

Landscape Institute Accreditation:

# Criteria for Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes

Details of the criteria which must be met for  
acquiring and maintaining LI Accredited  
status





# 1 Introduction to the criteria

This document details the five criteria used by the Landscape Institute in the accreditation of higher education programmes. It should be read in conjunction with the [Landscape Institute Competency Framework](#) and the [Procedures and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes](#), describing the LI's accreditation process in detail.

The five criteria describe the minimum requirements which must be met for full accreditation to be awarded to a programme, and for accreditation to be reaffirmed as part of the biennial re-accreditation exercise, as described in the *Procedures and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes* document.

The Landscape Institute's five criteria for accreditation of higher education programmes are:

- A. Schools must demonstrate that they have the staffing, expertise, resources and quality assurance mechanisms to deliver and maintain a high-quality programme of learning.**
- B. Programmes must:**
  - focus on a clear and defined area of professional landscape skills and expertise
  - deliver appropriate underpinning skills, knowledge and understanding to provide a foundation for entering the profession
- C. Programmes must deliver the key generic skills which underpin professional life and lifelong learning**
- D. Programmes must provide a foundation for progression to the workplace and professional practice**
- E. Schools must demonstrate a commitment to working in partnership with the Landscape Institute and the profession**

The criteria are equally weighted for the purposes of accreditation. Please note that candidate programmes – those programmes which are applying for LI accreditation for the first time – will not be expected to meet all of the criteria for accreditation in full, but demonstrate a commitment to working towards doing so in accordance with the arrangements described in the *Procedures and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes* document.

Underneath each criterion is a list of indicators explaining the ways in which the criteria should normally be demonstrated, for both the application process and biennial re-accreditation process. These indicators are intended to provide a framework for discussion and for assessment. Whilst the LI's expectation is that all indicators should be satisfied by a School, the LI is willing to discuss alternative evidence which demonstrates that the accreditation criteria are met in full.

Any questions regarding the criteria for accreditation or the process for applying for candidate accreditation or full accreditation should be directed to the Education team – [education@landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:education@landscapeinstitute.org)





## Criterion A: Schools must demonstrate that they have the staffing, expertise, resources and quality assurance mechanisms to deliver and maintain a high-quality programme of learning.

### Criterion description:

Schools seeking accreditation will be expected to demonstrate their commitment to delivering and sustaining a high-quality programme of learning. In particular, they will be expected to show that:

- The department and/or staff have a strong track record in the delivery of high-quality programmes focusing on the built and/or natural environment.
- The programme and the application for accreditation has high level support within the department and institution.
- There are rigorous and appropriate systems in place to ensure quality in delivery and assessment, and that standards on the programme are maintained.
- There is sufficient and appropriate staffing, expertise and resources to deliver the programme.
- The school is committed to developing and sustaining the programme to keep it fresh, stimulating and relevant.

Once a programme is accredited, the LI's expectation is that standard of output, resources and support will be maintained by the school throughout the period of accreditation. Where there are significant changes to staffing and expertise or the resources allocated to a programme, the school will be expected to demonstrate that standards are not compromised.

### Indicators (evidence demonstrating that this criterion is being met):

Indicators for programmes applying for candidate or full accreditation for the first time	Indicators for annual reaffirmation of accreditation
<p><b>A1:</b> There is support for the application for accreditation and commitment to sustaining the programme at both Head of Faculty and Department level</p> <p><b>A2:</b> The department demonstrates an existing strong track record in delivering programmes focusing on the built and/or natural environment</p> <p><b>A3:</b> Appropriate procedures are in place to assure the quality of provision and standards of assessment; standards, effectiveness and relevance of the programme are subject to periodic review.</p> <p><b>A4:</b> a) Internal/external validation and external examiner reports indicate that appropriate subject, institutional and national quality benchmarks are being met, and identify no significant points of concern.</p>	<p><b>A3R:</b> Appropriate procedures are in place, and acted upon, to assure the quality of provision and standards of assessment; standards, effectiveness and relevance of the programme are subject to periodic review</p> <p><b>A4R:</b> a) Internal reviews, validation documents, external examiner reports and graduation results indicate that standards are being maintained and that appropriate subject, institutional and national quality benchmarks are being met. No significant points of concern are identified</p>



