamber of architects. Admission requirements are a degree in interior architecture and two years' professional experience.

Due to the different federal laws, requirement for the admission to the chamber of architects in the majority of the federal states is a minimum of four years of study. Architects' law in a few federal states requires studying for a minimum of three years.

Courses of study in interior architecture, which aim to meet the requirements for admission to all German chambers of architects, must be based on a minimum of four years of study or must explicitly inform interested potential students that a course of studies of less than four years will only allow admission to the chamber of architects in a few federal states.

The training in interior architecture does not differ in complexity from the training in architecture. Also with regard to the continuously growing demands on the profession by public authorities, it seems only logical to formulate teaching objectives in compliance with the European directive on the recognition of professional qualifications (2005/36/EC).

This requires a five-year course of study or a four-year course of study in combination with two years of practical work experience in accordance with Article 46(4) of the directive.

The minimum duration of four years can be achieved with a three-year Bachelor's course combined with a two-year Master's course or a four-year Bachelor's course (also see 4.1 Contents and time structure of the course).

For public service the following applies: The accreditation of study programmes ensures that the degrees from institutions of higher education meet the educational requirements for working in public service. According to an agreement between the Conference of

Interior Ministers (IMK) and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (KMK), Master's degrees obtained at both universities and universities of applied sciences qualify for positions as upper-level civil servants, while Bachelor's degrees generally qualify for positions as upper-middle-level civil servants, irrespective of the duration of studies.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.3 International aspects of interior architectural education

The trend towards internationalisation creates new perspectives and potential whilst bringing new challenges to interior architects. International political and economic developments increasingly transform conventions. Education at institution of higher education must face these changes when formulating study goals and contents of study programmes. The mobility of students paves the way for working at home and abroad. An education that covers the analysis of different cultures and their demands regarding interior architecture can prepare for such activities.

In order to guarantee the greatest possible compatibility of German courses of study, international agreements on minimum contents of study programmes in architecture can be consulted for orientation (European directive on the recognition of professional qualifications, UIA Accord).

### 1.4 Creating profiles at institutions of higher education

Bachelor's study programmes should, according to the Model Ordinance for the Accreditation of Study Courses for the State Treaty on the Accreditation of Study Courses, ensure broad academic qualification. However, the definition of goals could help the individual institutions of higher education to establish a specific profile for the education in interior architecture by setting specific priorities.

Specialisation of study programmes for regulated professions is restricted as the essence of the qualification for the regulated profession must be upheld. For both the four-year Bachelor's degree and for consecutive study programmes the curricula must teach course contents with a total of 300 credits in accordance with ECTS as defined in these Professional Criteria.

## 2 Educational objectives

As study programmes in interior architecture should lead to graduates being qualified to work in the regulated profession, it must be defined for the courses which qualifications will lead to eligibility for admission to the chamber of architects. Particularly for Master's degree courses due care must be taken that the basic goal of the qualification is guaranteed in the same form for all students.

By the end of their studies students of interior architecture should have acquired skills in design and construction as well as knowledge and skills that enable them to perform their role as generalist and to work in a team of specialists. This competence distinguishes interior architects from other service providers in the field of the built environment.

The complexity of integrative skills increases during the course of study in interior architecture.

The following list of required areas of competence of interior architects refers to Section II of the UNESCO/ UIA (Objectives of Architectural Education).

### 2.1 Design competence

The ability to engage imagination, think creatively, innovate and provide design leadership.

The ability to gather information, define problems, apply analyses and use critical judgement and formulate strategies for action.

The ability to think three-dimensionally in the exploration of designs and to develop designs methodically in terms of science and artistic quality.

The ability to reconcile divergent factors, integrate knowledge and apply skills in the creation of a design solution.

### 2.2 Knowledge

#### Knowledge of cultural and artistic studies

- Ability to act with knowledge of historical and cultural precedents in local and world architecture and interior architecture.
- Ability to act with knowledge of the history and development of design and related technologies.
- Applying knowledge of the influence of the fine arts on the quality of architectural and interior architectural design.
- Understanding of heritage issues in the built environment and the intricacies of heritage preservation.
- Awareness of the links between architecture, interior architecture and philosophical and political currents, as well as the cultural development in other creative disciplines.

#### Knowledge of social studies

- Ability to act with knowledge of society, and to work with clients and users.

<sup>1</sup> Agreement of the Conference of Interior Ministers of 07.12.2007 and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Cultural Affairs and Education of 20.09.2007

- Ability to develop a project brief through definition of the needs of society, users and clients, and to research and define contextual and functional requirements for different types of built environments.
- The ability to identify and define functional conditions for different areas, and to apply them.
- Understanding of the human and social context of a construction project.
- Applying appropriate knowledge in the development of spatial quality and its specific factors such as light, colour, materials, texture, acoustics and use of new media.
- Understanding of the ergonomic, functional and space requirements in living environments, at the workplace and at places for leisure, at nursing and healthcare facilities as well as the aspiration of relating spaces, objects and the immediate surroundings to human needs and a human scale.
- Awareness of philosophy, political theory and ethics as related to architecture.

