ASIIN Seal

Accreditation Report

Bachelor's Degree Programme
Architecture and Planning

Provided by
Umm Al-Qura University

Version: 25 September 2026

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A About the Accreditation Process

Name of the degree programme (in original language)	(Official) English translation of the name	Labels applied for [1]	Previous accreditation (issuing agency, validity)	Involved Technical Committees (TC)[2]
برنامج بكالوريوس العمارة والتخطيط	Architecture and Planning	ASIIN	ASIIN 2018–2024	TC 03
Date of the contract: 23.09.2023 **Submission of the final version of the self-assessment report:** 06.01.2026 **Date of the onsite visit:** 09.–10.06.2026 **at:** Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah (hybrid)				
Expert panel: Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Mara Pinardi, Berliner Hochschule für Technik (online) Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Martin Weischer, FH Münster (online) Abdulmohsin Mohammed Adas, EGIS (on-site) Ammar Mohammed Alharbi, King Abdulaziz University (on-site)				
Representative of the ASIIN headquarter: Tamina Renner, M.A. (online)				
Responsible decision-making committee: Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes				
Criteria used: European Standards and Guidelines as of May 15, 2015 ASIIN General Criteria, as of March 28, 2023				

[1] ASIIN Seal for degree programmes
[2] TC: TC 03 – Civil Engineering, Geodesy and Architecture.

Subject-Specific Criteria of Technical Committee 03 – Civil Engineering, Geodesy and Architecture as of June 26, 2020	

B Accreditation Status

Result Overview

The most recent decision for the ASIIN Seal was made by the ASIIN Accreditation Commission on 25.09.2026.

Degree Programmes	ASIIN Seal	Validity
Ba Architecture and Planning	Accredited with requirements	26.09.2026 – 16.10.2027

Fulfilment of the Accreditation Criteria

ASIIN General Criteria / Subject-Specific Criteria	Ba Architecture and Planning
1 Degree programme: Concept, Content & Implementation	
1.1 Objectives and learning outcomes (intended qualification profile)	Fulfilled
1.2 Title of the degree programme	Fulfilled
1.3 Curriculum	Fulfilled
1.4 Admission requirements	**Not fulfilled** **Requirement A 1**
1.5 Workload and credits	**Not fulfilled** **Requirement A 2**
1.6 Didactics and teaching methodology	Fulfilled
2 Exams: System, Concept and Organisation	
2 Exams: System, Concept and Organisation	**Not fulfilled** **Requirement A 3**
3 Resources	

ASIIN General Criteria / Subject-Specific Criteria	Ba Architecture and Planning
3.1 Staff and staff development	Fulfilled
3.2 Student support and student services	Fulfilled
3.3 Funds and equipment	Fulfilled
4 Transparency and Documentation	
4.1 Module descriptions	Fulfilled
4.2 Diploma and Diploma Supplement	Fulfilled
4.3 Relevant rules	Fulfilled
5 Quality Management: Quality Assessment and Development	
5 Quality Management: Quality Assessment and Development	**Not fulfilled** **Requirement A 4**

Requirements

A 1. (ASIIN 1.4) The admission procedures must ensure equal access and must not contain any discriminatory criteria.

A 2. (ASIIN 1.5) Ensure an accurate conversion of national credits to ECTS. Implement a systematic process to regularly monitor and evaluate student workload. Involve students in the review and adjust credits where necessary.

A 3. (ASIIN 2) Ensure that the programme includes a final thesis or project demonstrating the student's ability to independently undertake an academic task at an appropriate level (EQF 6).

A 4. (ASIIN 5) Ensure that students are informed about the evaluation results.

Accreditation History

Ba Islamic Architecture

ASIIN Seal	Validity
Initial accreditation with requirements	18.06.2018 – 26.07.2019
Initial accreditation for full duration	29.03.2019 – 30.09.2023

C Characteristics of the Degree Programme

a) Name	Final degree (original/English translation)	b) Areas of Specialisation	c) Corresponding level of the EQF[3]	d) Mode of Study	e) Double/Joint Degree	f) Duration	g) Credit points/unit	h) Intake rhythm & first time of offer
Architecture and Planning	Bachelor	Architecture, Urban Design, Urban Planning	6	Full time	/	10 semesters	168 credit hours (equivalent to 300 ECTS)	Annually, 1982/1983

Contextualisation

According to the SAR, Umm Al-Qura University (UQU) is a public university located in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, and operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Its origins date back to the establishment of the College of Shari'a in 1949, which is described as the first higher education institution in the country. UQU was formally established by Royal Decree in 1981 and has since developed a broad academic profile, including Islamic studies as well as scientific and applied disciplines. A particular feature of the university is its location in the Holy City and its academic focus on areas related to Islamic heritage.

The SAR states that the college aims to contribute to national development and the objectives of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 by educating qualified engineers and architects. Its mission focuses on academic education, research, innovation, practical training, and community service, while also referring to Islamic values and the development of modern scientific and technical skills.

Brief Descriptions of the Study Programme

The Bachelor's programme in Architecture and Planning is offered by the Architecture Department of the College for Engineering and Architecture at Umm Al-Qura University. The programme has its origins in the former Bachelor's programme in Islamic Architecture, which was established in response to a needs assessment in the early 1980s and admitted its first students in the academic year 1982/1983.

[3] EQF = The European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning

The programme has undergone several stages of development since its initial launch. In the academic year 2021/2022, the programme was comprehensively revised and renamed Architecture and Planning. The subsequent P44 study plan was implemented under the trimester system with 255 credit hours and three tracks. The current P47 study plan, introduced in 2025/2026, comprises 168 credit hours over ten semesters and retains the three tracks: Architecture, Urban Design, and Urban Planning.

As described in the brochure of the study programme, the programme aims to educate graduates in architecture, urban design, and planning through a studio-based approach. It combines references to architectural and urban heritage with future-oriented design perspectives. The programme seeks to enable students to develop innovative architectural and urban solutions that respond to societal needs, contribute to the local built environment, and maintain a distinct architectural and urban identity.

Summary of the Experts' Assessment

The experts appreciate several positive aspects of the programme. The curriculum is well structured and has been further developed and modernised, as reflected in the new programme name. The revised curriculum appears promising, particularly due to its tracks, the extended internship, and its links to industry. The students are motivated, and the lecturers are accessible and provide good supervision, especially during the internship. The teacher-to-student ratio is favourable, and the experts also note the academic guidance offered to students in selecting their tracks and the ongoing development of a programme for female students.

At the same time, the experts see some areas where further development is needed. This concerns, in particular, the admission procedures, which must ensure equal access and avoid any discriminatory criteria. The experts also recommend strengthening the systematic monitoring of student workload and making better use of student feedback for further programme development. In addition, the final thesis or comparable project should clearly enable students to demonstrate their ability to work independently on an academic task at the required academic level. The Diploma Supplement should be completed with further information on the calculation and distribution of final grades. In addition, the name of the degree programme and the module titles must be used consistently across all programme-related documents and information published on the website. Regarding the curriculum, the experts see potential to further sharpen the profile of the programme, for example by strengthening design-related components, clarifying the distinction between the different tracks, and further developing students' competences in the use of artificial intelligence

tools. They also encourage the university to continue promoting international mobility and to further upgrade the digital infrastructure and laboratory equipment.

Furthermore, the experts note that a considerable part of the official regulations has only been submitted in Arabic. As only English translations can be taken into account in the accreditation procedure, the university is requested to submit the relevant documents in English as part of its response. Otherwise, the experts will have to treat these documents as missing evidence.

D Expert Report for the ASIIN Seal

1. The Degree Programme: Concept, Content & Implementation

Criterion 1.1 Objectives and Learning Outcomes of a Degree Programme (Intended Qualifications Profile)

Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report (SAR)
- Website with the LO: *https://uqu.edu.sa/isarch.dep/153549*
- Department of Architecture file repository: *https://uqu.edu.sa/isarch.dep/App/FILES/174891?page=1*
- Samples of the Diploma Supplement
- Objective-module matrix
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:
As set out in the SAR, the programme's vision is to achieve excellence in education and scientific research in order to creatively shape the future of architecture and urbanism. Its mission is to prepare distinguished graduates for the labour market and to promote research and innovation in architecture and urbanism, thereby contributing to the knowledge economy and community service, guided by the region's cultural identity. The SAR presents the programme's vision and mission as aligned with those of Umm Al-Qura University (UQU) and the College of Engineering and Architecture (CEA). They are complemented by four overarching goals with associated objectives, covering academic excellence, resources and governance, research and innovation, and community engagement and social responsibility.

According to the SAR, the programme's vision, mission, and objectives are reviewed together with the curriculum every five to ten years, with the involvement of internal stakeholders, such as student representatives and academic staff, and external stakeholders, including alumni representatives, architectural and urban firms, and related institutions. The SAR also describes further revisions undertaken in the academic years 2022/2023 and 2025/2026. The study plan submitted for accreditation, referred to as P47, is introduced in

the academic year 2025/2026 and is evaluated by two external reviewers and by stakeholders prior to its introduction.

With regard to the relevance of the programme for the labour market and society, the SAR refers to the national development agenda of Saudi Arabia, in particular Saudi Vision 2030, the King Salman Charter for Architecture and Urbanism, and the “Saudi Architecture” initiative. These initiatives are presented as important reference points for large-scale urban development programmes and projects. The university reports a demand for architects, urban designers, and planners in the Saudi labour market. In this context, the SAR refers to statistics of the Saudi Council of Engineers, according to which 199,544 engineers are registered in 2023, of whom approximately 38% are Saudi nationals, as well as to national efforts to increase the share of Saudi professionals in the engineering sector. The SAR also cites data from the National Labour Observatory, according to which the employment rate of the 2019 cohort of engineering graduates is 73% as of October 2020. In addition, the department conducts a survey among office owners, consultants, and real estate developers in Makkah, which, according to the SAR, indicates a growing demand for specialists in architecture, planning, and urban design. Graduates are expected to work, for example, as architectural designers, urban designers, urban planners, or landscape architects in the public and private sectors, in construction contracting and project management, in research, or in academia, and may also establish their own practices.

According to the SAR, graduates of the programme acquire a broad range of competences. These include, among others, the ability to create designs that meet aesthetic and technical requirements; knowledge of the history and theory of the built environment and related arts, technologies, and humanities; knowledge of urban planning and design and of planning techniques; an understanding of the relationship between people, buildings, and their surroundings; an understanding of the roles and societal responsibilities of architects, urban designers, and urban planners; knowledge of structural and engineering problems associated with building design and of building physics and technologies; as well as knowledge of the trades, organisations, regulations, and procedures involved in the practical implementation of architectural and urban plans.

The Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are structured in accordance with the Saudi National Qualifications Framework into the three domains “Knowledge and Understanding”, “Skills”, and “Values, Autonomy and Responsibility”. They include, for example, a comprehensive understanding of built environment design and technologies, the application of diverse knowledge to creatively address complex built environment problems, the use of scientific research and digital tools, and a commitment to professional and academic ethics, self-development, and society.

The complete learning outcomes of the degree programme are listed in the appendix of this report. They are also published on the programme website and included in the Diploma Supplement.

The SAR relates the qualification awarded, a Bachelor of Architecture and Planning, to Level 6 of the Saudi Qualifications Framework, to the national Specialized Learning Outcomes, and to Level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). For the subject-specific classification of the programme, the Subject-Specific Criteria (SSC) of ASIIN's Technical Committee 03 – Civil Engineering, Geodesy and Architecture, in the sections applicable to Bachelor's degree programmes in architecture, constitute the relevant frame of reference.

During the discussions with the programme coordinators, the expert panel asks for clarification regarding the different uses of the terms "goals", "objectives", and "learning outcomes" in the SAR. In particular, the experts ask whether objectives such as developing the department's facilities or strengthening partnerships are intended as strategic development objectives. The programme coordinators explain that these objectives primarily refer to the institutional and programme-related development. This understanding differs from the ASIIN understanding of objectives as programme educational objectives describing the intended graduate profile. The intended competences of graduates are defined through the Programme Learning Outcomes, which are further specified at course level through Course Learning Outcomes.

The experts also ask about the relationship between the programme and relevant professional bodies, in particular the Saudi Council of Engineers. The university explains that the programme is approved through the national accreditation framework and that the Saudi Council of Engineers is primarily concerned with professional practice rather than with the formal approval of educational programmes. According to the university, the curriculum is considered appropriate in this context.

The experts refer to the Subject-Specific Criteria of ASIIN's Technical Committee 03 – Civil Engineering, Geodesy and Architecture. Based on the documents reviewed, including the objective-module matrix, and the discussions during the audit, they confirm that the learning outcomes of the degree programme as a whole are described in a clear and concise manner. The panel further confirms that the learning outcomes are transparently defined, anchored, and published on the programme website and in the Diploma Supplement. They are therefore accessible to students, lecturers, and interested third parties.

The experts also confirm that the learning outcomes reflect the targeted academic qualification level of a Bachelor's degree at EQF Level 6. Graduates are expected to acquire advanced knowledge and a critical understanding of theories and principles, to apply advanced skills in order to solve complex and partly unpredictable problems, and to manage

professional activities and projects responsibly. In the experts' view, the intended competence profile is feasible and corresponds to the relevant exemplary learning outcomes specified in the applicable Subject-Specific Criteria of Technical Committee 03 for Architecture. In particular, the programme adequately covers the competences expected of graduates of a Bachelor's degree programme in architecture, including the analysis and synthesis of problems, the development of appropriate design solutions, the consideration of social, scientific, and ethical implications, and the application of knowledge and skills in architectural design, building construction, building technology, and building economics, as well as in the coordination and implementation of projects.

Overall, the experts conclude that the intended competence profile enables graduates to take up professional activities corresponding to the respective qualification level. This positive assessment is supported by the discussions with representatives from industry, who confirm that the programme is aligned with labour market needs. The experts also note that the relevance of the objectives and learning outcomes for the labour market is regularly reviewed through processes involving relevant stakeholders and that, where necessary, the learning outcomes are revised accordingly.

Criterion 1.2 Name of the Degree Programme

Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Website of the study programme: *https://uqu.edu.sa/App/Degrees/5*
- Sample of the Diploma Supplement
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:
According to the SAR, the bachelor's programme was originally offered under the title "Islamic Architecture". In the academic year 2021/2022, it was renamed "Architecture and Planning" as part of a comprehensive revision. As stated in the SAR, the programme title is aligned with the field of study and reflects the programme objectives, intended learning outcomes, and teaching and learning content.

The experts welcome the renaming of the programme. They confirm that the title of the degree programme reflects the intended objectives and learning outcomes as well as the teaching and learning content. In principle, the title is also consistent with the language of instruction of the programme.

However, the experts identify one aspect that requires further attention. Although the programme title is used correctly in the documents submitted for the accreditation procedure, the previous programme title is still displayed on the university's website. The university must therefore ensure that the programme title is used consistently in all relevant documents and publications, both in English and in the original language.

Criterion 1.3 Curriculum

Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Course Specifications and Module Handbook
- Objective-module matrix
- Programme website: *https://uqu.edu.sa/App/Degrees/1481*
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:

Content and Structure of the Programme

According to the SAR, the curriculum of the Architecture and Planning programme is designed to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes and is aligned with the requirements of the Saudi National Qualifications Framework and the national Specialized Academic Standards. The programme is organised into modules, which are referred to as courses in the university's documentation. Learning outcomes are defined for each course. According to the university, each course contributes to one or more programme outcomes, and many courses are sequenced through prerequisites in order to support progressive knowledge development.

With regard to the overall structure, the SAR describes a standard duration of five years across ten regular semesters. The programme comprises a total of 168 credit hours (300 ECTS). The first three years are devoted to general architectural studies. Beginning in semester 7, students specialise in one of three tracks, namely Architecture, Urban Design, or Urban Planning. The number of students admitted to each track is determined by the department on the basis of specific criteria, including the GPA and performance in designated reference courses. These are "Long-Span Buildings Design Studio" for the Architecture track, "Introduction to Urban Design Studio" for the Urban Design track, and "Introduction to Urban Planning Studio" for the Urban Planning track.