<p>b) External examiners are qualified in a discipline relevant to the subject matter of the course</p> <p><b>A5:</b> The expertise of teaching staff and staff:student ratios are/will be, for studio work, a minimum of 1:12 and for non-studio activities that involve student participation (seminars, tutorial) 1:15, and demonstrate the programme is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriately supported and</li> <li>• led, taught and assessed by individuals with the relevant qualifications and experience</li> </ul> <p><b>A6:</b> A minimum of two thirds of directed learning and teaching hours in the programme is carried out by permanent or long term contracted academic staff to ensure programme stability, continuity and coherence.</p> <p><b>A7:</b> Staff development policies are in place, and acted upon, to ensure staff remain up to date on developments in education and practice.</p> <p><b>A8:</b> A minimum 25% of student facing delivery is undertaken by either Chartered or Academic members or Fellows of the LI. Universities demonstrate proactive support for LI membership. <i>Please note that, where Schools applying for candidate accreditation do not currently have staff members who are members of the LI at the relevant grade, gaining such membership will be a condition of awarding full accreditation.</i></p> <p><b>A9:</b> Studio space, workshop, and laboratory facilities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sufficient to meet teaching and study needs, and</li> <li>• equipped with the technical equipment and support appropriate to the academic and professional requirements of the programme</li> </ul> <p><b>A10:</b> Information technology (hardware and software) facilities are sufficient to meet teaching and study needs, and equipped with the technical equipment and support appropriate to the academic and professional requirements of the programme</p>	<p>b) External examiners are qualified in a discipline relevant to the subject matter of the course</p> <p><b>A5R:</b> The expertise of teaching staff and staff: student ratios are maintained for studio work at a minimum of 1:12 and for non-studio activities that involve student participation (seminars, tutorials) at 1:15, and demonstrate the programme continues to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriately supported and</li> <li>• led, taught and assessed by individuals with the relevant qualifications and experience</li> </ul> <p><b>A6R:</b> A minimum of two thirds of directed learning and teaching hours in the programme is carried out by permanent or long term contracted academic staff to ensure programme stability, continuity and coherence.</p> <p><b>A7R:</b> Staff development policies are in place, and acted upon, to ensure staff remain up to date on developments in education and practice</p> <p><b>A8R:</b> A minimum 25% of student facing delivery is undertaken by either Chartered or Academic members or Fellows of the LI. Universities demonstrate proactive support for LI membership.</p> <p><b>A9R:</b> Studio space, workshop and laboratory facilities are being maintained and are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sufficient to meet teaching and study needs, and</li> <li>• equipped with the technical equipment and support appropriate to the academic and professional requirements of the programme</li> </ul> <p><b>A10R:</b> Information technology (hardware and software) facilities are being maintained and are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sufficient to meet teaching and study needs, and</li> <li>• equipped with the technical equipment and support</li> <li>• appropriate to the academic and professional requirements of the programme</li> </ul>
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## Criterion B: Programmes must focus on a clear and defined area or professional landscape skills and expertise; and deliver appropriate underpinning skills, knowledge and understanding to provide a foundation for entering the profession

### Criterion description:

The LI's Competency Framework defines the competencies (knowledge, skills and behaviours) required for Chartered membership.

The diversity of landscape as a profession and as a discipline means that no two accredited programmes will be exactly alike; each will have its own clear identity and emphasis. However, all schools applying for accreditation of their programmes must demonstrate that they deliver appropriate foundation knowledge, skills and understanding to enable graduates to take up employment in the profession, and, in the fullness of time, meet the LI's competencies to achieve Chartered status.

All schools will be required to:

- Identify the career path being targeted and the areas of professional practice which will be the focus of the programme
- Demonstrate the ways in which programmes develop individual's foundation knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to:
  - a) the area of practice identified
  - b) competencies described in the LI's Competency Framework
  - c) Health and wellbeing
  - d) Sustainability, climate and resilience

All programmes will be expected to focus on developing students' abilities to think critically and holistically about the landscape as a basis for action or intervention. The emphasis should be on enabling students to put theory into practice, interrelating knowledge and applying skills to a range of practical tasks. Coursework should include opportunities for students to demonstrate competency in taking a project from inception to delivery.