#### **Knowledge of environmental studies**

- Ability to act with knowledge of natural systems and built environments.
- Understanding of environmental sustainability, energy-saving design and the impact of a project on the environment, as well as passive systems and their management.
- Awareness of the consequences of technology and engineering.
- Awareness of the history and practice of architecture and of the environment.

#### **Knowledge of technical studies**

- Applying technical knowledge of structure, materials, supply and waste management.
- Understanding of the processes of technical design and the integration of structure, construction technologies and technical systems into a functionally effective project.
- Understanding of infrastructure and circulation as well as communications, maintenance and security systems.
- Awareness of the role of technical infrastructure in design realisation, and of the process of construction cost estimation and budget control.
- Knowledge of physical problems and technologies that affect the function of a room and building in order to provide comfort, safety and protection from the weather.

Sufficient knowledge about structural engineering and construction technology is also important because it has an immediate effect on the practitioner's right to apply for planning permission.

#### **Knowledge of design studies**

- Knowledge of design theory and methods.
- Understanding of design techniques and design processes; analysing and interpreting framework conditions.
- Knowledge of design history and architectural critique.
- Knowledge of ergonomics and perceptual psychology.

#### **Knowledge of construction economics / project implementation / planning law**

Knowledge and application of business, managerial, financial, legal and professional requirements.

In particular:

- Economic relations of the construction and furniture-manufacturing industry, the property market and facilities management.
- Market mechanisms and their influence on the development of the built environment; understanding of project management, project development and client consultation.
- Workings of public and private contract award processes.
- Crafted and factory-made constructions and manufacturing techniques.
- Laws, regulations and standards for planning, design, construction, health, safety and the use of the built environment.
- Public and private building law (architects' contracts, planning regulations and building regulations).
- Professional ethics and conduct in the practice of planning and designing interior architecture projects.
- Registration requirements for the chambers of architects and the professional duties of interior architects.

### **2.3 Skills**

- Ability to solve tasks and problems in a team and to communicate ideas through language, text, drawing, statistics and models.
- Ability to use analogue, digital, graphic and model-making skills to explore, develop, define and communicate a design proposal.
- Understanding of systems of evaluation that use manual and/or electronic means for performance assessment of built environments.

### 3 Contents of the educational programmes in interior architecture

The educational programme must provide a balance of theoretical and practical aspects of the interior architectural education. With reference to and following the minimum educational requirements for architects set out in the European Directive 2013/55/EU on the recognition of professional qualifications (amending Directive 2005/36/EC) the following essential criteria for the interior architectural education have been defined in subject-specific and/or modified form.

1. Ability to create interior architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements.
2. Adequate knowledge of the history and theories of architecture/interior architecture/design and the related arts, technologies and human sciences.
3. Knowledge of the fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural design.
4. Adequate knowledge of architectural design, urban planning, design, planning in general and the skills involved in the planning process.
5. Understanding of the relationship between people and space, people and buildings, and between buildings and their environment, and the need to relate buildings and the spaces between them to human needs and scale.
6. Understanding of the chosen profession of interior architects and the role of the interior architect in society, in particular in preparing briefs that take account of social factors.
7. Ability to develop a design and knowledge of various design methods. Ability to evaluate a design with regard to its feasibility.
8. Understanding of the structural design, construction and engineering problems associated with building design.
9. Adequate knowledge of the physical problems and technologies and of the function of buildings so as to provide them with internal conditions of comfort and protection against the climate.
10. Design skills necessary to meet the building users' requirements within the constraints imposed by cost factors and building regulations.
11. Adequate knowledge of the industries, organisations, regulations and procedures involved in translating design concepts into buildings and integrating plans into overall planning.

### 4 Course structure and course duration

#### 4.1 Contents and time structure of the course for professional qualification according to the Bologna system

Based on the Bologna system and the relevant national regulations for study courses in interior architecture, which should allow membership in the chamber of architects in each German federal state, the following course systems are available:

- Four-year Bachelor's course of study in interior architecture with 240 credits in accordance with ECTS (admission to the chamber of architects in some federal states is possible after a three-year Bachelor's course of study with 180 credits in accordance with the ECTS).
- Courses of study in interior architecture that follow on consecutively consist of at least a three or three-and-a-half year Bachelor's course of study in interior architecture in combination with a two- year or one-and-a-half-year Master's course of study in interior architecture with the sum of 300 credits in accordance with ECTS.

The degrees gained in Bachelor's and Master's programmes cannot lead to the same qualification. One qualification objective must be defined for each level of qualification. According to the qualification framework for German institutions of higher education this is higher for the Master's degree than for the Bachelor's degree.<sup>2</sup> One course shall not lead to separate professional qualifications. For each course only one standard period of study shall be permitted.<sup>3</sup>

Master's degree courses that follow on from a Bachelor's degree, which already teaches all qualifications required for registration in the chamber of architects, cannot again lead to one and the same educational objective;<sup>4</sup> they must have a fundamentally different, i.e. advanced educational goal.

#### 4.2 Bachelor's degree courses

The different qualification objectives of Bachelor's courses shall be clearly stated and the relationship of the degree to the regulated profession of the interior architect specified.