The programme content comprises General Courses, Specialised Courses, Elective Courses, “Cooperative Training”, two Integrated Studios, and the “Graduation Project”. The General Courses are university requirements and are described in the SAR as foundational, interdisciplinary courses required of all UQU students irrespective of their major. They address, for example, university and professional skills, critical thinking, ethics, and national identity, and include a series of courses on Islamic culture as well as one general elective. As set out in the SAR, all General Courses are delivered online, follow standardised descriptions applied uniformly across the university, and are taught by instructors assigned centrally by the university. The department therefore has no authority to modify their specifications. According to the SAR, some of these courses, such as “Design Thinking”, “Introduction to Artificial Intelligence”, “Professional Development Skills”, and “Digital Technology”, nevertheless contribute directly or indirectly to the programme. The specialised part of the curriculum is complemented by supportive courses in Mathematics and Statistics and by two compulsory English language courses delivered by the English Language Centre.

The specialised content is organised into five General Knowledge Units. These are Architectural Design, History and Theories, Construction and Building Systems, Urban Planning and Design, and Professional Practice. Each unit is subdivided into more specific fields of knowledge, including, for example, the design process, architectural representation and visualisation, architectural research, construction systems, building materials, codes and regulations, and project management.

Beyond the compulsory courses, students take three elective courses in semesters 7, 8, and 10. According to the SAR, these electives allow students to deepen their knowledge and skills in areas aligned with their interests and chosen track. “Cooperative Training” is integrated into the curriculum in semester 9. It is conducted during the summer and continues through the first semester of the fifth year. The SAR states that the department assumes responsibility for the quality of the internship in terms of content and structure, coordinates with the participating companies, and provides supervision and support to students throughout the training period.

In semesters 8 and 10, students complete an Integrated Studio structured in two phases, namely “Integrated Studio 1” and “Integrated Studio 2”. “Integrated Studio 1” serves as the research, conceptual development, and preliminary design phase for “Integrated Studio 2”. In semester 10, students additionally complete the course “Graduation Project”, in which they develop and present a scientific research study on a topic related to the local community, approved by the department council.

The department uses the designation P44 for the previous version of the programme and P47 for the current study plan submitted for accreditation. With regard to the current state

of implementation, the SAR explains that students are transferred from plan P44 to plan P47 through a course-mapping process and that, as of the academic year 2025/2026, no students remain enrolled under P44. Plan P47 has not yet produced any graduates. The most senior cohort is currently in semester 7 and is admitted exclusively into the Architecture track for administrative reasons related to the course mapping. Consequently, there are currently no students enrolled in the Urban Design or Urban Planning tracks. According to the SAR, students will be admitted into all three tracks from the next academic year onwards.

The curriculum of the degree programme, including the course sequences of the three tracks, is presented in the appendix of this report.

During the discussions with the programme coordinators and university management, the expert panel first addresses the structural development of the curriculum, in particular the transition from the trimester system to the semester system in the current curriculum P47. The university explains that the previous change to a trimester system was introduced as a ministerial requirement, but that this requirement was only in force for one year. Afterwards, universities were given the option either to maintain the trimester system or to return to a two-semester structure. UQU therefore decided to reintroduce the semester system.

Building on the discussion of the overall programme structure with the programme coordinators, the experts also ask for further clarification regarding the distinction between the “Urban Design” and “Urban Planning” tracks. The programme coordinators explain that the programme learning outcomes are the same for the tracks, but that the tracks differ in perspective, scale, and the type of projects addressed. They further state that each track includes separate design studios.

The discussion then turns to specific aspects of the curriculum and the students’ design work. In this context, the experts raise the question of architectural detailing and execution. Based on the projects shown during the campus tour, the experts could not fully identify the level of detailing they would have expected. The teaching staff explains that different levels of detail are addressed in the programme and that students work at different scales, for example 1:10 or 1:20.

The expert panel further discusses the elective component of the curriculum, as students formally select only three elective modules over the five-year programme. The programme coordinators explain that, in addition to these electives, students have opportunities to choose design studio project topics according to their individual interests. In this way, students are able to develop a more individual profile within the framework of the studio-based curriculum.

Another topic addressed during the audit with different stakeholders is the use of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning. The university management explains that UQU has already started to develop its own guidelines for the use of AI. However, as the Ministry has also begun preparing recommendations and guidelines in this area, the university has decided to postpone the finalisation of its own guidelines in order to take the ministerial framework into account and avoid duplicating work. Artificial intelligence is already used in some courses, and training opportunities are provided for teaching staff. The teaching staff further explains that the use of AI is not permitted in examinations or final exams. During the discussions, students state that they would welcome a stronger integration of AI into the curriculum, for example through studio work involving AI-based design. Industry representatives also indicate that stronger competences in the use of AI would be beneficial for graduates.

Finally, the expert panel discusses the organisation and quality assurance of “Cooperative Training”. The university explains that the Cooperative Training Office is responsible for organising the relevant processes. Training placements are evaluated in advance, and companies must be approved by the university before students can be placed there. The university sends the course specifications to the companies, including the expectations regarding the competences students are expected to acquire. Each student is assigned one internal supervisor from UQU and one external supervisor from the company. At the end of the internship, students submit a final report. During the discussions, students confirm that they receive substantial support from the university in finding internship placements and during the internship itself. They also report that, in their experience, there is close communication between the internal and external supervisors.

Based on the documents reviewed and the discussions during the audit, the experts assess the content and structure of the programme positively overall. They confirm that the curriculum enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Each module represents a coherent and well-balanced unit of teaching and learning. The experts further confirm that learning outcomes are defined for each module and that, taken together, they enable the achievement of the overarching intended qualification profile. The Module Handbook clearly specify the knowledge, skills, values, autonomy, and responsibility to be acquired by students in each module.

The experts also consider the structure and sequence of modules to be appropriate. In their view, the curriculum is designed in a way that allows the intended learning outcomes to be achieved and that enables students, in principle, to complete the programme within the standard period of study. Statistical data on the average duration of studies are not yet available, as the current curriculum has not yet produced graduates. For the previous

curricula, however, the proportion of graduates completing within the standard period of study was consistently above 80%.

Through the three specialisations, namely “Architecture”, “Urban Design”, and “Urban Planning”, as well as through the three elective modules, the programme allows students to pursue individual academic profiles and study paths. The experts note, however, that there are currently no students enrolled in the “Urban Design” and “Urban Planning” tracks.

The experts consider “Cooperative Training” to be well integrated into the curriculum. The university assumes responsibility for ensuring the quality of the internship in terms of content and structure by assigning each student an academic supervisor from UQU. In addition, the university maintains good links with industry and is therefore able to place students with reliable and suitable companies. To this end, the university coordinates with the participating companies and supervises students throughout the internship period.

At the same time, the experts identify several aspects where further development would be beneficial. While they welcome the three tracks offered within the programme, they consider that the distinction between “Urban Design” and “Urban Planning” should be further clarified. This is particularly relevant as the two tracks have not yet been implemented in practice, which makes it more difficult to assess their specific profiles. The experts therefore recommend that the department clarify the distinction between these tracks more explicitly.

In addition, the experts recommend including at least one design project with a stronger focus on architectural detailing and execution. In their view, students should have further opportunities to develop design solutions at a more detailed scale and to address aspects of technical implementation, construction detailing, and materialisation.

The experts also see potential to expand the elective component of the curriculum. While students have some opportunities to develop individual interests through studio projects, the formal choice of only three elective modules over the course of a five-year programme appears rather limited. The experts therefore recommend broadening the range of elective options in order to strengthen students’ opportunities for individual academic profiling and specialisation.

Finally, the experts identify a need for further development regarding the integration of artificial intelligence into the curriculum. They welcome that the university has started to develop guidelines in this area and is awaiting the ministerial framework before finalising its own approach. Nevertheless, the experts gain the impression that the current handling of AI is still rather restrictive and that the topic is not yet sufficiently addressed within the

relevant courses. As AI tools are becoming increasingly relevant in architectural practice, students should be enabled to use them in a critical, reflective, and professionally appropriate manner. This view is also supported by industry representatives, who indicate that stronger competences in this field would be beneficial for graduates. The experts therefore recommend further strengthening students' competences in the critical and reflective use of artificial intelligence tools.

Student Mobility

The SAR states that the regulations of the University Affairs Council for undergraduate study and examinations, together with the executive regulations of UQU, define the framework for transfer, course equivalency, visiting students, and student exchange.

The transfer of Saudi students from another institution to UQU is possible under defined conditions. Among other requirements, the transfer must be to a major that is an extension of the student's previous field, the student must have completed at least one academic semester and no more than two academic years at the previous institution, the previous institution must be accredited by the Ministry of Education, and at least 60% of the course requirements must be completed at UQU. Recognition of courses is subject to approval by the department and college councils. Only courses with a grade of at least 70 out of 100 are recorded and counted towards the cumulative GPA. The number of recognised courses must not exceed 40% of the academic plan, and a similarity of at least 75% in course content and credit hours is required.

The SAR further describes that students may, with the approval of their college, study one or more courses as visiting or exchange students at another university inside or outside the Kingdom without transferring. The courses taken must be equivalent and approved for credit. No more than 20% of the total credit hours required for graduation may be completed in this way, and courses are counted if a grade of at least 70 is achieved. A corresponding note is added to the academic record. However, no data are provided on the number of students who have made use of these opportunities.

With regard to international students, the SAR refers to the scholarship regulations of Saudi public universities. According to these regulations, the Ministry of Education offers internal and external scholarships to international students, including full, partial, and fee-based scholarships, which enable them to study at public universities in Saudi Arabia.

During the discussions with university management, the expert panel asks about the university's internationalisation strategy. The university explains that it aims to increase the number of international incoming students. According to the university, more than 2,100

international students are currently enrolled at UQU. Most of them come from Arabic-speaking countries, and approximately 90% are enrolled in Arabic-language programmes.

The university management further explains that UQU students are encouraged to participate in short-term international activities, such as international competitions or hackathons. According to the university, students may also receive financial support for such activities.

In the discussions, the students participating in the audit confirm that mobility opportunities are communicated, for example by email and through lecturers. None of the students present has participated in, or is currently planning, a semester abroad. Some students note that the strong availability of expertise at UQU reduces the perceived need for a semester abroad. The discussion nevertheless indicates that structured international semester mobility is not yet common and that international activity more often takes the form of shorter activities or incoming students completing a full degree at UQU rather than semester-based exchange. The discussions also indicate that existing partner universities appear to be located mainly within Saudi Arabia, for example in Jeddah or Riyadh.

The experts note that the regulatory framework allows student mobility in principle. However, mobility appears to take place mainly within Saudi Arabia or, in the case of international mobility, through shorter activities such as competitions or similar formats rather than through structured semester stays at international partner universities. The panel notes positively that students have access to scholarship opportunities and financial support. The university states that credits earned abroad can generally be recognised without extending the standard period of study. However, the corresponding documentation has not yet been submitted in English, and no data on student mobility are available.

The experts therefore identify significant potential to further develop international student mobility. They recommend that the university strengthen the promotion of international mobility, including targeted information for students, cooperation with international higher education institutions, formalised memoranda of understanding or other cooperation agreements, and clearly defined contact persons, for example through an International Office or an international coordinator at departmental level.

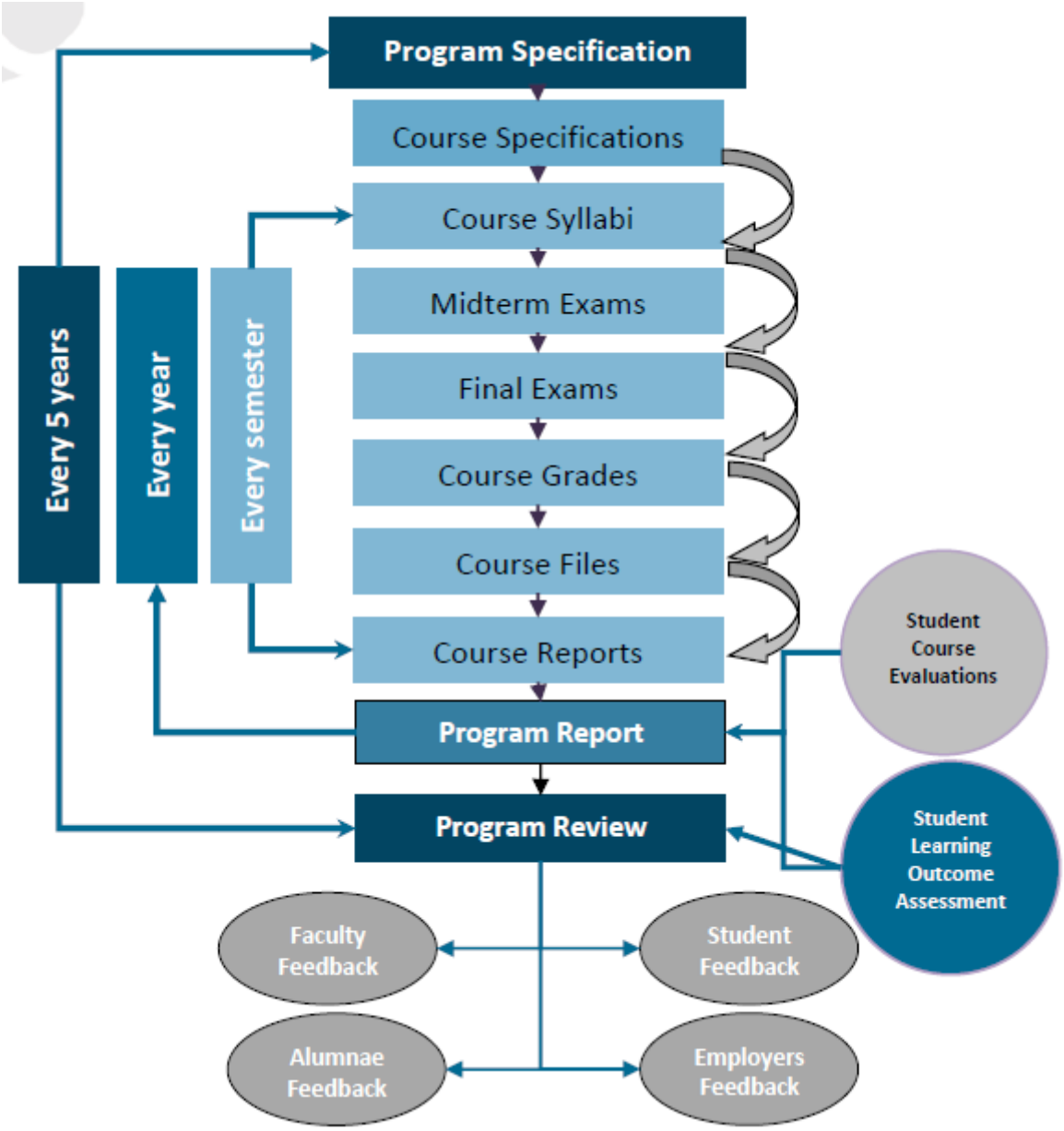
In addition, data on student mobility and the regulations for the recognition of credits acquired externally, including credits completed during a semester abroad, must be submitted as part of the university's response (see also Crit. 1.4 and Additional Documents).

Periodic Review of the Curriculum

According to the SAR, the Bachelor's degree programme has undergone several developmental updates since its inception in 1982. The SAR states that the department follows the principle that undergraduate programmes must be reviewed and revised every five to ten years. In practice, the programme is updated more frequently. The documentation presents the sequence of study plans since 1982, including the previously accredited plan P37, which was introduced in 2016/2017 with 172 credit hours, its adaptation to a three-semester system in 2022/2023, the introduction of the Architecture and Planning plan P44 in 2022/2023 with 255 credit hours under the trimester system and three new tracks, and the current plan P47, which applies from 2025/2026 and comprises 168 credit hours under the two-semester system.