##### 4.2.1 Bachelor's degree courses with 180 or 210 ECTS credits (six or seven semesters on a full-time course)

Three-year or three-and-a-half-year Bachelor's courses qualify for fields of activity in all areas of planning and construction, in public administration and in the real estate industry, and are a requirement for acceptance

2 Qualification framework for degrees from German institutions of higher education

3 In accordance with Article 3 (2) of the Model Ordinance for the Accreditation of Study Courses

4 On current issues pertaining to the accreditation of courses of study in architecture, Managing Director of the Accreditation Council, Bonn 18.02.2009

on a Master's degree course. While they qualify to practice in the regulated interior architects' profession in some federal states, this does not apply to the whole of the Federal Republic; the educational objective of these courses of study cannot contain general qualification for registration or licensing in the profession.

Notwithstanding this, if the course of studies aims for qualification in compliance with the law in individual federal states, it must be guaranteed that the above mentioned contents are sufficiently anchored in the study programme and therefore no gaps need to be closed in the Master's course. Institutions of higher education providing this educational objective must make sure that the Master's course does not lead to one and the same qualification again.

#### **4.2.2 Bachelor's degree courses with 240 ECTS credits (eight semesters on a full-time course)**

Four-year study programmes ending in a Bachelor's degree and a subsequent two-year period of professional practice qualify throughout the Federal Republic of Germany for the interior architects' regulated profession. They also qualify for acceptance on a Master's course at a German or international institution of higher education.

The four-year Bachelor's course must teach all necessary subjects required for the interior architects' regulated profession. Therefore, the Bachelor's course shall not leave any gaps in interior architectural education that are only then filled by the Master's course. Consequently, institutions of higher education cannot combine the four-year Bachelor's course with a two-year Master's course, which would lead to the same professional qualification (also see 3.1, 1–11).

If the institution of higher education offers both eight-semester and six-semester Bachelor's degrees, each shall be developed as a separate, autonomous course. For both courses different resilient targets shall be defined and different curricula developed. The relevance of the degrees for the profession of interior architecture must be shown.

### **4.3 Master's degree courses**

The successful completion of a Master's course leads to a Master's degree. It enables admission to doctoral studies or doctorates and meets educational qualifications required for upper-level civil servants.

#### **4.3.1 Two-year or one-and-a-half-year Master's degree courses (120 or 90 credits) in combination with three-year or three-and-a-half-year Bachelor's degree courses**

In the Master's course the core areas of interior architectural education are complemented with a focus on research and development as well as artistic activities. However, interior architecture must remain the main educational element.

For the successful completion of a Master's course it is also required that a full five-year academic course of study in interior architecture has been finished.

Acceptance of graduates who hold Bachelor's degrees in other subjects on a Master's course in interior architecture that qualifies for the regulated interior architects' profession is generally excluded since educational objectives would not be reached in the same measure by all graduates.

#### **4.3.2 One-year Master's degree courses (60 ECTS credits)**

The objective of a Master's course that follows on from a Bachelor's course which already qualifies for the interior architecture profession in all federal states, must lead to further scientific or artistic specialisations that extend the professional profile in special areas.<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, the various specialisations must be pointed out in the study programme and professional fields that require such specialisation identified.

#### **4.3.3 Master's degree courses for graduates from different fields of study**

Master's degree courses for graduates from different fields of study require practical professional training of generally no less than one year. The contents of the Master's degree course for graduates from different fields of study shall incorporate their professional experience and tie in with it. While developing the concept for the Master's degree course the institution of higher education shall indicate the relationship of the course and qualification for the profession and/or research. Master's degree courses for graduates from different fields of study may lead to specialisation. However, with the appropriate educational contents, they may also follow on from a Bachelor's degree in interior architecture and lead to a qualification as an interior architect. In this case they must comply with the requirements in 3.1, 1–11.

### **4.4 Cooperation with international institutions of higher education**

In the case of cooperative courses with international institutions of higher education that offer students an international degree, the institutions of higher education must review compatibility with the above requirements and inform students in advance.

### **4.5 Part-time courses, part-time courses for working students**

Part-time courses are study programmes that are constituted in curricula, structured by examination regulations and lead to an academic degree, although not in full-time study but characteristically in continuous and consistent training and self-directed learning and achieving verifiable academic achievements. The educational contents and learning of competences must be equivalent to those taught in the corresponding full-time courses, the only difference being the duration.

<sup>5</sup> „On current questions on the accreditation of degree courses in architecture“ – Bonn 18.02.2009

## 4.6 Dual study programmes

Dual study courses are characterised by the use of companies and equivalent institutions as second learning venues alongside the institution of higher education, and dividing the curriculum between two learning venues at least. Their intended integration of contents, duration and organisation is aimed at students achieving a specific qualification profile by linking theoretical and practical teaching. The dual study courses' level, type and scope are generally equivalent to a corresponding full-time course.

## 4.7 Doctoral study programmes

PhD study courses provide organised academic education for PhD students. As a general rule, entrance requirements are Master's degrees in accordance with the PhD regulations of each institution of higher education. Other entrance requirements are set by the institutions of higher education.

The objective of the study course is to acquire the skill to successfully complete the doctoral study programme.

## 5 Entrance requirements for Bachelor's and Master's degree courses

Entrance requirements are essential for the quality of the courses. Other than the entrance requirements listed below, the institutions of higher education may formulate additional entrance requirements, as for instance for dual study courses. They must be robustly defined by the institution of higher education in special admission regulations or in the course and examination regulations as well as in the diploma supplements. This must be assessed for accreditation.

### 5.1 Entrance requirements for Bachelor's courses in interior architecture

The entrance requirements for a Bachelor's degree course are the same as the entrance requirements stipulated by federal state law. An additional entrance qualification for the subject interior architecture, other than the higher education entrance qualification, can be in the form of an aptitude test. However, this is not permitted by law in some federal states.

### 5.2 Entrance requirements for Master's courses in interior architecture

In accordance with the Model Ordinance for the accreditation of study courses, a first degree from an institution of higher education is a mandatory requirement for acceptance onto a Master's degree course. Advanced Master's degree courses require additional professional work experience of generally one year. A Master's degree course must meet high professional and academic standards; therefore admission to a Master's degree course shall be dependent on additional entrance requirements in accordance with the relevant federal law (e.g. admission examination, preliminary work placement). This must be assessed for accreditation.

In accordance with the European Professional Recognition Directive, a minimum study period of five years or a four-year course in combination with two years of practical work experience in accordance to Article 46(4) of the directive is required to qualify for the regulated architects' profession. The automatic recognition of interior architects has not been stipulated yet in the Professional Recognition Directive. Since the requirements for interior architects are similar to those for architects, a minimum duration of four years for the course of study should be aimed for, also with a view to recognition by the EU in the future. In the majority of federal states the requirement for the regulated profession of interior architecture is a four-year course of study.

This implies the following for study programmes that lead to a Master's degree and qualify for the regulated profession of interior architecture:

- Entrance requirements for a Master's degree course in interior architecture which qualifies for the regulated interior architects' profession must be a first degree in interior architecture.
- Master's degree courses that have the title and follow the objective to provide a specialisation in the field of interior architecture or design, and so are directed at graduates from different disciplines, are as a rule not suitable qualifications for the interior architecture profession. This must be made absolutely clear and transparent to potential students.

The above issues must be clearly and transparently stated in all respective admissions, course and examination regulations as well as in the descriptions of available courses.

## 6 Qualifications

### 6.1 Degree titles

Courses in interior architecture may generally lead to three different degrees:

- Bachelor or Master of Arts (B.A. / M.A.)
- Bachelor or Master of Science (B.Sc. / M.Sc.)
- Bachelor or Master of Engineering B.Eng. / M.Eng.)

The title "arts" denotes liberal arts-oriented courses (including study courses in arts); the title "science" denotes study courses in natural sciences, the title "engineering" denotes study courses in engineering. Since interior architecture can be attributed to all of these fields, the institution of higher education must define the focus of the course. According to the Accreditation Council this decision lies with the institution of higher education.

Bachelor's and Master's degree courses are distinct courses that lead to distinct degrees. Therefore, successful completion of a Bachelor's or Master's course can each only achieve one degree. Consequently, Bachelor's and Master's degrees cannot be gained at the same time as completing a diploma or magister course.

A doctoral study course is a research-oriented advanced qualification with the objective of teaching in-depth



methodic and scientific subject-related knowledge that may cover areas outside the previous studies and beyond them.

## **6.2 Degree certificates, diploma supplement**

The diploma supplement and transcript of records provide proof of students' qualifications, which they need particularly if they want to change institutions of higher education.

The institutions of higher education must clearly define in their examination regulations and in the diploma supplement which qualifications graduates will have gained on completion of the respective degree courses with regard to registration or licensing.

The accreditation certificate shall include a supplement with a detailed description of the academic standard with regard to its international status.

## **7 Modularisation, mobility and the credit transfer system**

### **7.1 Modularisation concept**

The courses of study must promote the internationalisation of professional studies. They are required to be modular in structure, and their assessment must be in line with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) to ensure national and international compatibility.

For the accreditation of a Bachelor's or Master's degree course it must be verified that the course is modular and the ECTS is in place. As a rule, the contents of modules must be designed so that they can be taught within one semester or one year. In exceptional cases a module may extend over several semesters.

As a rule, 60 credits can be obtained per course year in accordance with the ECTS that is 30 credits per semester. This assumes that one credit is equivalent to students' workload of 25 to 30 hours maximum self-directed study or classroom presence, so that the workload on a full-time course in one semester of lectures and lecture-free periods amounts to a total of 750 to 900 hours. This is equivalent to 32 to 39 hours per week for 46 weeks per year.

The "target" proviso that modules should not offer less than five credits intends to ensure that the old structure of courses is not retained. The specific conditions of a course of study or module are the determining factor when specifying a module's size. Assigning less than five ECTS credits is possible in specific cases, but must be justified.

It is important to note that the allocation of credits does not necessarily require an examination, but the successful completion of a particular module. The allocation of credits must be precisely and comprehensibly described in the examination regulation and in the accreditation documentation.

The objectives of modules must be related to the different qualification objectives of courses. Robust rules must be developed for a possible recognition of modules taken in parallel courses of study.