The SAR further describes that external stakeholders representing the labour market and alumni are invited to programme development workshops in order to provide feedback on the quality and relevance of the curriculum. External reviewers from other universities are also involved in evaluating revised study plans. According to the self-assessment, these workshops include a review of the programme objectives, particularly with regard to labour market requirements. Where the curriculum does not align sufficiently with the programme objectives, curricular adjustments are made.

The self-assessment presents curriculum review as a structured process operating at several levels and intervals. The programme specification is revised every five years, while an annual programme report and programme review are prepared at the end of each academic year. At course level, course specifications, syllabi, examinations, course files, and course reports are reviewed every semester. These processes are supplemented by feedback from students, teaching staff, alumni, and employers. The different stages and responsibilities within the curriculum review process are illustrated in the following figure.



The experts are able to ascertain that the curriculum is periodically reviewed with regard to the implementation of the programme objectives. They positively note that the review process is not limited to internal considerations, but also takes into account feedback from different stakeholders, including representatives of the labour market, alumni, and external reviewers. In the experts' view, this supports the continuous development of the programme and helps ensure that the curriculum remains aligned with the intended qualification profile and labour market expectations.

The experts further welcome that the SAR provides examples of curricular changes resulting from these review processes. They therefore conclude that the university has established mechanisms for the periodic review and further development of the curriculum.

Criterion 1.4 Admission Requirements

Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Admission Portal: *https://uqu.edu.sa/en/App/Catalog/361*
- Annual Programme Report (2025)
- Statistical data
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:

According to the SAR, admission to bachelor's degree programmes at Umm Al-Qura University is regulated by the Saudi Universities Act No. 1/9/1414 together with the university's own admission regulations. Applicants must meet the requirements set out in the university's Admission Guide, which the SAR specifies as follows:

- "The applicant must be a Saudi national, have a Saudi mother, or be the mother of Saudi children.
- The applicant must hold a General Secondary School Certificate or an equivalent qualification, obtained either from within the Kingdom or abroad. Certificates issued from outside the Kingdom must be accredited by the Ministry of Education.
- For applicants to medical and health colleges, no more than two (2) years should have passed since obtaining the certificate. For other specializations, the certificate should not be older than five (5) years.
- The applicant must not be older than twenty-five (25) years at the time of application.
- The applicant must hold valid scores in the National Center for Assessment (Qiyas) tests —namely, the General Aptitude Test and the Scholastic Achievement Admission Test — applicable to both male and female students across all university specializations.
- The applicant must not have been dismissed from the university or any other institution for disciplinary reasons.
- The applicant must not be currently enrolled in another university.
- The applicant must be medically fit and capable of meeting the academic program requirements.
- A student who has withdrawn from the university may reapply as a new applicant if at least one academic year has passed since the withdrawal from a bachelor's (including preparatory/ foundation year) or diploma program. The period is counted

from the end of the semester in which the withdrawal occurred. Reapplication is subject to meeting all current admission requirements.

- The applicant must pass any required specialization aptitude and English language proficiency tests, as determined by the university."

Admission to the Bachelor's programme in Architecture and Planning is currently limited to male students. At the time of the accreditation procedure, no equivalent programme is offered for female students.

According to the documentation, recognition and transfer procedures are regulated by the University Affairs Council's regulations for undergraduate study and examinations as well as the executive regulations of UQU. These regulations define the criteria for student transfer, course equivalency, visiting students, and student exchange. Transfers from other institutions are subject to several conditions, including the accreditation status of the previous institution, the compatibility of the previous field of study with the target programme, the student's academic progress, and the fulfilment of the admission criteria for the target programme. Course equivalency is assessed by the responsible department and college councils. For a course to be recognised, it must show at least 75% similarity in content and credit hours, and only courses with a grade of at least 70 are recorded and counted towards the cumulative GPA. The number of recognised courses must not exceed 40% of the academic plan, while students are required to complete at least 60% of the programme requirements at UQU.

To contextualise the admission and graduation situation, the SAR provides an overview of student numbers in the programme over the past seven years. This is complemented by data from the Annual Programme Report, which includes information on the number of students admitted to the programme and the number of graduates in 2025. In addition, the university submits supplementary information during the audit, including data on the average number of graduates. Taken together, these data sources provide the experts with an overview of the development of student intake and graduation figures.

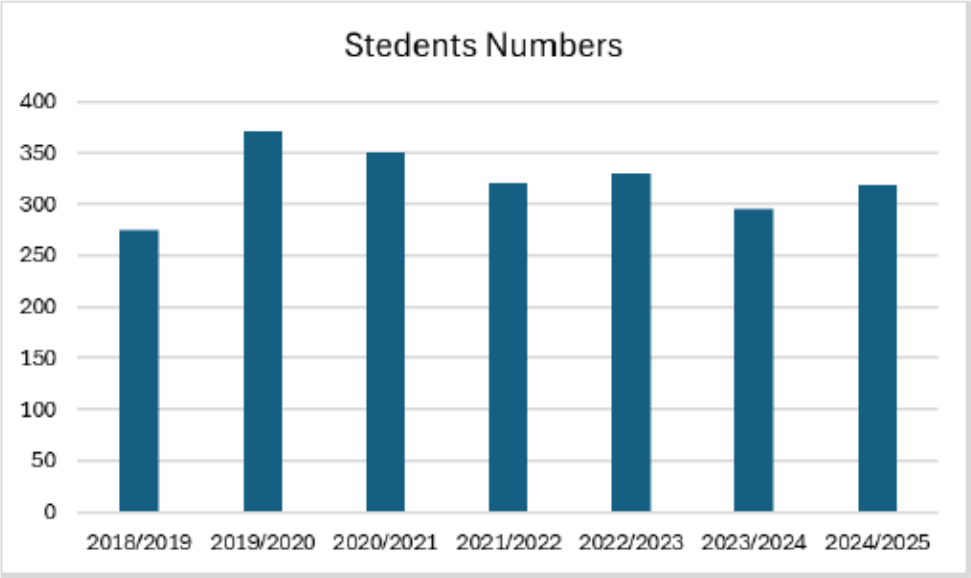
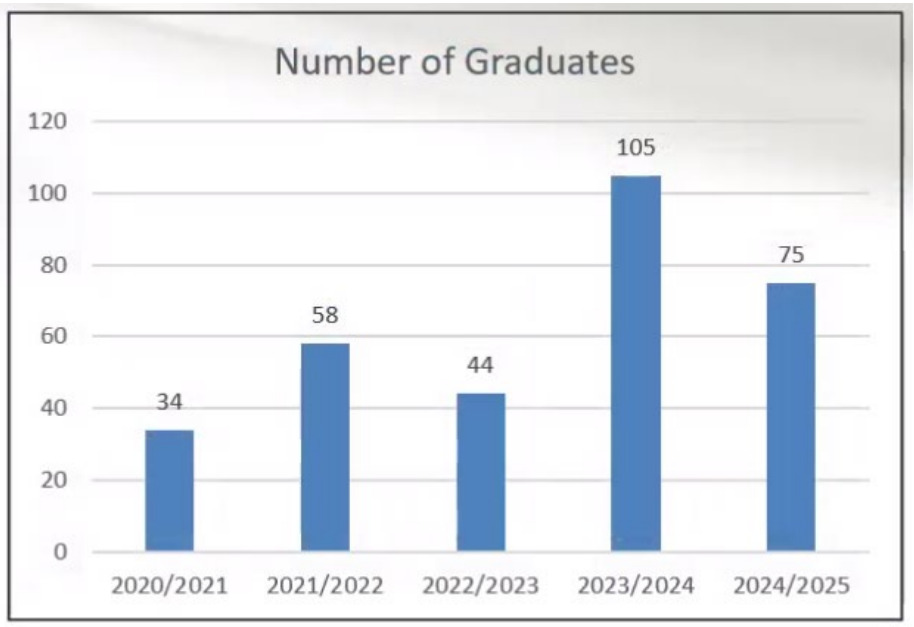


Figure (27), Total Number of Students Over the Past Seven Years

B. Program Statistics

Item	Number
Number of students enrolled in the program	315
Number of students who started the program (in reporting year)	99
Number of students who completed the program	71



Against this background, the expert panel asked the programme coordinators and university management during the discussions to clarify several aspects of the admission requirements. In particular, the requirement that applicants be “medically fit” raised the question of whether certain groups of applicants might be excluded as a result. The university

explained that such cases are assessed individually and that students with disabilities are not excluded as a general rule; for example, individual solutions are sought for students using a wheelchair.

The experts also raise the question of the age restriction in the admission process. The programme coordinators explain that this restriction has recently been lifted by the Ministry. However, the revised regulations are not yet published at the time of the audit.

The experts further inquired whether there are plans to open the Architecture and Planning programme to female students. The university states that initial steps have already been taken in this regard, although the process is still at an early stage. In the long term, the university intends to offer the programme to female students as well. The experts would welcome the establishment of equivalent study opportunities for both male and female students. At the same time, the experts acknowledge the national framework conditions and conventions regarding gender-segregated higher education. They note that, under these conditions, offering the programme to female students requires specific organisational arrangements. The experts therefore positively note the university's ongoing efforts to establish a corresponding offer for female students.

It should also be noted that, based on the regulations provided, international applicants do not appear to have access to the programme.

Overall, the experts note that the admission requirements and procedures appear to be clearly defined, binding, and transparent. They also seem, in principle, to ensure that admitted students are able to successfully complete the programme. However, as the relevant documents have not yet been submitted in English, the experts cannot make a final assessment at this stage. UQU is therefore requested to provide English versions of the relevant admission regulations and of the regulations for the recognition of externally acquired credits and competences as part of its statement.

The admission requirements appear to support students' ability to complete the programme within the standard period of study. In the course of the audit, statistics were presented indicating that more than 80% of students complete their studies within the standard period; however, these figures relate to the previous curricula, as the revised curriculum has not yet produced any graduates. Data on dropout and withdrawal rates have not yet been provided (see Additional Documents).

Nevertheless, based on the observations above, the experts identify a need for improvement with regard to equal access. The current admission regulations still contain aspects that may be considered discriminatory, for example concerning age, physical fitness, and

nationality. The admission procedures must therefore ensure equal access and must not contain any discriminatory criteria.

Criterion 1.5 Workload and Credits

Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Module Handbook
- Course Questionnaire Report
- Studio Course Report (incl. Students Satisfaction Survey)
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:
The programme follows the Saudi Arabian credit hour system, which is based on contact hours. The university states that the current system has been harmonised with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which is based on student workload and includes both contact hours and self-study hours. For this purpose, UQU assumes a workload of 30 hours per ECTS credit. ECTS credits are calculated for all compulsory and elective modules of the programme and are awarded in accordance with the respective workload. According to the documentation, students complete 60 ECTS credits per academic year.

During the discussions with the programme coordinators, the expert panel asks how the student workload is verified. The programme coordinators explain that students are surveyed at the end of each module and that these surveys also address whether the allocated time is considered appropriate. The teaching staff further explains that conversion principles are used to relate contact hours and self-study hours. For example, in design studio courses, 10 contact hours are usually accompanied by an average of 10 hours of self-study, while the ratio differs for theoretical modules. The SAR further states that if students raise concerns regarding the amount of self-study required for a module, the instructor is consulted and possible adjustments are considered. According to the university, an action plan is developed and implemented in order to address any issues identified.

In the discussion with the students, they describe Architecture as a demanding but feasible field of study. They consider the overall workload to be balanced and confirm that surveys are conducted every semester. According to the students participating in the audit, structural workload peaks are generally avoided and completing the programme within the standard period of study is considered feasible.

The experts find that a credit system based on student workload is implemented. While the local credit hour system is primarily based on contact hours, UQU provides a conversion into ECTS credits that takes into account both contact hours and self-study time. Credits are awarded for each module in accordance with the respective workload. The experts further determine that all compulsory components of the study programme are covered by the credit system.

The Bachelor's degree programme comprises 300 ECTS credits and therefore exceeds the minimum requirement of 180 ECTS credits. Each academic year comprises 60 ECTS credits, which supports a balanced distribution of workload and helps to avoid structural workload peaks, as confirmed by the students.

At the same time, the experts identify a need for further development regarding the systematic verification of student workload. The current workload calculation appears to be based mainly on estimates and conversion factors provided by the teaching staff. It has not yet been systematically confirmed through quantitative workload surveys involving students. The closest reference to workload monitoring is one question in the Studio Course Report, asking whether the time allotted for projects and assignments is appropriate. However, this question only appears in the context of studio courses and refers to student satisfaction rather than to a quantitative assessment of the actual workload. The Course Questionnaire Report also does not address workload verification in a systematic manner.

The experts therefore conclude that the workload monitoring and verification aspect is not yet fully met. UQU must implement a systematic process to regularly monitor and evaluate student workload, involve students in this review, and adjust credits where necessary. This also includes ensuring an accurate conversion of national credit hours into ECTS credits and identifying and correcting inaccurate workload and credit calculations. For example, the workload of "Cooperative Training" is specified as 800 hours, while 28 ECTS credits are awarded, corresponding to approximately 28.6 hours per ECTS credit. Similar inconsistencies appear in other modules, including "Photorealistic Rendering Techniques" and "Environmental Simulation". For each of these modules, six hours of contact time and self-study are specified per week. Based on 15 sessions, this results in a total workload of 90 hours, although only two ECTS credits are awarded, corresponding to 45 hours per ECTS credit. Furthermore, the amount of ECTS credits must be stated consistently across all relevant documents (see Crit. 2).

Criterion 1.6 Didactic and Teaching Methodology

Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Course Specifications and Module Handbook
- Overview of the teaching methodology of the Architecture and Planning Programme
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:

The SAR describes a range of teaching and learning methods used in the programme. Major-specific courses are delivered on campus, while general courses are conducted online. The teaching methods for the individual courses are defined in the Course Specifications and in the Module Handbook.

As stated in the SAR, the teaching and learning formats are selected to support students in achieving the intended learning outcomes. They include lectures, dialogue and discussion, problem-solving activities, homework, research assignments, project-based tasks, and collaborative learning formats. Some courses also include teamwork-based assignments, which are intended to support the development of social and communication skills.

The programme uses different teaching formats depending on the type of course. Lectures are used mainly for theoretical instruction, while practical courses include workshops and laboratory sessions. Studio courses provide specialised drawing and design sessions for architecture students. In addition, the curriculum includes a graduation project as well as cooperative training in the form of a summer training period and a semester-long training component.

According to the documentation, theoretical courses are usually taught in groups of approximately 10 to 30 students. In design studios and laboratory sessions, students are placed in smaller groups, typically with no more than 10 students, in order to provide individual support. While classrooms are used for theoretical teaching, design studios constitute an important learning environment in the architectural education of the programme.

The SAR further states that the programme aims to provide a balance between attendance-based learning and self-study. Seminar assignments, exercises, design tasks, and project work are used to develop students' knowledge and skills in areas such as design, critical thinking, written communication, data collection, problem-solving, lifelong learning, project management, presentation, teamwork, negotiation, organisation, and coordination. Academic and research-related competences are introduced in the module "Architectural

Research Methods" and are further applied in the integrated studios and the graduation project.

Based on the module descriptions as well as the discussions with teaching staff and students, the experts observe that the programme uses a variety of teaching methods and didactic approaches. These methods support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and contribute to student-centred learning and teaching. The experts note positively that lectures, discussions, problem-solving activities, project-based tasks, studio work, practical training, and collaborative learning formats are combined in a meaningful way.

In the experts' view, the university ensures a balanced combination of digital teaching via Blackboard and face-to-face teaching. Both formats and the corresponding infrastructures appear to be well established and mutually reinforcing. The balance between contact hours and self-study time is also considered appropriate and is confirmed by the students during the discussions.

The experts further welcome that the introduction to independent scientific work forms an integral part of the study programme.

Final assessment of the experts after the comment of the Higher Education Institution regarding criterion 1:

Inconsistent use of the programme title (Crit. 1.2)

In its statement, the university explains that the department has taken up the experts' observation concerning the programme title shown on the University website. According to the statement, the department formally approached the relevant University authorities after the accreditation visit and requested the necessary correction. As a result, the former title "Islamic Architecture" has been replaced by the approved title "Architecture and Planning" on the university website.