The dual use of modules whose contents builds on previous modules of a course of study is excluded.<sup>6</sup> This is the case for consecutive and non-consecutive as well as post-graduate courses at Master's degree level. The duplication of modules from Bachelor's degree courses in Master's courses is permitted in exceptions, if the educational objective which is accomplished after successful completion of the relevant module plays an adequate role in accomplishing the overall educational objective of the Master's degree course.

The following applies in all other cases: The qualification standard defined for each degree level must be maintained. The institutions of higher education must ensure that individual students cannot take the same or essentially similar modules in a Bachelor's and again in a Master's degree course.

### **7.2 Academic feasibility**

The logical consistency of a course concept and the academic feasibility (studiability) of a course of study, including self-directed work, must be ascertained by the institutions of higher education and reviewed as well as confirmed for accreditation.

In addition to reviewing the structure of modules and examinations, the study plans and methods employed for determining and updating of workload should be scrutinised in particular.

### **7.3 Recognition of educational credits at other institutions of higher education**

Responsibility for the recognition of credits that have been obtained at another institution of higher education lies with the institution of higher education that is asked to accept credits ("reversal of burden of proof" pursuant to the Lisbon Convention; reasons must be given for non-recognition of modules). The focus of assessment by the institutions of higher education has now shifted from "similarity" of qualifications to their materiality of differences.<sup>7</sup> The recognition process must be based on manageable provisions, which are also part of the examination regulations. This is subject to accreditation. The aim is to facilitate mutual recognition of modules at other institutions of higher education; this is a key element of the Bologna reform.

Since students of interior architecture are increasingly involved in an international context it is recommended that ECTS credits are also given for modules that are marked individually.

### **7.4 Recognition of skills gained outside institutions of higher education**

The structural requirements of Standing Conference of the Ministers of Cultural Affairs and Education (KMK),

<sup>6</sup> See also former proviso for the interpretation of the structural requirements common to all German federal states, decision of the Accreditation Council of 12.02.2010, and Information provided by the Accreditation Council to ASAP on 21 November 2011

<sup>7</sup> "Implementation of the Lisbon Convention", letter from the chairman of the Accreditation Council to the agents, dated 27.09.2011

common to all German federal states, allow that verified equivalent competences and skills obtained outside educational institutions may account for up to half of the credits allocated for a course of study. The State Treaty on Accreditation takes up the issue but, like the Model Ordinance, does not include information on the maximum extent. If an institution of higher education applies this exception, it must provide evidence that it has developed a suitable procedure for verifying the students' qualifications. The institution of higher education must reliably announce the abridged academic part of the course of study in their examination regulations and in the diploma supplement.

In particular for courses of study in interior architecture, the criteria listed under 8.2 expressly for practical training periods within a course also apply.

## **8 Professional practice**

Practical training – possibly including further education seminars – parallel to the course of study is an important part of interior architectural education. However, it should not and cannot replace or correct, even in part, what is taught at institutions of higher education. Practical training aims to enable students to experience what they cannot learn academically.

### **8.1 Work experience placements prior to acceptance on the degree course**

**8.1.1** A practical work placement is recommended before taking up studies for a Bachelor's degree. Most suitable are the trades cabinet making, carpentry, dry-wall building, upholstery and decorating as well as metal working crafts. Work placements serve to confirm an applicant's chosen subject of study as well as providing valuable experience that will be of use during the course.

**8.1.2** Another practical work placement in the interior architects' professional field can, according to federal law, be mandatory as an additional entrance requirement for the Master's degree course (Model Ordinance for the State Treaty on the Accreditation of Study Courses, Article 5 (3)).

### **8.2 Practical training period during the degree course**

Phases of practical training, e.g. in a workshop, on a construction site, in an interior architects' practice, architects' practice or in agencies under supervision of an interior architect, are highly recommended. Such work placements serve to confirm an applicant's chosen focus and can be part of the examination regulations.

Practical training within a full-time course of study, which is integrated into the course and whose contents is set by the institution of higher education and thus is a supervised element of the professional practice training, forms part of the workload and is rewarded by ECTS credits. This includes practical training during lecture-free periods, since the students' workload is calculated over the whole academic year or semester.

The UIA standards for the professional qualifications of architects stipulate that practical training periods must not lead to a reduction in academic study periods. ASAP is of the opinion that this should also apply to courses in interior architecture. The requirement for a practical training period is to be implemented in a recommended practical phase of up to 12 months (see 8.1.2). This recommendation for practical training periods completed between Bachelor's and Master's degree courses does not pose a risk to the consecutiveness of the Master's degree course.

### **8.3 Practical training period**

The work experience placement that follows a course of study is not subject to accreditation, although it has to be considered within the context of a study plan. After obtaining a degree that qualifies for the regulated profession, the architects' law of the German federal states requires a period of professional work experience to subsequently enable formal acceptance and registration in the architects' list and carry the title interior architect. As a rule, the duration of this period is generally two years.

### **8.4 Practical orientation through excursions**

Study trips are an important educational tool and form an essential link to the practice in the profession. Excursions to international destinations can also help students experience working practice in other countries.

### **8.5 Continuing education and further training**

After completing the course of study at the institution of higher education, a process of lifelong learning begins while practicing the profession.

Large areas of a profession's practical knowledge cannot be learned through academic education, because it undergoes cycles of renewal and so must be continually updated while working in the professional sphere. The fact that lifelong learning is indispensable for quality assurance is undisputed.

Institutions of higher education are advised to develop relevant courses in coordinated educational programmes.

## **9 Research and teaching**

To guarantee the quality of interior architecture teaching and maintain the essential real-world reference to the complex demands of professional working life, it is necessary for the teaching staff at higher education institutions to practice their profession alongside teaching.

Accreditation must ensure the correlation of research and teaching. It is a fundamental aspect of internal quality assurance. Reflection of the discipline's different sectors, on issues relating to the changing political, cultural, social and economic parameters, require a continuous review of the spheres of responsibility and action. The competence to evaluate quality criteria or the relevance of intervention fields that will help estab-

lish networks beyond the discipline, and to generate contributions that develop the discipline are cornerstones for a resilient research approach by interior architects.

Particular focus is placed on the following sections:

### **9.1 Design as a research topic**

The term “Entwerfen” alone is an expression of cultural significance within the German language:<sup>8</sup> Borrowed from the image of a weaving loom, where the shuttle is thrown back and forth through the warp and weft, it is the vision of a progressively developing picture that the author already holds in his mind’s eye, but which for others only finds expression in the process. In this context, the interaction, for instance, between the authorship, the design and the proposal on the one hand and the receptor, the user and the client on the other needs to be explored. Traditionally, this was achieved by drawings showing the design on three planes and by three-dimensional illustrations. Advanced technology and communication techniques, such as virtually generated realistic images, sometimes containing film or video, and other media that actively involve the receptor, are used to create new and diverse variants, and have become necessary as the receptors’ visual habits are changing. Exploration of these developments and other levels of interaction related to design need transdisciplinary collaborations and/or interdisciplinary lines of research.

### **9.2 Interior architecture in context**

Interior architects are experiencing an increasing expansion of their field of action. Strategic marketing now uses commercial interiors to make brands both a visual and physical experience and use spaces as a tangible setting for their products and all related actions. Generating moving images, which are employed in focused and precise communications, relies on appropriate spaces that look good through the lens of a camera. Museums, companies and institutions have a growing desire for such spaces and demand development of these approaches. Research is not only needed to accomplish unique results but also to consider increasing involvement from direct and indirect participants.

### **9.3 The creative process**

The potential for new impetus should be researched, primarily founded on artistic/design aspects but also in awareness and the reassessment of technical, social and economic developments. The academic methods on the interface between knowledge, analysis and discovery that stimulate and focus design and planning processes need due consideration.

### **9.4 Transdisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity**

The complexity of global problems increasingly requires solutions that incorporate methods from other

disciplines and/or demand cooperation with other disciplines. Instruments, platforms and target ranges should be researched, whose interdependency and consequences must be evaluated within the discipline.

Furthermore, representatives of the interior architecture discipline are currently engaged in intense discourse with institutions of higher education, politics and representatives of the economy and industry with the goal of further enhancing the research aspect.

## **10 Staff structure**

Accreditation documentation should give an overview of an institution’s academic teaching staff, which is to include information about teaching, but also about research projects, publications, independent professional work and social involvement, e.g. tasks in self-government. The student to teacher ratio must be stated as well as the number of first semester students, the total number of students and the annual number of graduates.

The faculty must make available sufficient supervisory staff for the courses of study offered. Proof must be provided of lecturers’ qualifications for the modules they teach (job description at the time of appointment, practical experience, academic and artistic reputation) as well as the quantitative capacity of the teaching workload. The suitability of the participating teaching staff’s qualifications regarding the profile of the course of study must be checked. This applies in particular to Master’s degree courses with a special focus.

### **10.1 Professors**

Availability of sufficient basic staff resources of professors who are interior architects is an important sign of quality for courses in interior architecture. Full-time professorships make an important contribution to a continuous discussion and development of the educational concept and for an effective academic self-government. Additionally, part-time positions and temporary positions (visiting professor) are invaluable in order to incorporate additional areas of duty and set new impetus.

Professors are usually appointed from within the profession and, in addition to an excellent professional reputation, they must also demonstrate particular academic or artistic accomplishments and didactic competence.

The credentials of higher education teaching staff can only be assured in the long term if, in the course of their available time, design and construction projects or research projects are implemented.

### **10.2 Non-professorial teaching staff**

The non-professional teaching staff supports the implementation of research and teaching. The qualification for a teaching position is several years of work experience after graduation. Since positions are usually offered on fixed-term contracts, the faculty should ensure that in addition to the statutory basis for further professional or academic qualifications, participation

<sup>8</sup> The German word “Entwerfen” means design; the literal translation of the first syllable “ent”, used in combination with a verb means the beginning of something, and “werfen” means to throw. Here, the authors draw a parallel to the shuttle in a weaving loom that is thrown back and forth as a piece of cloth is created.

in competitions and other design or research projects allow the development of individual profiles. Funds must be allotted for this purpose that not only cover periods of leave.