The experts have verified the university website and confirm that the programme title has been corrected accordingly. The point raised is thereby implemented. Consequently, the experts no longer consider a requirement necessary.

Unclear distinction between two study tracks (Crit. 1.3)

In its statement, the university agrees that the distinction between the Urban Design and Urban Planning tracks should be communicated more explicitly. According to the statement, both tracks share a common foundation in understanding cities and the built

environment but differ in their primary scale of inquiry, academic emphasis, competences, and professional orientation. The department describes the Urban Design track as focusing on the physical and spatial configuration of the built environment at the scale of streets, public spaces, neighbourhoods, and urban districts, covering urban form, streetscape, public realm, place identity, pedestrian experience, spatial quality, and the integration of architectural elements into the wider urban context, and therefore as predominantly design-oriented.

The Urban Planning track, by contrast, is described as operating at a broader strategic and policy-oriented scale, addressing land-use planning, urban growth and development, zoning and regulations, infrastructure and transportation planning, demographic and socioeconomic analysis, environmental planning, and the formulation of long-term development strategies for cities and regions. The university further explains that a precise description of the scope, objectives, competences, and expected professional orientation of each track will be included in the department's official introductory handbook. As the statement points out, this information will be made available to students during the programme orientation and before track selection, so that the differences are understood before any specialisation-related decisions have to be taken.

The experts welcome the measures planned by the university, but these aspects should also be made evident in the module descriptions.

Limited coverage of architectural detailing and execution (Crit. 1.3)

UQU's statement clarifies that architectural detailing and technical execution are already embedded in the programme through the integration of the design studio courses with the building construction studios and the working drawing courses. According to the statement, these technical courses are based primarily on design projects that students have previously developed in their architectural design studios, which allows them to transform their conceptual and schematic designs progressively into technically resolved architectural solutions. The institution adds that in "Building Construction Studio 1 and 2" students further develop the housing unit designed earlier in the "Fundamental Design Principles Studio", and that the same project is examined at a more detailed level in "Building Construction Studio 3 and 4", covering construction systems, building components, material selection, junctions, details, and methods of execution. As the university points out, a comparable progression is followed in the subsequent working drawing courses, where earlier studio projects serve as the basis for technical drawings and detailed construction solutions as well as for quantities and specifications. This integrated approach is intended to ensure continuity between architectural design and technical implementation and to enable

students to understand how a design concept is translated into a constructible and materially resolved building. The statement also refers to the course specifications for the relevant Building Construction and Working Drawing courses, which are attached as supporting evidence.

The experts welcome this but note that this should be evident from the module description.

Narrow elective component of the curriculum (Crit. 1.3)

According to the statement, the curriculum includes three specialised elective courses within each of the three programme tracks (Architecture, Urban Design, and Urban Planning), which together with one university elective amounts to ten elective courses in total. The university further explains that these electives are deliberately linked to the academic and professional orientation of each specialisation and are therefore not conceived as general electives, and that students have additional scope to pursue individual interests through the choice of topics, sites, design approaches, and research directions in the integrated architectural studios and in the graduation project. The institution adds that internal benchmarking against other engineering curricula in the College, namely the ABET-accredited Civil Engineering programme and the Mechanical Engineering programme, indicates a comparable number and distribution of electives. The statement nevertheless welcomes the recommendation and announces that an expansion of the elective range will be considered in future periodic curriculum reviews. As the university points out, NCAAA requirements do not permit major modifications to the study plan currently in force until the first cohort enrolled under this plan has graduated, so any substantial revision of the elective structure will form part of the formal curriculum review following that cohort's graduation.

The experts follow the explanations provided and take note of the elective structure described in the statement. While the benchmarking against other engineering curricula in the college demonstrates consistency within the institution, it does not in itself address the concern underlying the recommendation, which relates to the breadth of individual choice available to students in this programme. The experts are aware that the number of electives that can realistically be offered depends on the resources available to the department. In their view, a wider range of elective courses reaching beyond the respective specialisation would nonetheless benefit the individual academic profiling of graduates. Being a recommendation, it remains for UQU to decide how to pursue this point within its curriculum review process.

Critical and reflective use of artificial intelligence (Crit. 1.3)

In its statement, the university announces that an institutional framework for the responsible use of artificial intelligence is currently being developed, in alignment with the forthcoming national guidelines. According to the statement, the department will in parallel strengthen the integration of AI-related competences in relevant courses step by step, with emphasis on critical use, professional judgement, ethical considerations, and the appropriate application of AI tools in architectural design and practice.

The experts welcome the measures planned by UQU.

Scope for further international mobility (Crit. 1.3, Additional Documents D1)

In its statement, the university explains that international student mobility, institutional agreements, and the recognition of externally earned credits are managed primarily at university level. According to the statement, the recommendation has therefore been formally referred to the relevant university authorities for consideration and appropriate action, as documented by an internal letter submitted with the statement. The department will cooperate with the responsible units and provide any programme-level information or support required. With the documents requested for subsequent submission, UQU also provided further information on existing international activities:

- Summer school “Architecture and Sustainability” with the Architectural Engineering Department of The British University in Egypt, 16 to 27 July 2023, with 23 participating architecture students working on sustainable design and passive design strategies.
- Summer school “Net Zero Carbon: Architecture and Landscape for Climate Emergency” at Kingston School of Art, Kingston University London, July 2022, combining lectures, site visits, workshops, and design projects on net-zero-carbon and climate-responsive design.
- Participation in the international SKYHIVE Skyscraper Challenge 2022 organised by Buildner, with students of “Architecture Design Studio 6”.
- Participation in the international student competition Bauhaus Campus 2021 for the redesign of the Bauhaus Campus in Dessau, organised by Arkitekturo, with students of “Architecture Design Studio 6”.
- Participation in the Architecture at Zero competition 2020 for a zero net energy library in Hollister, California, with students of “Architecture Design Studio 6”.

The experts acknowledge the activities presented and regard the summer schools and the participation in international competitions as valuable elements of international exposure. Concrete figures on how many students spent time abroad in which academic year have not yet been submitted, so the extent of student mobility cannot be assessed. Beyond the short-term formats described, the experts consider it important that students also have access to longer periods of study abroad. The recommendation to further promote international mobility is therefore maintained.

Missing rules for the recognition of external qualifications (Crit. 1.3, 1.4, Additional Documents D2)

With its statement, the university submits the updated Undergraduate Study and Examination Regulations (Executive Rules). Chapter Six of these regulations, “Transfer and Course Equivalency”, governs the recognition of credits achieved at other higher education institutions, both in cases of transfer from an external institution, including institutions abroad, and in the case of study periods spent abroad as a visiting student.

The experts take note of the regulations submitted and confirm that rules for the recognition of qualifications achieved externally are in place.

Cohort-based statistics on student progression, including dropout/withdrawal rates (see Crit. 1.4 and 5, Additional Documents D4)

The university replies that the observation is acknowledged and explains that the revised curriculum has not yet produced graduates, so completion-rate data are currently available only for the previous curricula. With its statement, UQU submits cohort-based statistics on student progression for the last three graduating cohorts under Plan 37, including dropout and withdrawal rates.

Academic Cohort	Admitted	Graduated	Still Enrolled	Dropout	Withdrawal
2020/21- 1st semester	88	71	8	2	7
2019/20- 1st semester	59	54	3	0	2
2018/19- 1st semester	65	53	4	2	6

The experts take note of the data submitted.

Insufficiently defined admission requirements and procedures (Crit. 1.4, Additional Documents D3)

With its statement, the university submits the relevant admission regulations. Among other information, these documents contain the admission requirements already named in the SAR and set out the weighted percentage calculation applied in the admission procedure, namely 40 per cent for the high school diploma, 30 per cent for the General Aptitude Test, and 30 per cent for the Achievement Test. As the university points out, students are admitted to the university colleges through an automated selection system and in accordance with the capacity of each specialisation.

The experts confirm that the admission requirements and the procedure applied are defined in a binding and transparent manner.

Equal access in the admission procedure (Crit. 1.4)

According to the statement, admission requirements and procedures are regulated centrally at university level and the department has no authority to establish or amend these criteria independently. The point raised by the experts has therefore been formally referred to the competent university authority for review and appropriate action, as documented by the letter submitted with the statement. The department supports the principle of equal and non-discriminatory access and will comply with any revised university regulations. UQU further confirms that the rights and support of students with disabilities are governed by the Regulations and Rights for Persons with Disabilities. As the statement explains, the university applies the provisions of these regulations when dealing with students with disabilities and when providing the relevant academic, educational, support, and accessibility services, thereby protecting their rights and their access to university services within the applicable national regulatory framework.

The experts welcome the clarification that persons with disabilities are not excluded from studying in the programme and that equal opportunity, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities are covered by binding regulations. The age criterion applied in the admission procedure, however, remains in conflict with the principle of lifelong learning. As the review by the competent university authority has not yet been concluded, the panel maintains its requirement until its full implementation has been demonstrated.

Credit conversion and monitoring of student workload (Crit. 1.5)

UQU's statement clarifies that student workload is already evaluated at the end of each course through student feedback, which includes specific questions on the adequacy of self-study hours and on the time allocated for exercises and assignments. To strengthen this process, the department will introduce an annual programme-level workload review. According to the statement, course coordinators will summarise student feedback on the actual workload and compare it with the workload and ECTS credits specified in the course specification. Courses showing recurring workload concerns will be reviewed by the Programme Committee, and corrective actions may include revising assignments, redistributing course activities, adjusting the expected self-study hours or, where justified, proposing changes to the allocation of hours. The university further explains that the outcomes of this review and any actions taken will be documented in the annual programme quality report, and that possible errors or inconsistencies in the documents will be corrected.

The experts welcome the measures planned by UQU and consider the annual workload review, together with the involvement of students through the course evaluations, to be a suitable approach. However, while this is positively acknowledged, the panel maintains its requirement until its full implementation has been demonstrated.

Overall, the experts consider Criterion 1 to be **partly fulfilled**.

2. Exams: System, Concept and Organisation

Criterion 2 Exams: System, Concept and Organisation

Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Sample exams
- Course Specifications and Module Handbook
- Studio Course Report (incl. survey results on the achievement of the learning outcomes)
- Graduation Project Modification
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:
According to the SAR, examinations are designed to assess the extent to which students achieve the intended learning outcomes at the individual level. They are structured to cover the targeted outcomes of the programme, including knowledge, skills, values, autonomy, and responsibility. The SAR states that the programme combines formative and summative assessment methods in order to provide students with different learning and assessment experiences.

The programme uses a variety of assessment methods aligned with the intended learning outcomes. These include written examinations, drawing examinations, computer-based examinations, project presentations and oral examinations, the submission and presentation of reports, as well as homework and coursework assessments. The type, number, and weighting of the assessment methods for each course, together with their contribution to the final grade, are specified in the respective Course Specification. Assessment results are documented in the course reports in order to track the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

As set out in the SAR, semester assessments typically comprise continuous assessment activities, such as homework assignments, quizzes, and semester projects, a midterm examination, and a final examination. Examination schedules are published for each semester and are accessible via the university's website and portal. The semester examination schedule is published four weeks before the start of the examination period, and students must receive at least three weeks' written notice of the examination dates. The SAR further states that no student is given more than two examinations on one day. Students are informed of their midterm grades before the final examination and may review their grades in accordance with the college's regulations. Grades and absences are recorded in the electronic system without a delay of more than one week.

Each course is graded out of 100 points. As a rule, 40% of the total grade is allocated to continuous assessment, 20% to the midterm examination, and 40% to the final examination. For studio courses, the distribution differs, with 70% allocated to continuous assessment, 10% to the midterm examination, and 20% to the final jury evaluation. Students must attend at least 75% of the scheduled classes of a course in order to be admitted to the final examination. Exceptions must be approved by the College Council.

Graduation requires students to complete all courses of the study plan with a minimum cumulative GPA of 1.0. Students are suspended if they cannot complete the graduation requirements within 15 semesters.

The SAR explains that examinations at UQU are conducted within a formal regulatory framework. The regulations of study and examinations for undergraduate students are

based on a decision of the national Council of Higher Education and are implemented at UQU through executive regulations approved by the University Council. These regulations cover, among other aspects, assessment procedures, grading, attendance requirements, re-examinations, academic probation, dismissal, examination discipline, and appeals.

The relevant regulations also define procedures for special cases. Students who are absent from a final examination for a valid reason accepted by the department council and the dean of the college may take the examination at a later date. An “Incomplete” grade may be awarded, upon the instructor’s recommendation and the approval of the department council, to students who have not completed course requirements. This applies in particular to project-based courses. The outstanding requirements must be completed in the following semester. Otherwise, the grade automatically converts to a fail. With regard to students with special needs, the SAR refers to academic advising, counselling, and support for students with disabilities as part of the student services provided by the university.

According to the SAR, students complete the “Graduation Project” in semester 10, which serves as the final academic project of the Bachelor’s programme. In this course, they develop and present a scientific research study on a topic related to the local community.

In the discussion with the teaching staff and programme coordinators, the expert panel addresses the structure of the “Graduation Project”. Since the “Graduation Project” has only become a compulsory component again with the introduction of the new curriculum and the revised programme has not yet produced any graduates, no examples of completed graduation projects are available at the time of the audit. The experts note that the “Graduation Project” itself is allocated only 3 credit hours (8.5 ECTS in the SAR and 9 ECTS in the module descriptions). They therefore ask how this credit allocation reflects the scope of the final academic project in a practice- and design-oriented degree programme. The university representatives explain that the “Graduation Project” should not be understood as a stand-alone final thesis component, since it is closely connected to two preceding design studio courses which form part of the broader final project structure. In the first stage, students develop the basis for their project, while the subsequent studio course builds on this work and requires students to address a specific design problem. In the final “Graduation Project”, students then examine the identified problem from a research perspective and under specific contextual conditions, such as the Hajj or other large-scale events. In this approach, the research and design components are addressed in separate, but closely connected, courses. The university representatives explain that the objective is to enable students to understand how to approach and investigate a research problem. During that time, students meet with their supervisor twice per week for guidance and feedback.

The programme coordinators provide further clarification during the audit and provide the additional document “Graduation Project Modification”. This document specifies the structure described above, according to which the graduation project-related work extends over two academic semesters and comprises three integrated courses. Together, these courses account for a total of 10 credit hours (25 ECTS in the SAR or 26 ECTS in the module descriptions), making the graduation project the largest academic component of the programme in terms of credit-hour allocation. According to the university, this structure reflects its central role in integrating and demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and competences acquired throughout the programme.

The first course, “Introduction to Graduation Project” (Code ARC 4008, in the SAR and module descriptions “Integrated Architectural Design Studio 1”), comprises 2 credit hours (5 ECTS) and focuses on the collection, investigation, and analysis of project-related data. Students select a project intended to serve community needs and contribute to societal development. The course emphasises research and contextual analysis as a basis for the subsequent design proposal. The second course, “Graduation Project Studio” (Code ARC 4009, in the SAR and module descriptions “Integrated Architectural Design Studio 2”), comprises 5 credit hours (11.5 ECTS in the SAR or 12 ECTS in the module descriptions) and focuses on the development of an architectural design proposal based on the research findings and analyses completed in “Introduction to Graduation Project”. Students translate the collected data, site studies, user requirements, and contextual analyses into an architectural design solution that addresses the identified community needs and project objectives. The third course, “Graduation Project” (Code ARC 4208), comprises 3 credit hours (8.5 ECTS in the SAR or 9 ECTS in the module descriptions) and integrates the outcomes of the previous courses into a comprehensive academic research project. Students synthesise the research, analyses, and architectural design developed in the earlier stages and present them in a scientific report documenting the project’s problem, objectives, methodology, findings, design process, and final proposal. The course concludes with an oral presentation and defence of the research findings.

According to the “Graduation Project Modification”, the delivery of these courses is to be restructured in order to place greater emphasis on self-directed learning. The majority of course activities and student workload are dedicated to independent study, research, and project development. Academic supervision and faculty guidance are concentrated in the first half of the semester in order to provide students with direction and feedback during the planning and development stages of their projects.

During the audit, the experts review sample examinations and assessment materials. They conclude that the examinations are generally designed to assess the extent to which the defined learning outcomes have been achieved. The examinations are module-related and

correspond to the respective course content and intended learning outcomes. From the module descriptions, the experts note that the types of examinations are clearly specified for each module.

During the discussions, the experts confirm that students are informed about module requirements and examination arrangements at the beginning of each module. The students participating in the audit consider the examination workload, level of difficulty, and distribution to be appropriate and manageable and describe the system as well organised, fair, and transparent. They regularly receive feedback on their results and are familiar with the procedures for re-examinations and appeals. The experts share this positive assessment and conclude that the examination system supports a smooth progression of studies. The students also appreciate the support provided by the teaching staff when difficulties arise.

The experts further observe that examinations are assessed according to transparent criteria. Students have the opportunity to discuss their examination results with lecturers. The experts also note that the adequacy of examinations is regularly reviewed. This includes student surveys on whether examinations appropriately assess the achievement of learning outcomes.

The SAR refers to regulations regarding make-up examinations, non-attendance, cases of illness, and compensation for disadvantages, for example for students with disabilities or special needs. However, the corresponding regulations have only been submitted in Arabic. They must therefore be provided in English as part of the university's statement (see Additional Documents). At this stage, the experts cannot yet confirm that these aspects are clearly and bindingly defined in the relevant regulations.

The experts further confirm that the programme includes a final project-related component. No examples of completed final projects are available at the time of the audit, as the final project has only become compulsory again with the introduction of the new curriculum and the revised programme has not yet produced any graduates. However, the experts identify a need for improvement with regard to the design of the final project. According to the explanations provided during the audit, the final project-related sequence consists of two studio modules and a research component. While the experts acknowledge the intention to integrate design development and research, they note that the work appears to be closely guided throughout the process. It therefore remains unclear whether students are required to demonstrate their ability to work independently on an academic task at the level expected of a Bachelor's programme. This aspect cannot yet be verified through completed final projects.

UQU must therefore ensure that the programme includes a compulsory final thesis or project which enables students to demonstrate their ability to independently undertake an

academic task at the appropriate level of the degree programme, corresponding to EQF level 6.

Final assessment of the experts after the comment of the Higher Education Institution regarding criterion 2:

Missing regulations on make-up examinations and special needs (Crit. 2, Additional Documents D5)

With its statement, the university submits the corresponding regulations.

The experts take note that regulations on make-up examinations and on the treatment of students with special needs are in place.

Independent academic work in the final project (Crit. 2)

In its statement, the university announces that, in accordance with the "Graduation Project Modification" proposal, the delivery of the Graduation Project courses will be restructured to place greater emphasis on self-directed and independent learning, with the majority of course activities and student workload dedicated to independent study, research, design development, and project completion. According to the statement, academic supervision and faculty guidance will be concentrated primarily in the first half of the semester, providing direction and feedback during the planning and development stages, whereas in the later stages students will assume greater responsibility for developing, conducting, and completing their work independently. The statement also refers to the revised course specifications for the three courses in each track, which are appended.

The experts acknowledge the university's plan to restructure the delivery of the Graduation Project courses, with academic supervision concentrated in the first half of the semester and students assuming increasing responsibility for independent work thereafter. In principle, they consider this approach acceptable. However, they note that the module comprises only three hours per week, so that the scope for independent work remains very limited. They therefore maintain the requirement.

Overall, the experts consider Criterion 2 to be **not fulfilled**.

3. Resources

Criterion 3.1 Staff and Development

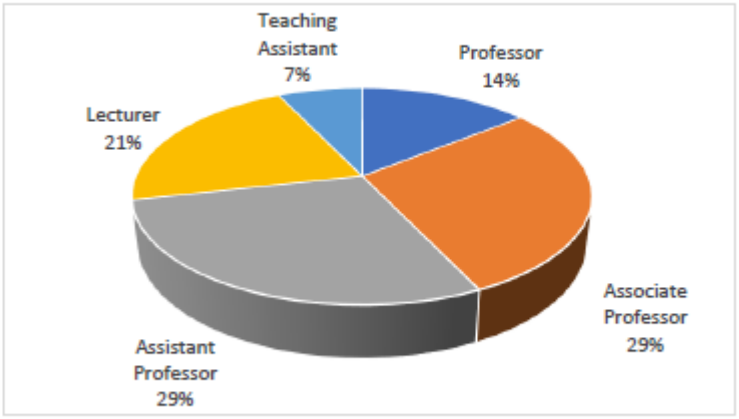
Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Faculty CVs
- Overview of research papers
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:

According to the SAR, the Department of Architecture comprises 28 full-time teaching staff members. Their academic ranks are distributed as shown in the table below. The SAR states that 20 members of the teaching staff hold a PhD in fields such as architecture, landscape design, urban design, and planning. It further describes that the faculty members have been recruited from diverse international backgrounds and academic institutions.

Ranking	No of Staff
Professor	4
Associate Professor	8
Assistant Professor	8
Lecturer	6
Teaching Assistant	2
Total	28



With regard to the staff-to-student ratio, the SAR reports an average of 14.5 students per member of the teaching staff over the past seven years. The self-assessment describes the research activities of the teaching staff as covering different fields of architecture. According to the SAR, strategic efforts are directed towards expanding funded research projects and increasing postgraduate enrolment. In this context, two Master's programmes have been approved and are scheduled to commence in the academic year 2026/2027.

The SAR further states that the department undertakes governmental and consulting projects through the university's Institute of Research, Studies, and Consulting Services. In

addition, the department cooperates with the Royal Commission for Makkah City and Holy Sites on the planning of residential districts and the urban design of neighbourhoods.

With regard to staff development, the SAR indicates that UQU offers a range of learning programmes and workshops to develop teaching and research competences. These are provided in particular by the Deanship of Development and Quality and the Deanship of Information Technology and E-Learning. The Deanship of Scientific Research organises additional workshops and training programmes aimed at strengthening faculty research activities.

During the discussion with the university management, the expert panel asks about institutional support for the professional and academic development of the teaching staff. The university representatives explain that UQU provides resources to support international travel and research-related stays, including participation in international conferences. The teaching staff confirm during the audit that funding for such activities is generally accessible. They also report that the university supports sabbaticals and research projects. At the same time, they note that additional support for research activities and external funding would be welcome.

The expert panel further addresses staff development in the discussion with the teaching staff, with a particular focus on higher education didactics. The teaching staff explain that didactic training opportunities are available on a voluntary basis. Newly appointed staff members receive introductory training, and the university offers further opportunities for the continuous development of teaching competences. Overall, the teaching staff express satisfaction with the range and quality of the development opportunities available.

The experts conclude that the composition, professional orientation, and qualifications of the teaching staff are appropriate for the successful delivery of the degree programme. The number of teaching staff members, their academic qualifications, and their disciplinary backgrounds correspond to the requirements of the programme and support the implementation of the curriculum.

The experts also observe that members of the teaching staff are engaged in research and consulting activities in fields relevant to the programme. The experts further welcome the availability of professional development opportunities in higher education didactics, research, and e-learning. Lecturers are supported in continuously developing their professional and didactic competences and are encouraged to make use of the available offers. Overall, the experts conclude that UQU provides appropriate conditions for staff development and for the continuous strengthening of teaching and research competences.

Criterion 3.2 Student Support and Student Services

Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:
The SAR describes academic advising as a central element of student support throughout the programme. Each faculty member dedicates two hours per week to individual meetings with students and provides academic and professional guidance. The advising system aims to familiarise students with university life, provide accurate information on the college, educational policies, resources, and academic programmes, enhance academic performance, offer preventive advising and support students facing academic difficulties. Faculty members advise students on course selection, academic planning, and career pathways, while also monitoring their academic progress. Students, in turn, are expected to engage actively in the advising process and to make use of the support provided.

In addition to academic advising, the SAR lists a range of central student services. These include counselling and support for students with disabilities, as well as electronic services, such as online portals for examination schedules, examination results, and academic information.

The SAR further states that public higher education in Saudi Arabia is free of charge. Students also receive a stipend during their studies. In addition, the self-assessment further refers to the Student Fund Department, which aims to support students facing financial difficulties and to promote student activities and services. Its objectives include providing financial support and social care to address students' financial problems, contributing to investment projects that benefit the student fund, such as computer training laboratories and student service centres, and supporting summer extracurricular activities.

The SAR also describes a range of training, leisure, and extracurricular opportunities. These include general and specialised training courses and programmes for university students. According to the SAR, up to 120 courses are offered annually. Students can register online through the deanship's website and receive an accredited certificate upon completion. Further services include sports facilities, such as a gym, swimming pool, stadium, and recreation facilities, as well as student clubs and cultural activities.

During the discussion with the students, the expert panel asks how students are informed about the available support services and how they use them during their studies. The students explain that each student is assigned an academic supervisor whom they can consult whenever needed. They also refer to a support team at the university and state that

academic guidance can direct students to the appropriate university support channels, including in cases of financial difficulty. They emphasise that support is accessible and that students can contact the relevant persons whenever they need assistance. They also confirm that technical support is available and that the support services are generally seen as very helpful.

The experts welcome that students have access to both subject-specific and general counselling, as well as comprehensive supervision and support services. These are complemented by administrative and technical assistance. The experts positively note that students are aware of the available services and express a high level of satisfaction with the support structures in place.

The experts consider that sufficient resources are available to provide individual guidance, counselling, and support to all students. In their view, the support system helps students adapt to the university environment, pursue the intended learning outcomes, and successfully complete their studies. Overall, the experts conclude that the university provides appropriate student support and student services for the degree programme.

Criterion 3.3 Funds and Equipment

Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Annual Programme Report (2025)
- Overview of resources, facilities and equipment
- Website of the Deanship of Information Technology: *https://uqu.edu.sa/en/it/69901*
- Visitation of the relevant facilities
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:
UQU is a public university under the supervision of the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia. With regard to funding, the SAR refers in particular to research-related resources. Research projects of the department are supported through funded projects. In addition, the Prince Khaled Al-Faisal Research Chair for the Development of Makkah and the Sacred Sites, sponsored by the Saudi Binladin Group, supports research on the development of informal areas in Makkah through a five-year programme of workshops, seminars, and lectures.

With regard to the teaching infrastructure, the SAR describes the institutional environment of the department as comprising the spaces and technology required for the delivery of the programme. The department has eleven design studios, so that each academic level has its own dedicated studio. Classrooms are available on demand from the college, and all teaching spaces are equipped with projection technology. In addition, there are three laboratories and workshops, one of which is a computer laboratory equipped with student laptops.

The faculty building further houses a restaurant and café, a common room for staff, an academic supervision room for students equipped with copying, computing, and printing facilities, a departmental meeting room, and an auditorium used for departmental events and the defence of Master's theses. According to the SAR, the use of facilities and equipment is regularly assessed with regard to its suitability for students and staff, and routine maintenance is carried out for studios, classrooms, and laboratories.

Library services are provided at several levels. The King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Library serves as the central library of the university and offers loan, reference, and periodicals services as well as induction programmes for students and faculty. Through the Saudi Digital Library, the national digital academic repository, students and staff have access to more than 680,000 e-books and 174 Arabic and international databases. The College of Engineering and Architecture operates its own library with approximately 5,150 books in Arabic and English covering architecture and the engineering disciplines. It offers on-site and online services, information literacy education, and computer workstations.

In addition, the Department of Architecture has maintained its own library since 2005, largely based on donations from staff, community figures, and local professional firms. According to the SAR, it provides textbooks and references for undergraduate students, a collection of research and project samples for graduating students, a reading area with computers linked to the central library, photocopying services, a seminar area for up to 15 persons with digital projection and printing facilities, and a quiet area for researchers and postgraduate students.

Concerning IT resources, the SAR states that laptops, colour copiers, laser printers, and scanners are available in the common room. Students can use computers in common areas such as the libraries, and the university offers free Wi-Fi on campus. Registered students and faculty members receive free copies of Microsoft Office 365 and Autodesk software. Centralised services, such as e-learning, can also be accessed from outside the campus. Students can view course information, learning materials, assignments, and their credit points online.

A central facility of the department is the Digital Fabrication Laboratory, which was established in 2020. As set out in the SAR, the laboratory occupies 200 m², contains various

machines and equipment, and is open to students and faculty from Sunday to Thursday. Daily operations are managed by a laboratory manager, supported by a technician and student teams. Over the past three years, the Digital Fabrication Laboratory has trained more than 200 students and more than 20 faculty members and has accumulated more than 1,000 operational hours. It has also been involved in collaborative projects with other units of the university.

At the same time, the SAR indicates that the department aims to further provide and upgrade the existing laboratories and workshops with the required equipment and software. A dedicated section of the SAR presents a future plan for the development of the laboratories. This plan includes the modernisation of existing facilities, including BIM, VR and AR visualisation, and energy performance simulation tools. It also includes the expansion of the Digital Fabrication Laboratory, the establishment of specialised research laboratories, namely an Environmental Simulation and Sustainability Lab, an Urban Design and Planning Lab, and a Heritage Conservation and Digital Documentation Lab, the integration of smart and sustainable systems, and continuous training for faculty, staff, and students.

During the audit, the expert panel discusses the availability and quality of the facilities, laboratories, IT infrastructure, and equipment with students and teaching staff. The students participating in the audit are generally satisfied with the available infrastructure and confirm that the tools and software required for their studies are available. Some students participating in the audit indicate that they would welcome more contemporary and comfortable studio furniture and improvements to the physical learning environment, including greenery or other measures that enhance the quality of the learning space. The teaching staff also confirm that the available facilities and equipment generally support the delivery of the programme.

Based on the documentation and the inspection of the facilities and laboratories, the experts consider the financial resources specified to be sufficient to ensure the sustainability of the degree programme for the duration of the accreditation period. They also conclude that the available equipment and infrastructure provide an adequate basis for the delivery of the programme. The experts positively note the availability of dedicated design studios, laboratories, library services, IT resources, and the Digital Fabrication Laboratory. In their view, these facilities support the practical, design-oriented, and research-related components of the curriculum.

The experts welcome that the department has already identified the need for further development of the laboratories and equipment and has included corresponding measures in its future planning.

The experts consider the planned upgrades to be a meaningful step towards further strengthening the programme's technical and digital infrastructure. In particular, the continued modernisation of computers, laboratory equipment, and digital tools would support the practical and design-oriented components of the curriculum. They therefore recommend that UQU pursue the planned development of its digital infrastructure and laboratory equipment.

Final assessment of the experts after the comment of the Higher Education Institution regarding criterion 3:

As no shortcomings were identified with regard to this criterion and the university did not raise any further comments in its statement, the experts maintain their original assessment and continue to consider Criterion 3 to be **fulfilled**.

4. Transparency and Documentation

Criterion 4.1 Module Descriptions

Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Course Specifications and Module Handbook
- Graduation Project Modification
- Department of Architecture file repository: *https://uqu.edu.sa/isarch.dep/App/FILES/174891?page=1*
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:

According to the SAR, module descriptions for the Architecture and Planning programme are provided in the form of Course Specifications. These are prepared both in the national NCAAA format and in an ASIIN-oriented format, the Module Handbook. The SAR states that both formats are available on the department's website for students, teaching staff, and all relevant stakeholders. Students also receive the relevant course material at the beginning of each semester.

The Course Specifications serve as the central reference for the teaching and learning process. According to the self-assessment, they support students in planning their studies, guide instructors in structuring their courses, facilitate academic advising, and provide

evidence of the alignment of the courses with the intended learning outcomes and accreditation standards.

As set out in the SAR, each Course Specification contains general information about the course, including course identification, teaching mode, credit hours, and ECTS credits. It also includes the Course Learning Outcomes together with the associated teaching strategies and assessment methods, the course content, student assessment activities, learning resources, required facilities and equipment, including references, a section on the assessment of course quality, and the specification approval data.