### **10.3 Student tutors**

Successfully qualified students in higher semesters can usefully support teaching of specific subjects in direct contact with students. They must be instructed by the relevant professors.

### **10.4 Lecturers, visiting lecturers, guest critics**

Lecturers, visiting lecturers and guest critics support the organisation of research and teaching. Furthermore, their teaching adds a specific focus on issues faced by practitioners. The required subject-specific qualifications of lecturers, which entitle them to hold examinations, should be the same as for professors.

The study plan must identify courses taught by external lecturers and courses taught in cooperation with visiting lecturers and guest critics, as well as interdisciplinary events.

## **11 Infrastructure**

New didactic methods, growing diversification of the contents of teaching in technical and laboratory-related areas as well as a changing dependence on IT infrastructure have led to increasing demand for subject-specific infrastructural facilities at schools of architecture and interior architecture since the mid-1900s. This development has resulted in the traditional distribution of funds in the budget for technical sciences becoming obsolete. With scarce resources at institutions of higher education this can lead to disputes about the codes for the distribution of funds and calculation criteria. In this respect accreditation can contribute by providing the independent assessors' external and objective views on the one hand whilst supporting the faculties of interior architecture in justifying their requirements on the other.

Accreditation must evaluate whether the existing infrastructural facilities are adequate and suited to guaranteeing the education objectives and quality of courses of study.

### **11.1 Students' workspaces**

It is essential for the quality of training that students of interior architecture have workspaces in a studio; this is the current standard. They must be adequately equipped and, if possible, individually accessible 24 hours a day.

### **11.2 Workshops, laboratories and studios**

Workshops and laboratories are essential elements for teaching and research. Equipment, size and supervision must be listed and specified. The list of workshops must distinguish between areas that belong to a particular teaching department and areas that are accessible to all students.

### **11.3 IT equipment**

The availability of subject-specific hardware and software is essential for the efficient teaching of interior architecture. Accreditation will evaluate whether the existing equipment corresponds to the study and research objectives and whether it meets the curricular requirements in the high-end segment.

### **11.4 Library and collection of materials**

A library and material collection is an important facility for teaching interior architecture. It should be well equipped with current literature, have long opening hours and be easily accessible from the studio workspaces.

### **11.5 Research laboratories**

Spaces used for a specific discipline's research activities and spaces that are available for interdisciplinary work must be listed together with information on the research projects conducted in them.

### **11.6 Spaces for communication and presentation**

In addition to other functional spaces, schools of interior architecture need communication and presentation spaces that are available to all teaching staff and students. These mainly include conference rooms, spaces for crits of student projects and spaces for public presentation of student projects.

## **12 Finances / third-party funding**

A department's budget must be divided into allocations for academic staff (teacher appointments, student research assistants, staff) and non-academic staff (office staff, workshop supervisors, etc.) if these positions are known. The available physical resources, financial resources and freely available staff resources (e.g. for teaching appointments, undergraduate assistants, etc.) must be listed.

Evidence that the didactic and spatial targets can be met by the current budget must be provided. The amount of third-party funding is to be noted with reference to the relevant research projects. Other third-party funds that are administered by the department must also be listed.

## **13 Quality assurance**

Important information for the assessment of the quality and quality assurance of courses of study as regards teaching and research is data on infrastructure and finances, and the additional issues:

### **13.1 Formalised procedures**

The institution of higher education or faculty should have a concept and concomitant procedure for assuring the quality and standards of its study programme and degrees. In order to achieve this it should develop a strategy for its continuous quality development and

implement it. The strategy, concept and procedure should have a formal status and be accessible to the institution of higher education's public. Additionally, it should allocate specific roles for students and other stakeholders.

The tools and procedures for quality assurance employed by a faculty must be reviewed in terms of their relevance to the course of study in interior architecture. This applies in particular to the adoption of inter-faculty quality assurance systems.

### **13.2 Interaction of professional field and society**

In the field of interior architectural teaching, interaction with internal and external stakeholders is an important means to control and develop the quality of teaching. This includes exhibitions of student projects, publications, etc. Particularly the presentation of results, study processes and teaching philosophy for public critique guarantees a constant scrutiny of educational objectives and, therefore, optimal quality control.

### **13.3 Interaction in the realm of higher education**

The involvement of faculties and degree courses in partnerships with national and international institutions of higher education and research facilities not only enhances choices available for students, but also provides an essential tool for broadening experiences in teaching and for reviewing their own positions.

The assessors should discuss with the faculty to what extent cooperation between institutions of higher education is put into practice. The extent to which the faculty engages in discourse with several institutions of higher education about the theory and teaching of interior architecture must be reviewed.

### **13.4 Interdisciplinarity**

Interdisciplinarity plays a significant part in all professional fields of interior architecture. This is why it forms a requirement of research and teaching. Particularly design projects in which numerous disciplines are applied present a broad sphere of activity. Explicit evidence is required of the ways in which the study plan reflects interdisciplinarity. Teaching imports and teaching exports beyond the boundaries of the discipline and the department must be listed.

### **13.5 Academic performance**

The offered modules and required academic performance should be listed.