In addition, comprehensive Course Reports are prepared each semester. The SAR describes that these reports document student results, including grade distribution and comments, the assessment results for the Course Learning Outcomes together with recommendations, topics not covered, and a course improvement plan. The appendices include the student satisfaction survey, a histogram of module results, the measurement of the Course Learning Outcomes, the contribution of the Course Learning Outcomes to the assessment of the Programme Learning Outcomes, a consistency report with test standards, and a correction report based on a random sample of student answers. According to the SAR, both the Course Specifications and the Course Reports are accessible on the department's website for students and teaching staff.

During the discussions, the students confirm that information on courses is consistently available online. They also state that details regarding course content, requirements, and examinations are communicated by the teaching staff at the beginning of each course.

Based on the review of the Module Handbook, the experts conclude that the module descriptions contain most of the required information. In particular, the module descriptions include the module title, the person or persons responsible for the module, the teaching and learning methods, credits and workload, the intended learning outcomes, the module content, admission and examination requirements, the forms of assessment and details on the calculation of the module grade, recommended literature, and the date of the most recent revision. It is published on the website of the department.

The experts also note that the information provided in the Course Specifications is largely consistent with the information in the Module Handbook. However, the Course Specifications do not include all information contained in the ASIIN-oriented module descriptions, in particular detailed workload information and the requirements according to the examination regulations. The experts therefore suggest that UQU consider adding this information to the Course Specifications, to the extent possible within the NCAAA format. This would reduce the need to maintain two largely redundant sets of documents and would help ensure that all course-related information remains consistent and up to date.

At the same time, the experts notice inconsistencies in the module titles used in different programme documents. In particular, the document "Graduation Project Modification", which was submitted during the audit, uses different titles for the modules ARC 4008 and ARC 4009 than the SAR and the Module Handbook/Course Specifications. While ARC 4008 "Integrated Architectural Design Studio 1" and ARC 4009 "Integrated Architectural Design Studio 2" are listed under these titles in the SAR and the module descriptions, they are referred to as "Introduction to Graduation Project" and "Graduation Project Studio" in the "Graduation Project Modification" document (see also Crit. 2). UQU must therefore ensure that module titles are used consistently across all relevant programme documents.

Criterion 4.2 Diploma and Diploma Supplement

Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Samples of the diploma
- Samples of the Diploma Supplements
- Sample of the Transcript of Records
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:
According to the SAR, graduates of the Bachelor's programme receive a diploma confirming the successful completion of all academic requirements. In addition, they receive an academic Transcript of Records and a Diploma Supplement. The SAR states that the Diploma Supplement is prepared in accordance with European standards and provides information on the structure and outcomes of the programme that is not specified in the diploma itself, including the number of credits earned. Diploma Supplements have been prepared for the current study plan P47 for each of the three tracks, namely Architecture, Urban Design, and Urban Planning. According to the documentation, these documents are to be attached to the degree certificate together with the Transcript of Records.

During the audit, the expert panel addresses the issuance of the Diploma Supplement. The experts note that, according to the preface of the SAR, the Diploma Supplement has not been issued to students during the transition period in which the previous study plans were implemented under the trimester system. The experts emphasise that, in order to comply with the accreditation criteria, the Diploma Supplement must be issued automatically to all graduates together with the degree certificate and the Transcript of Records. The university

representatives explain that, under the current study plan P47, the Diploma Supplement is again foreseen as part of the graduation documents.

The experts welcome that the current study plan provides for the issuance of a diploma, a Transcript of Records, and a Diploma Supplement in English. Based on the submitted documentation, they confirm that these documents are intended to provide graduates with comprehensive information on their qualification profile, individual performance, and the classification of the degree programme within the respective education system.

The experts note that the Diploma Supplement contains almost all information required to ensure transparency and comparability of the qualification. However, it does not yet include sufficient information on how the final grade is calculated. In addition, it does not provide a classification of the final grade based on statistical data from the respective cohort, as recommended by the ECTS Users' Guide. The inclusion of such cohort-specific grade distribution data is necessary to enable a meaningful comparison of the graduate's performance with that of their peers. UQU must therefore ensure that the Diploma Supplement includes transparent information on the calculation of the final grade and a cohort-based classification of the final grade.

Criterion 4.3 Relevant Rules

Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report
- Website of laws and regulations at UQU: *https://uqu.edu.sa/App/Regulations*
- Department of Architecture file repository: *https://uqu.edu.sa/isarch.dep/App/FILES/174891?page=1*
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:
According to the SAR, the regulations governing study-related matters are established and readily available. The overarching framework is provided by the University Regulation of Higher Education and Universities of the Ministry of Education. More detailed provisions are laid down in the Rules and Regulations of Undergraduate Study and Examinations at UQU, the Strategic Plan of the College of Engineering and Architecture, the Student Rights Regulations at UQU, and the Rules of Student Conduct and Discipline.

The SAR states that these regulations cover essential information on admission, course requirements, and degree completion. According to the self-assessment, they also clearly

define the rights and duties of both the university and the students in a binding manner. As set out in the SAR, relevant course-related information is accessible to stakeholders in Arabic and English. The applicable regulations are compiled on the department's website.

The experts note that the rights and obligations of both the university and the students appear to be clearly defined and binding. They also confirm that the department provides a dedicated website for rules and regulations, which makes the relevant information available to stakeholders in a structured manner. The experts further note that students receive the necessary course materials at the beginning of each semester and that comprehensive information about the programme is available on the respective website.

However, the experts cannot yet make a final assessment of the relevant regulations, as the corresponding documents have only been made available to them in Arabic. In addition, the websites providing this information appear to be available only in Arabic. UQU is therefore requested to submit English versions of these documents as part of its statement. Only on this basis can the experts verify whether the relevant study-related regulations are clearly defined and binding (see Additional Documents).

Final assessment of the experts after the comment of the Higher Education Institution regarding criterion 4:

Inconsistent module titles across programme documents (Crit. 4.1)

The university replies that the "Graduation Project Modification" document was a proposal presented during the audit rather than an approved curriculum document, prepared in response to the experts' suggestion to strengthen the Graduation Project and to increase the credit hours allocated to it. According to the statement, the proposal envisages renaming ARC 4008 "Integrated Architectural Design Studio 1" as "Introduction to Graduation Project" and ARC 4009 "Integrated Architectural Design Studio 2" as "Graduation Project Studio", whereas the title of ARC 4208 "Graduation Project" would remain unchanged. The restructuring would allocate a total of 10 credit hours to the three Graduation Project courses. As the university points out, the differing titles in the "Graduation Project Modification" document therefore represent proposed future modifications, while the SAR, the module handbook, and the course specifications reflect the course titles currently approved.

The experts take note of this clarification. The differing titles do not indicate an inconsistency in the programme documentation, as the course titles in the approved documents are used consistently. The point raised is thereby resolved.

Incomplete information in the Diploma Supplement (Crit. 4.2)

In its statement, UQU announces that a statistical distribution of the final cumulative grade point averages of the respective graduating cohort will be provided, so that an individual graduate's performance can be compared with the relevant reference group in line with the ECTS Users' Guide. In addition, the method of calculating the final cumulative grade point average has been added, and the revised Diploma Supplements for the three tracks are attached.

The experts acknowledge the revised Diploma Supplement submitted with the statement, which already implements both aspects raised. UQU thereby issues a Diploma Supplement in line with the ASIIN criteria.

Insufficient transparency of study-related regulations (Crit. 4.3, Additional Documents D6)

With its statement, the university submits a set of documents translated into English, which contain the regulations and information requested by the experts:

- Regulations Governing Study and Examinations for the Undergraduate Stage
- Executive Rules for the Undergraduate Study and Examination Regulations at Umm Al-Qura University
- Admission Guide
- Student Rights Regulations
- Rules of Student Conduct and Discipline

The experts take note of the documents submitted and confirm that the relevant study-related regulations are binding and defined.

Overall, the experts consider Criterion 4 to be **fulfilled**.

5. Quality Management: Quality Assessment and Development

Criterion 5 Quality Management: Quality Assessment and Development

Evidence:

- Self-Assessment Report (incl. survey samples and results)
- Studio Course Report (incl. Students Satisfaction Survey)
- Discussions during the audit

Preliminary assessment and analysis of the experts:
The SAR describes quality assurance at UQU as being embedded in the national framework of Saudi higher education. The programme takes into account the requirements of the Ministry of Education and the standards of the National Center for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation (NCAAA). UQU has obtained institutional accreditation from the NCAAA, and programme accreditation is scheduled for all academic programmes of the university. The SAR therefore presents external quality assurance as an integral part of the university's quality management framework.

In addition to external quality assurance, the SAR describes internal quality assurance processes at both university and departmental level. The department reports on its overall performance to the Deanship of Development and Quality every semester. The university quality management system is described in the Quality Handbook and in the regulations of the organisational units, including support services. According to the SAR, these quality regulations include process descriptions and procedures for critical processes.

Within the Department of Architecture, the Quality Management Committee acts as a steering committee that supports the Head of Department in the production, assessment, and further development of the programme. The SAR states that the committee documents evidence related to quality assurance and development, evaluates quality aspects, defines and prioritises development targets, proposes development plans for required actions, and issues reports assessing the fulfilment of standard requirements. The Quality Management Committee meets regularly and deals with issues related to programme quality, including teaching, research, financial aspects, and programme development.

At course level, the SAR describes the course reports as an important quality assurance instrument. In these reports, teaching staff document what has been implemented during the semester and provide justifications, comments on student evaluations, and recommendations for the further improvement of course delivery. Examples of course reports are provided in the documentation. Performance and development plans are subsequently

discussed between the Department of Quality Assurance and the college. If the average course assessment is below the expected level, the Head of Department intervenes and discusses the matter with the relevant staff members.

The SAR further describes a broad range of surveys and feedback instruments used for quality assessment and development. These include:

- Course-level feedback surveys, which are conducted electronically for each individual course every semester. The surveys use standardised criteria covering academic staff, the evaluation system, and equipment and facilities.
- A first-year student questionnaire, which is completed by students at the start of their studies and addresses the progress of studies as well as tutoring and peer tutoring. It is conducted annually by the Quality Management Committee.
- A biennial general student feedback survey, which focuses on student well-being and frequently identifies areas for improvement in teaching methods and campus facilities. The findings are shared with the UQU administration.
- A university-wide UQU survey, which collects feedback from all students on the quality of facilities, teaching, assistance, and support. The results are made available online to staff members and the Head of Department.
- A graduating students survey, in which students are asked at the time of graduation about the quality of their studies and the contents of the programme. The survey is conducted annually, and the results are published on the university-level website.
- An alumni survey after five years of professional practice, which assesses alumni satisfaction with the education provided by the Department of Architecture.
- An employer feedback survey, which collects information on employers' satisfaction with graduates.
- Faculty feedback, which is listed as a separate feedback source in the programme review process alongside student, alumni, and employer feedback.
- Indirect assessment through surveys and interviews, through which students describe their learning experience in classrooms and studios. According to the SAR, this complements the direct assessment carried out by instructors.

Overall, the SAR presents quality management as a multi-level system that combines external accreditation requirements, university-wide quality assurance procedures, departmental quality management structures, course-level reporting, and regular feedback from students, alumni, employers, and teaching staff.

During the discussions with the programme coordinators, the expert panel asks how students are involved in the further development of the curriculum. The programme coordinators explain that, in addition to the various surveys and feedback instruments, the Architecture Students Club represents the student body and is involved in discussions on programme development.

The students confirm during the audit that they have opportunities to provide feedback, particularly through anonymous surveys. They state that they feel their feedback is taken seriously and that they can observe improvements resulting from student input. They also report that evaluation results are sometimes discussed with teaching staff. However, they indicate that they are not systematically informed about the outcomes of course evaluations or about the measures taken in response to their feedback.

The experts note that the programme is subject to regular internal quality assurance processes involving different stakeholder groups, as also addressed under Criteria 1.1 and 1.3. These include feedback from students, teaching staff, alumni, and employers. The experts positively note that the results of these processes are used for the continuous development of the programme and that the SAR provides examples of improvement measures derived from quality assurance activities.

The experts further note that processes and responsibilities for the further development of the programme appear to be defined in the university's quality management framework, including the Quality Handbook. However, since the corresponding quality management documentation has not yet been submitted in English, the experts cannot make a final assessment at this stage. UQU is therefore requested to provide the relevant quality management documents in English as part of its statement (see Additional Documents).

At the same time, the experts identify a need for further development with regard to the feedback loop. During the discussions with the programme coordinators and students, it becomes apparent that students are not systematically informed about the results of course evaluations. While students feel that their feedback is taken seriously and observe improvements in the programme, they do not receive regular information on the evaluation results or on measures derived from their feedback.

In the experts' view, closing the feedback loop is an important element of a functioning quality assurance system. Informing students about evaluation results and follow-up measures helps to make quality assurance processes transparent, strengthens student participation, and demonstrates how student feedback contributes to programme development. UQU must therefore ensure that students are systematically informed about the results of course evaluations and, where applicable, about the measures taken in response to their feedback.

Final assessment of the experts after the comment of the Higher Education Institution regarding criterion 5:

Insufficiently formalised quality management processes and responsibilities (Crit. 5, Additional Documents D7)

With its statement, the university submits the Quality Manual, which sets out the internal quality system of the Department of Architecture, including responsibilities, committees, key performance indicators, and the review cycle.

The experts welcome the document submitted and confirm that the quality management processes and the corresponding responsibilities are defined and documented in a transparent manner.

Missing feedback on evaluation results to students (Crit. 5)

In its statement, the university agrees on the importance of strengthening the feedback loop as part of the quality assurance and continuous improvement processes of the programme. According to the statement, the department will establish a systematic mechanism to communicate the main results of the course evaluations to students and to inform them, where applicable, of the improvement measures taken in response to their feedback. This will be implemented through appropriate channels such as student meetings, programme-level announcements, and the department's electronic communication platforms.

The experts welcome the measures planned by UQU. However, while this is positively acknowledged, the panel maintains its requirement until its full implementation has been demonstrated.

Overall, the experts consider Criterion 5 to be **not fulfilled**.

E Additional Documents

Before preparing their final assessment, the panel ask that the following missing or unclear information be provided together with the comment of the Higher Education Institution on the previous chapters of this report:

D 1. Data on outgoing student mobility, including semester stays abroad, short-term mobility, competitions, or other international activities (see Crit. 1.3)

D 2. Regulations for the recognition of externally acquired credits and competences, including credits completed during a semester abroad (see Crit. 1.3 and 1.4)

D 3. Official admission requirements (see Crit. 1.4)

D 4. Cohort-based statistics on student progression, including dropout/withdrawal rates (see Crit. 1.4 and 5)

D 5. Examination regulations, including rules for failed examinations, illness or absence, special arrangements for students with disabilities or comparable needs, academic misconduct and plagiarism, and procedures for appeals against examination results (see Crit. 2)

D 6. Statutes, regulations, or guidelines that clearly and bindingly define the rights and duties of both the university and students (see Crit. 4.3)

D 7. Quality manual or handbook defining and regulating the university's quality management processes, responsibilities, and timelines (see Crit. 5)

F Comment of the Higher Education Institution (25.08.2026)

Besides the documents requested for subsequent submission (see Additional Documents), the following quotes the statement of the institution:

1. The Degree Programme: Concept, Content & Implementation

Criterion 1.2 Name of the Degree Programme

a. The experts note that although the programme title is correctly used in the documents submitted for the accreditation procedure, the previous programme title is still displayed on the University website. They therefore require the programme title to be used consistently in all relevant documents and publications, both in English and in the original language.

Response: The Department acknowledges the experts' observation regarding the programme title displayed on the University website. Following the accreditation visit, the Department formally contacted the relevant University authorities and requested the necessary correction. As a result, the previous title "Islamic Architecture" has been replaced with the current approved title "Architecture" on the University website. This action ensures consistency between the official programme documentation and the information published on the University website.

Criterion 1.3 Curriculum

a. The experts welcome the inclusion of the three tracks within the programme but recommend providing a clearer distinction between the "Urban Design" and "Urban Planning" tracks so that their respective academic and professional orientations are more clearly understood.

Response: The Department acknowledges the experts' observation and agrees that the distinction between the two tracks should be communicated more explicitly. While the two tracks share a common foundation in understanding cities and the built environment, they differ in their primary scale of inquiry, academic emphasis, competencies, and professional orientation.

The Urban Design track primarily focuses on the physical and spatial configuration of the built environment at the scale of streets, public spaces, neighbourhoods, and urban districts. It addresses the relationship between buildings and open spaces, urban form, streetscape, public realm, place identity, pedestrian experience, spatial quality, and the integration of architectural elements within the wider urban context. Its emphasis is therefore predominantly design-oriented and concerned with shaping the physical character and spatial experience of urban environments. In contrast, the Urban Planning track operates at a broader strategic and policy-oriented scale. It focuses on land-use planning, urban growth and development, zoning and regulations, infrastructure and transportation planning, demographic and socioeconomic analysis, environmental planning, and the formulation of long-term development strategies for cities and regions. Its emphasis is therefore on guiding and managing urban development through planning policies, analytical methods, regulatory frameworks, and strategic decision-making.

To ensure that this distinction is clearly understood by students from the beginning of their studies, the Department will include a precise description of the scope, objectives, competencies, and expected professional orientation of each track in the Department's official introductory handbook. This information will be made available to students during the programme orientation and before track selection, enabling them to understand the differences between the tracks well before they are required to make any specialization-related decisions.

b. The experts recommend providing students with at least one design project that places greater emphasis on architectural detailing, technical implementation, construction detailing, and materialisation, allowing them to develop their design proposals at a more advanced and detailed scale.

Response: The Department would like to clarify that the development of architectural detailing and technical execution is already embedded in the programme through the integration of design studio courses with building construction studios and working drawing courses. These technical courses are primarily based on design projects that students previously developed in their architectural design studios. This approach enables students to progressively transform their conceptual and schematic designs into technically resolved architectural solutions. For example, in "Building Construction Studio 1 and 2", students further develop the housing unit that they previously designed in the "Fundamental Design Principles Studio". The same project is then examined at a more detailed level, including construction systems, building components, material selection, junctions, details, and methods of execution in "Building

Construction Studio 3 and 4". A similar progression is followed in subsequent working drawing courses, where students continue to use earlier studio projects as the basis for developing technical drawings and detailed construction solutions, in addition to quantities and specifications. This integrated approach is intended to ensure continuity between architectural design and technical implementation and to enable students to understand how a design concept is translated into a constructible and materially resolved building. The course specifications for the relevant Building Construction and Working Drawing courses are attached as supporting evidence, demonstrating how architectural detailing, technical implementation, and the materialisation of students' architectural design projects are systematically incorporated into the curriculum. Kindly refer to Item 4, "Course General Description," in each course specification.

c. The experts consider the formal elective component of the five-year programme to be relatively limited and recommend broadening the range of elective opportunities to enhance students' ability to pursue individual academic interests, develop a distinct academic profile, and achieve greater specialisation.

Response: The Department would like to clarify the structure of the elective component within the programme. The curriculum includes three specialised elective courses within each of the three programme tracks: Architecture, Urban Design, and Urban Planning. Consequently, the programme as a whole provides a pool of nine track-specific elective courses, in addition to one University elective course, resulting in a total of ten elective courses incorporated within the overall curriculum structure.

The track-specific electives are deliberately linked to the academic and professional orientation of each specialisation. They are therefore not intended as general electives, but rather as focused opportunities through which students can deepen their knowledge and competencies within their selected field. In addition, students retain further opportunities to develop individual interests through the choice of topics, sites, design approaches, and research directions within integrated architectural studios and the graduation project.

It should also be noted that, as part of the programme's internal benchmarking, the Department reviewed comparable engineering curricula within the College. For example, the currently accredited Civil Engineering programme, which is accredited by ABET, includes three programme-level elective courses in addition to the University elective, despite not having separate academic tracks. Similarly, the Mechanical Engineering Department follows a structure comparable to that of the Architecture programme, with three academic tracks, each including three specialised elective courses. This internal benchmarking indicates that the number and distribution of elective

courses within the Architecture programme are consistent with the curricular structure adopted by comparable engineering programmes within the College, while also supporting the distinct academic orientation of each specialisation track.
Accordingly, the Department considers that the current curriculum provides a structured level of academic choice that is closely connected to the three specialisation pathways. Nevertheless, the experts' recommendation is welcomed and will be taken into consideration in future periodic curriculum reviews, particularly concerning expanding the range of elective options where this can further strengthen students' opportunities for individual academic profiling and specialisation. In accordance with NCAAA requirements, major modifications to the currently implemented study plan cannot be introduced until the first cohort enrolled under this plan has graduated. Accordingly, any substantial revision to the elective structure will be considered as part of the formal curriculum review process following the graduation of the first cohort.

d. The experts recommend strengthening students' competencies in the critical, reflective, and professionally appropriate use of artificial intelligence within the curriculum.

Response: The University is currently developing an institutional framework for the responsible use of AI, in alignment with the forthcoming national guidelines. In parallel, the Department will progressively strengthen the integration of AI-related competencies within relevant courses, with emphasis on critical use, professional judgment, ethical considerations, and the appropriate application of AI tools in architectural design and practice.

e. The experts note that some documentation was not available in English and that information concerning student mobility was missing.

Response: The following documents have already been translated into English and were submitted to ASIIN on 7 July 2026. They are attached again here for reference and contain the relevant regulations and information requested by the experts.

(ME-02) Rules of Study and Examinations of Higher Education – ENG
(UQU-01) Executive Rules for the Undergraduate Study and Examination Regulations at Umm Al-Qura University -ENG
(UQU-03) Quality Manual-ENG
(UQU-06) Admission Guide in Umm Al Qura University -ENG
(UQU-21) Student Rights Regulations at UQU
(UQU-22) Rules of Student Conduct and Discipline

The relevant document considering student mobility requirements and registrations is included in (UQU-01) Executive Rules for the Undergraduate Study and Examination Regulations at Umm Al-Qura University -ENG, Chapters 6 and 7. In addition, the Department documented examples of outgoing student mobility activities, including participation in short-term mobility programmes and international competitions.

f. The experts recommend strengthening international student mobility and request supporting data and regulations concerning mobility and credit recognition.

Response: International student mobility, institutional agreements, and the recognition of externally earned credits are primarily managed at the University level. Accordingly, this recommendation was formally referred to the relevant University authorities for consideration and appropriate action. The Department will cooperate with the responsible units and provide any programme-level information or support required.

Criterion 1.4 Admission Requirements

a. The experts consider the admission requirements and procedures to be generally clear and transparent but request English versions of the relevant admission regulations and the regulations governing the recognition of externally acquired credits and competences.

Response: The relevant regulations have already been translated into English as part of the "(UQU-06) Admission Guide in Umm Al Qura University -ENG" and "Executive Rules for the Undergraduate Study and Examination Regulations at Umm Al-Qura University", which were submitted to ASIIN on 7 July 2026. The document is attached again for reference and includes the relevant provisions concerning admission requirements as well as the recognition of externally acquired credits and competences.

b. The experts note that completion-rate statistics were presented for the previous curricula, while the revised curriculum has not yet produced graduates, and request additional data on dropout and withdrawal rates. The Department acknowledges this observation. Since the revised curriculum has not yet produced graduates, completion-rate data are currently available only for the previous curricula. The requested available data on student dropout and withdrawal rates are as follows:

Academic Cohort	Admitted	Graduated	Still Enrolled	Dropout	Withdrawal
2020/21- 1st semester	88	71	8	2	7
2019/20- 1st semester	59	54	3	0	2
2018/19- 1st semester	65	53	4	2	6

Note: Students classified as withdrawn did so for the purpose of transferring to another programme, either within the University or to another higher education institution.

c. The experts recommend revising admission criteria related to age, physical fitness, and nationality to ensure equal and non-discriminatory access to the programme.

Response: Admission requirements and procedures are regulated centrally at the University level, and the Department has no authority to establish or amend these criteria independently. Accordingly, the experts' recommendation was formally referred to the relevant University authority for review and appropriate action. The Department fully supports the principle of equal and non-discriminatory access and will comply with any revised University regulations.

On the other hand, Umm Al-Qura University confirms that the rights and support of students with disabilities are governed by and implemented in accordance with the Regulations and Rights for Persons with Disabilities, issued pursuant to Royal Decree No. (M/27) dated 11/02/1445 AH and published on 23/02/1445 AH (corresponding to 08/09/2023). The University applies the provisions of these regulations when dealing with students with disabilities and when providing the relevant academic, educational, support, and accessibility services, thereby ensuring that their rights and access to University services are protected in accordance with the applicable national regulatory framework.

Criterion 1.5 Workload and Credits

a. The experts require a systematic process for regularly monitoring and evaluating student workload, with direct student involvement and appropriate adjustment of credits where necessary.

Response: Student workload is already evaluated at the end of each course through student feedback, including specific questions on the adequacy of self-study hours and

the time allocated for exercises and assignments. To strengthen this process, the Department will introduce an annual programme-level workload review. Course coordinators will summarise student feedback on actual workload and compare it with the workload and ECTS specified in the course specification. Any course showing recurring workload concerns will be reviewed by the Programme Committee, and appropriate corrective actions may include revising assignments, redistributing course activities, adjusting expected self-study hours, or, where justified, proposing changes to hours allocation. The outcomes of this review and any actions taken will be formally documented in the annual programme quality report.

b. The experts request verification of the conversion from national credit hours to ECTS credits and refer to Cooperative Training as an example, stating that 800 workload hours were assigned 28 ECTS credits.

Response: The Department would like to clarify that the workload of Cooperative Training was specified as 840 hours, not 800 hours, in Table (8): Detailed Comparison between CH System and ECTS, presented on pages 35–38 of the submitted *Self-Assessment Report for International Accreditation*.
Accordingly, the allocation of 28 ECTS credits is consistent with the adopted conversion of 30 workload hours per ECTS credit:
840 hours ÷ 28 ECTS = 30 hours per ECTS.
Therefore, the Cooperative Training workload and its corresponding ECTS allocation were calculated correctly in the submitted documentation. The Department will nevertheless review the relevant documents to ensure that the same figures are presented consistently throughout all accreditation materials.

c. The experts identify inconsistencies in the workload-to-ECTS calculation for modules such as “Photorealistic Rendering Techniques” and “Environmental Simulation”, where 90 workload hours are shown against only 2 ECTS credits.

Response: The Department acknowledges that there is an error in the detailed table for the Elective course 2 at level 8. The modules listed under this elective group should carry 3 ECTS credits, not 2 ECTS credits. With a total workload of 90 hours, the correct calculation is therefore:
90 hours ÷ 3 ECTS = 30 hours per ECTS.
This error is limited to the detailed table of the Elective course 2 modules. In the preceding programme-level curriculum table, Elective 2 is correctly assigned 3 ECTS

credits. Therefore, the error does not affect the total ECTS calculation at the semester or programme level. The detailed table will be corrected accordingly.

d. The experts recommend ensuring that the final thesis or comparable project provides students with sufficient opportunity to demonstrate independent academic work at the required level.

Response: According to the "Graduation Project Modification" proposal, the delivery of the Graduation Project-related courses will be restructured to place greater emphasis on self-directed and independent learning. The majority of course activities and student workload will be dedicated to independent study, research, design development, and project completion.
Academic supervision and faculty guidance will be concentrated primarily in the first half of the semester, providing students with the necessary direction and feedback during the planning and development stages. In the later stages, students will assume greater responsibility for independently developing, conducting, and completing their work. The revised course specifications of the three courses for each track are as follows:

Architecture Graduation Project - Modified course specifications
Urban Design Graduation Project - Modified course specifications
Urban Planning Graduation Project - Modified course specifications

2. Exams: System, Concept and Organisation

Criterion 2 Exams: System, Concept and Organisation

a. The response regarding the Graduation Project has already been provided above.

b. The experts note that the regulations concerning make-up examinations, non-attendance, illness, and compensation for disadvantages have so far been submitted only in Arabic. They therefore request English versions to enable them to assess whether these provisions are clearly and bindingly defined.

Response: The Department acknowledges the experts' observation. The relevant regulations have already been translated into English and were previously submitted to ASIIN on 7 July 2026. The English version includes the relevant provisions concerning make-up examinations, non-attendance, cases of illness, and compensation for

disadvantages, including provisions related to students with disabilities or special needs. For ease of reference, the English version of the University's statement is attached again.

(ME-02) Rules of Study and Examinations of Higher Education – ENG
(UQU-01) Executive Rules for the Undergraduate Study and Examination Regulations at Umm Al-Qura University -ENG

3. Resources

Criterion 3.1 Staff and Development

The Department appreciates the experts' positive assessment.

Criterion 3.2 Student Support and Student Services

The Department appreciates the experts' positive assessment.

Criterion 3.3 Funds and Equipment

The Department appreciates the experts' positive assessment.

4. Transparency and Documentation

Criterion 4.1 Module Descriptions

a. The experts suggest including more detailed workload information and examination-related requirements in the Course Specifications, where possible within the NCAAA format.

Response: Unfortunately, the NCAAA Course Specification template is highly standardised and must be followed strictly, which limits the possibility of adding information beyond the prescribed format. Nevertheless, the more detailed ASIIN-oriented module descriptions are already available alongside the NCAAA Course Specifications. Both sets of documents are accessible to students and academic staff through the Department's website, ensuring that the required information is transparently available to all relevant stakeholders.

b. The experts identify inconsistencies in the titles of ARC 4008 and ARC 4009 between the official programme documents and the "Graduation Project Modification" document submitted during the audit.

Response: The Department would like to clarify that the "Graduation Project Modification" document was a proposal presented during the ASIIN audit, rather than an existing approved curriculum document. It was prepared in response to the experts' recommendation to strengthen the Graduation Project and increase the credit hours allocated to it.
Within this proposal, the following title changes were suggested:
ARC 4008: Integrated Architectural Design Studio 1 → Introduction to Graduation Project
ARC 4009: Integrated Architectural Design Studio 2 → Graduation Project Studio
ARC 4208: Graduation Project → title retained unchanged
The proposed restructuring would allocate a total of 10 credit hours to the three Graduation Project courses, making the Graduation Project sequence one of the most substantial credit allocations within the programme. Therefore, the different titles appearing in the "Graduation Project Modification" document represent proposed future modifications, whereas the SAR, Module Handbook, and Course Specifications correctly reflect the currently approved course titles.

Criterion 4.2 Diploma and Diploma Supplement

a. The experts request greater transparency in the Diploma Supplement regarding both the calculation of the final grade and the graduate's relative performance within the relevant cohort.

Response: The University will provide a statistical distribution of final cumulative GPAs for the relevant graduating cohort, using the University's existing 4.00 GPA system, in order to enable comparison of an individual graduate's performance with the relevant reference group, in line with the ECTS Users' Guide. The following is an example of the additional table to the Diploma Supplement:

Final GPA / 4.00	Graduates	Percentage	Cumulative %
3.75–4.00	8	16%	16%
3.50–3.74	10	20%	36%
3.00–3.49	17	34%	70%
2.50–2.99	10	20%	90%
2.00–2.49	5	10%	100%

EXAMPLE

In addition, the method of calculating the final cumulative grade point average (GPA) has been added. The modified Diploma Supplements for the three tracks are attached (Refer to page 6/8).

5. Quality Management: Quality Assessment and Development

Criterion 5 Quality Management: Quality Assessment and Development

a. The experts note that the processes and responsibilities for programme development appear to be defined within the University's quality management framework, but the relevant quality management documentation has not yet been provided in English.

Response: The Department acknowledges the experts' observation. The Quality Handbook was translated into English and was submitted to ASIIN on 7 July 2026. The following attached document describes the processes, responsibilities, and mechanisms governing the continuous development and improvement of the programme.

(UQU-03) Quality Manual-ENG

b. The experts identify a need to strengthen the feedback loop, noting that although students feel their feedback is taken seriously and observe improvements, they are not systematically informed about course evaluation results or the measures taken in response to their feedback.