This entails a comprehensive description of the academic programme as well as a description of the study programme and schedule, annotated lecture list, examination regulations, details of the design tasks and their form of organisation.

### **13.6 Presentations**

Relevant, high-profile public or in-house exhibitions must be listed in a self-evaluation report for accreditation.

## **13.7 Publications**

Publications on students' projects and study results provide information and exchange with the interested public. They can give important feedback for the development of teaching. Publications by the faculties and departments must be listed in a self-evaluation report.

## **Supporting documents**

### Worldwide

UNESCO/UIA Charter for Architectural Education, Revised Edition 2011, Approved by UIA General Assembly, Tokyo 2011

UIA Accord on Recommended International Standards of Professionalism in Architectural Practice, August 2014

### European Union

Joint declaration by the European ministers for education, 19.07.1999, Bologna

Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications, last amended by Directive 2013/55/EU

European Commission: ECTS Users' Guide, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2015

European Charter of Interior Architecture Training 2013 by ECIA (European Council of Interior Architects)

### Federal Republic of Germany

German framework law for institutions of higher education (Hochschulrahmengesetz, HRG) as announced on 19 January 1999 (BGBl. I S. 18), last amended by Article 6G on 23 May 2017 (BGBl. I S. 1228, 1241)

Qualification framework for degrees from German institutions of higher education, KMK/HRK, of 21.04.2005

Qualification framework for degrees from German institutions of higher education in architecture, ASAP (June 2016), DARL, fbta (November 2016)

Agreement of the Conference of Interior Ministers of 07.12.2007 and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Cultural Affairs and Education of 20.09.2007, on the admission to careers in the upper-level civil service with a Master's degree from universities of applied science

Implementation of the Lisbon Convention, letter from the Chair of the Accreditation Council to the agencies, dated 27.09.2011

Conference of the Ministers of Cultural Affairs: The following resolutions of the Conference of the Ministers of Cultural Affairs have shaped the original wording in the Professional Criteria. These resolutions are replaced by the State Treaty on the Accreditation of Study Courses and the supplementary regulations of the federal states. In so far as they have been formulated already, reference to the State Treaty on the Accreditation of Study Courses and the Model Ordinance has been amended in the second edition of the Professional Criteria.

- Development of the Bologna process, resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Cultural Affairs and Education, 15.10.2009
- Common structural guidelines of the German federal states for the Accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's courses of study (resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Cultural Affairs and Education, 10.10.2003, amended 04.02.2010)
- Interpretation of the Common Structural Guidelines of the German Federal States for the Accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's Courses of Study, 04.02.2010. Handout by the Committee on Institutions of Higher Education at the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Cultural Affairs and Education, 25.03.2011, 25.03.2011.

State Treaty on the organisation of a common accreditation system for quality assurance for study programmes and teaching at German institutions of higher education (State Treaty on the Accreditation of Study Courses) 1.–20.06.2017

Model Ordinance in accordance with Article 4 (1–4) State Treaty on the Accreditation of Study Courses, resolution by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Cultural Affairs and Education, 07.12.2017

Statement by ASAP, ZEvA and KMK on the duration of study courses BA and MA in architecture, 8.12.2003

Accreditation Council: Reply to ASAP's query on the qualification level of Bachelor's and Master's courses, 21.11.2011

"On current questions on the accreditation of degree courses in architecture" – Bonn 18.02.2009 – Statement by Dr. Achim Hopbach, Managing Director of the Accreditation Council, Prof. Prof.h.c. Herbert Bühler, currently chairman of the ASAP

#### States of the Federal Republic of Germany

Federal state law on institutions of higher education

Architects law of the federal states

In future: Ordinance in accordance with Article 4 (1–4)

State Treaty on the Accreditation of Study Courses

#### **Abbreviations**

ACQUIN	Akkreditierungs-, Zertifizierungs- und Qualitätssicherungs-Institut (Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute)
AR	Akkreditierungsrat (Accreditation Council)
ASIIN	Akkreditierungsagentur für Studiengänge der Ingenieurwissenschaften, der Informatik, der Naturwissenschaften und der Mathematik (Accreditation Agency for Courses of Study in Engineering Sciences, Informational Services, Natural Sciences and Mathematics)
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
HRK	Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (German Rectors' Conference)

KMK	Kultusministerkonferenz (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the states in the Federal Republic of Germany)
WR	Wissenschaftsrat (German Council of Science and Humanities)
UIA	Union Internationale des Architectes (International Union of Architects)
ZEvA	Zentrale Evaluations- und Akkreditierungsagentur (Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency)

This text is based on the criteria developed by the ASAP Committee of Experts for Architecture.

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bdla Bund Deutscher Landschaftsarchitekten  
BGL Bundesverband Garten-, Landschafts- und Sportplatzbau  
DASL Deutsche Akademie für Städtebau und Landesplanung  
DARL Deutsche Dekane- und Abteilungsleiterkonferenz für  
Architektur, Raumplanung und Landschaftsarchitektur  
fbta Fachbereichstag Architektur  
HKL Hochschulkonferenz Landschaft  
IfR Informationskreis für Raumplanung  
SRL Vereinigung für Stadt-, Regional- und Landesplanung

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