Response: The Department acknowledges this observation and agrees on the importance of strengthening the feedback loop as part of the programme's quality assurance and continuous improvement processes. The Department will establish a systematic mechanism to communicate the main results of course evaluations to students and to inform them, where applicable, of the improvement measures taken in response to their feedback. This will be implemented through appropriate channels such as student meetings, programme-level announcements, and/or the Department's electronic communication platforms. The process will ensure that students can clearly see how their feedback contributes to programme development and improvement, thereby enhancing transparency, student engagement, and the effectiveness of the quality assurance system.

G Summary: Expert Recommendations (07.09.2026)

Taking into account the additional information and the comments given by the university, the experts summarise their analysis and **final assessment** for the award of the seals as follows:

Degree Programme	ASIIN seal	Maximum duration of accreditation
Ba Architecture and Planning	With requirements for one year	30.09.2032

Requirements

A 1. (ASIIN 1.4) The admission procedures must ensure equal access and must not contain any discriminatory criteria.

A 2. (ASIIN 1.5) Ensure an accurate conversion of national credits to ECTS. Implement a systematic process to regularly monitor and evaluate student workload. Involve students in the review and adjust credits where necessary.

A 3. (ASIIN 2) Ensure that the programme includes a final thesis or project demonstrating the student's ability to independently undertake an academic task at an appropriate level (EQF 6).

A 4. (ASIIN 5) Ensure that students are informed about the evaluation results.

Recommendations

E 1. (ASIIN 1.3) It is recommended to clarify the distinction between the Urban Design and Urban Planning tracks.

E 2. (ASIIN 1.3) It is recommended to include at least one design project focusing on architectural detailing and execution.

E 3. (ASIIN 1.3) It is recommended to expand the elective component of the curriculum.

E 4. (ASIIN 1.3) It is recommended to further strengthen students' competences in the critical and reflective use of artificial intelligence tools.

E 5. (ASIIN 1.3) It is recommended to further promote international mobility.

E 6. (ASIIN 3.3) It is recommended to upgrade the digital infrastructure and equipment of the laboratories.

H Comment of the Technical Committee 03 – Civil Engineering, Geodesy and Architecture (08.09.2026)

Assessment and analysis for the award of the ASIIN seal:

The Technical Committee discusses the procedure and follows the experts' assessment without amendments.

Assessment and analysis for the award of the EUR-ACE® Label:

The Technical Committee deems that the intended learning outcomes of the degree programme do comply with the engineering specific parts of Subject-Specific Criteria of the Technical Committee 03 – Civil Engineering, Geodesy and Architecture.

The Technical Committee 03 – Civil Engineering, Geodesy and Architecture recommends the award of the seals as follows:

Degree Programme	**ASIIN seal**	**Maximum duration of accreditation**
Ba Architecture and Planning	With requirements for one year	30.09.2032

I Decision of the Accreditation Commission (25.09.2026)

Assessment and analysis for the award of the subject-specific ASIIN seal:

The Accreditation Commission discusses the procedure and follows the experts' and the TC's assessment.

Assessment and analysis for the award of the EUR-ACE® Label:

The Accreditation Commission deems that the intended learning outcomes of the degree programme do comply with the engineering specific parts of Subject-Specific Criteria of the Technical Committee 03 – Civil Engineering, Geodesy and Architecture.

The Accreditation Commission decides to award the following seals:

Degree Programme	**ASIIN seal**	**Maximum duration of accreditation**
Ba Architecture and Planning	With requirements for one year	30.09.2032

Requirements

A 1. (ASIIN 1.4) The admission procedures must ensure equal access and must not contain any discriminatory criteria.

A 2. (ASIIN 1.5) Ensure an accurate conversion of national credits to ECTS. Implement a systematic process to regularly monitor and evaluate student workload. Involve students in the review and adjust credits where necessary.

A 3. (ASIIN 2) Ensure that the programme includes a final thesis or project demonstrating the student's ability to independently undertake an academic task at an appropriate level (EQF 6).

A 4. (ASIIN 5) Ensure that students are informed about the evaluation results.

Recommendations

E 1. (ASIIN 1.3) It is recommended to clarify the distinction between the Urban Design and Urban Planning tracks.

E 2. (ASIIN 1.3) It is recommended to include at least one design project focusing on architectural detailing and execution.
E 3. (ASIIN 1.3) It is recommended to expand the elective component of the curriculum.
E 4. (ASIIN 1.3) It is recommended to further strengthen students' competences in the critical and reflective use of artificial intelligence tools.
E 5. (ASIIN 1.3) It is recommended to further promote international mobility.
E 6. (ASIIN 3.3) It is recommended to upgrade the digital infrastructure and equipment of the laboratories.

Appendix: Programme Learning Outcomes and Curricula

According to the Self-Assessment Report, the following **learning outcomes (intended qualifications profile)** shall be achieved by the Bachelor's degree programme of Architecture and Planning:

Knowledge and Understanding: *At the end of the program, graduates should be able to*

K1	Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of built environment design and its latest developments.
K2	Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of built environment technologies.
K3	Demonstrate an understanding of the profession's ethics, responsibilities, and regulations.
K4	Demonstrate an understanding of relevant mathematical concepts and scientific theories.
K5	Demonstrate an understanding of research and inquiry methodologies.

Skills: *At the end of the program, graduates should be able to*

S1	Apply diverse knowledge to creatively address complex built environment problems.
S2	Analyze the Islamic values that shape human and built environments.
S3	Use scientific research to address complex built environment issues.
S4	Demonstrate proficiency in creating drawings and craftworks.
S5	Employ a variety of communication methods to effectively transfer knowledge and skills.
S6	Effectively use digital skills throughout the design process of the built environment.
S7	Use mathematical operations and quantitative methods to process data and information.
S8	Carry out complex practical tasks and procedures related to professional practice.

Values, Autonomy and Responsibility: *At the end of the program, students should be able to*

V1	Demonstrate commitment to ethics, and professional and academic values.
V2	Demonstrate commitment to self-development.
V3	Demonstrate commitment to society.

The following **curriculum** is presented:

General Architecture

level	Course Code	Course Title	Activity					Credit Hours	Contact / term	self study/ term	Total	ECTS
			Lecture	Practical	Studio	Training	G Project					
1	ARC 1101	Architectural Formation Principles Studio			10			5	150	120	270	9.0
1	ARC 1102	Architectural Drawing	1	3				2	60	60	120	4.0
1	ARC 1000	Design Process and Methods	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
1	ARC 1201	Ancient Civilizations and Medieval Architecture	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
1	IND1101	Design Thinking	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
1	ELIN1301	English Language 1	10					3	150	30	180	6.0
1	QR1101	The Holy Quran Tajweed	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
2	ARC 1001	Fundamental Design Principles Studio			10			5	150	120	270	9.0
2	ARC 1103	Visual Studies	2	3				3	75	60	135	4.5
2	ARC 1104	Vector-based Drawing	1	3				2	60	45	105	3.5
2	ARC 1105	Architectural Models Studio			6			3	90	60	150	5.0
2	ELIN1302	English Language 2	10					3	150	30	180	6.0
2	CUR1101	University Skills	2					0	30	30	60	2.0
2	QR2102	The Holy Quran Memorization 1	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
3	ARC 2002	Small Public Buildings Design Studio			10			5	150	210	360	12.0
3	ARC 2301	Building Construction Studio 1			4			2	60	75	135	4.5
3	ARC 2106	3D Modeling	2	3				3	75	60	135	4.5
3	ARC 2010	Buildings Design Standards 1	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
3	ARC 2307	Environmental Control Systems	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
3	AI2001	Introduction to Artificial Intelligence	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
3	QR2103	The Holy Quran Memorization 2	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
4	ARC 2003	Vernacular Architecture Design Studio			10			5	150	210	360	12.0
4	ARC 2302	Building Construction Studio 2			4			2	60	75	135	4.5
4	ARC 2401	Principles of Urban Design	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
4	ARC 2202	Architecture of Islamic Civilization	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
4	ARC 2402	Principles of Landscape Architecture	2	3				3	75	60	135	4.5
4	ICC1201	Values and Ethics	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
4	QR3104	Completion of the Holy Quran	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
5	ARC 3004	Sustainable Design Studio			10			5	150	180	330	11.0
5	ARC 3303	Building Construction Studio 3			4			2	60	60	120	4.0
5	ARC 3403	Introduction to Urban Design Studio			6			3	90	75	165	5.5
5	ARC 3203	Renaissance and Pre-modern Architecture	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
5	ARC 3404	Principles of Urban Planning	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
5	ARC 3405	Housing	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
5	x	General Elective	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
6	ARC 3005	Long-Span Buildings Design Studio			10			5	150	180	330	11.0
6	ARC 3304	Building Construction Studio 4			4			2	60	60	120	4.0
6	ARC 3206	Architectural Research Methods	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
6	ARC 3204	20th Century and Contemporary Architecture	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
6	ARC 3406	Introduction to Urban Planning Studio			6			3	90	75	165	5.5
6	ARC 3305	Advanced Technologies in Building Construction	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
6	MTH1183	Mathematics for Architects	2					2	30	30	60	2.0

Architecture Track

level	Course Code	Course Title	Activity					Credit Hours	Contact / term	self study/ term	Total	ECTS
			Lecture	Practical	Studio	Training	G Project					
7	ARC 4006	Heritage Buildings Conservation Studio			10			5	150	180	330	11.0
7	ARC 4306	Working Drawings Studio 1			6			3	90	75	165	5.5
7	ARC 4107	Creative Generative-Design	1	3				2	60	45	105	3.5
7	ARC 4011	Buildings Design Standards 2	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
7	ARC 421#	Elective Course 1	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	ICC4202	The Family in Islam	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	MTH1681	Principles of Statistics for Architects	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4007	Professional Practice Studio			10			5	150	180	330	11.0
8	ARC 4307	Working Drawings Studio 2			6			3	90	75	165	5.5
8	ARC 4008	Integrated Architectural Design Studio 1			4			2	60	90	150	5.0
8	ARC 4503	Architectural Project Management 1	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
8	ARC 411#	Elective Course 2	1	3				2	60	30	90	3.0
8	ARC 4309	Applications of Building Code in Architecture	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
8	BUS1099	Professional Development Skills	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
9	ARC 4500	Cooperative Training				40		6	0	840	840	28.0
10	ARC 4009	Integrated Architectural Design Studio 2			10			5	150	195	345	11.5
10	ARC 4505	Economics of Architectural Projects	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
10	ARC 4501	Professional Practice for Architects	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
10	ARC 4504	Architectural Project Management 2	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
10	ARC 441#	Elective Course 3	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4310	Universal Design Code	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
10	ARC 4208	Graduation Project					3	3	45	210	255	8.5

Architecture Electives

level	Course Code	Course Title	Activity					Credit Hours	Contact / term	self study/ term	Total	ECTS
			Lecture	Practical	Studio	Training	G Project					
7	ARC 4211	Islamic Values in Architecture	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	ARC 4212	Saudi Regional Architectural Identity	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	ARC 4213	Architecture of the Two Holy Mosques	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	ARC 4214	Islamic Identity in Contemporary Architecture	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4111	Photorealistic Rendering Techniques	1	3				2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4112	Computer Modeling in Building Construction	1	3				2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4113	AI Applications in Architecture	1	3				2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4114	Environmental Simulation	1	3				2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4411	Resilient Urban Design	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4412	Sustainable Landscape Architecture	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4413	Human and Urban Environment	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4414	Urban Wayfinding	2					2	30	30	60	2.0

Urban Design Track

level	Course Code	Course Title	Activity					Credit Hours	Contact / term	self study/ term	Total	ECTS
			Lecture	Practical	Studio	Training	G Project					
7	ARC 4601	New Areas Urban Design Studio			10			5	150	180	330	11.0
7	ARC 4602	Landscape Design Studio 1			6			3	90	90	180	6.0
7	ARC 4603	Urban Information Systems	1	3				2	60	45	105	3.5
7	ARC 4604	Urban design methodologies and techniques	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
7	ARC 462#	Elective Course 1	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	ICC4202	The Family in Islam	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	MTH1681	Principles of Statistics for Architects	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4607	Existing Areas Urban Design Studio			10			5	150	180	330	11.0
8	ARC 4608	Landscape Design Studio 2			6			3	90	90	180	6.0
8	ARC 4609	Integrated Urban Design Studio 1			4			2	60	90	150	5.0
8	ARC 4610	Urban Environmental Control	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
8	ARC 463#	Elective Course 2	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4611	Sustainable Urban Design	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
8	BUS1099	Professional Development Skills	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
9	ARC 4613	Cooperative Training				40		6	0	840	840	28.0
10	ARC 4614	Integrated Urban Design Studio 2			10			5	150	195	345	11.5
10	ARC 4615	Conservation of Heritage Sites	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
10	ARC 4616	Professional Practice of Urban Design	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
10	ARC 4617	Urban Mobility	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
10	ARC 464#	Elective Course 3	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4618	Streetscape	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
10	ARC 4619	Graduation Project					3	3	45	210	255	8.5

Urban Design Eectives

level	Course Code	Course Title	Activity					Credit Hours	Contact / term	self study/ term	Total	ECTS
			Lecture	Practical	Studio	Training	G Project					
7	ARC 4621	Temporary Urbanism	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	ARC 4622	Humanizing the Cities	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	ARC 4623	Floating Cities	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	ARC 4624	City Branding	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4631	Advanced studies in Landscape Architecture	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4632	Cities Centers	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4633	Terminals Planning and Design	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4634	Selected Topics in Urban Design	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4641	Fundamentals of Real Estate Development	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4642	Urban Project Management	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4643	Crowd Management	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4644	Multicriteria Assessment of Urban Development Projects	2					2	30	30	60	2.0

Urban Planning Track

level	Course Code	Course Title	Activity					Credit Hours	Contact / term	self study/ term	Total	ECTS
			Lecture	Practical	Studio	Training	G Project					
7	ARC 4601	New Areas Urban Design Studio			10			5	150	180	330	11.0
7	ARC 4602	Landscape Design Studio 1			6			3	90	90	180	6.0
7	ARC 4603	Urban Information Systems	1	3				2	60	45	105	3.5
7	ARC 4604	Urban design methodologies and techniques	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
7	ARC 462#	Elective Course 1	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	ICC4202	The Family in Islam	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	MTH1681	Principles of Statistics for Architects	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4607	Existing Areas Urban Design Studio			10			5	150	180	330	11.0
8	ARC 4608	Landscape Design Studio 2			6			3	90	90	180	6.0
8	ARC 4609	Integrated Urban Design Studio 1			4			2	60	90	150	5.0
8	ARC 4610	Urban Environmental Control	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
8	ARC 463#	Elective Course 2	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4611	Sustainable Urban Design	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
8	BUS1099	Professional Development Skills	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
9	ARC 4613	Cooperative Training				40		6	0	840	840	28.0
10	ARC 4614	Integrated Urban Design Studio 2			10			5	150	195	345	11.5
10	ARC 4615	Conservation of Heritage Sites	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
10	ARC 4616	Professional Practice of Urban Design	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
10	ARC 4617	Urban Mobility	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
10	ARC 464#	Elective Course 3	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4618	Streetscape	2					2	30	45	75	2.5
10	ARC 4619	Graduation Project					3	3	45	210	255	8.5

Urban Planning Eectives

level	Course Code	Course Title	Activity					Credit Hours	Contact / term	self study/ term	Total	ECTS
			Lecture	Practical	Studio	Training	G Project					
7	ARC 4621	Temporary Urbanism	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	ARC 4622	Humanizing the Cities	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	ARC 4623	Floating Cities	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
7	ARC 4624	City Branding	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4631	Advanced studies in Landscape Architecture	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4632	Cities Centers	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4633	Terminals Planning and Design	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
8	ARC 4634	Selected Topics in Urban Design	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4641	Fundamentals of Real Estate Development	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4642	Urban Project Management	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4643	Crowd Management	2					2	30	30	60	2.0
10	ARC 4644	Multicriteria Assessment of Urban Development Projects	2					2	30	30	60	2.0