### Indicators (evidence demonstrating that this criterion is being met):

Indicators for programmes applying for candidate or full accreditation for the first time	Indicators for annual reaffirmation of accreditation
<b>B1:</b> Programme is comprised of a core of landscape and environmental modules	
<b>B2:</b> Programme development and content is based on an understanding and research of current and anticipated sector requirements (including reference to	<b>B2R:</b> Programme development and evolution continues to be based on an understanding and research of current and anticipated sector requirements



<p>LI's Competency Framework), and includes input from and consultation with practitioners from relevant fields.</p> <p><b>B3:</b> The application, programme documentation and supporting materials clearly explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The programme's mission, aims, objectives, and ethos</li> <li>• The career path and area of practice the programme is addressing and the reasons for this focus</li> <li>• The way in which the programme develops foundation knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the following competencies from the LI's Competency Framework: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. all core Landscape Competencies</li> <li>2. a sufficient number of the Additional Landscape Competencies to prepare students for entry to the Pathway to Chartership i.e., those that would meet the requirements for Chartered membership via the Chartered Landscape Architect and/or Chartered Landscape Professional pathway(s).</li> </ol> </li> <li>• The outcomes which will be achieved by graduates from the programme</li> </ul> <p><b>B4:</b> The focus of the programme, the career paths and areas of practice being targeted and the professional skills that it is seeking to deliver are clearly understood by staff and students.</p> <p><b>B5:</b> The School demonstrates a commitment to involving practising professionals with appropriate expertise in the programme.</p> <p><b>B6:</b> The work of graduating students demonstrates the competency required for entry level positions in the profession of landscape architecture as appropriate to the areas of practice upon which the course focuses.</p>	<p>(including reference to the competencies in the LI's Competency Framework) and includes input from and consultation with the PRG and practitioners from relevant fields.</p> <p><b>B3R:</b> Programme documentation and publicity materials clearly explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The programme's mission, aims, objectives, and ethos</li> <li>• The career path and area of practice the course is addressing and the reasons for this focus</li> <li>• The way in which foundation skills, knowledge and understanding for the profession (as set out in the LI 's Competency Framework) are developed through the programme</li> <li>• The way in which foundation skills, knowledge and understanding of health and wellbeing and sustainability, climate and resilience are developed through the programme</li> <li>• The outcomes which will be achieved by graduates from the programme</li> </ul> <p><b>B4R:</b> The focus of the programme, the career paths and areas of practice being targeted and the professional skills that it is seeking to deliver are clearly understood by staff and students.</p> <p><b>B5R:</b> The school ensures there is a contribution to the programme from practising professionals with appropriate expertise.</p> <p><b>B6R:</b> The work of graduating students demonstrates the competency required for entry level positions in the profession of landscape architecture as appropriate to the areas of practice upon which the course focuses.</p>
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## Criterion C: Programmes must deliver the key generic knowledge, skills and understanding which underpin professional list and lifelong learning.

### Criterion description:

The nature and pace of modern working life means that those entering the profession must be flexible, adaptable and open to change. They must have the skills and habits to be able to maintain and develop their professional knowledge and expertise throughout their career.

Schools applying for accreditation must demonstrate that the programmes support students in developing the key transferable knowledge, skills and understanding which underpin professional practice and working life in general and which are reflected in the Professional Competencies in the LI's Competency Framework.

### Indicators (evidence demonstrating that this criterion is being met):

Indicators for programmes applying for candidate or full accreditation for the first time	Indicators for annual reaffirmation of accreditation
<p><b>C1:</b> Programme documentation clearly explains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ways in which knowledge, skills and understanding related to the Professional Competencies in the LI's Competency Framework are developed and assessed through the programme.</li> <li>• The outcomes which will be achieved by graduates from the programme</li> </ul>	<p><b>C1R:</b> Knowledge, skills and understanding relating to the Professional Competencies in the LI's Competency Framework are demonstrated in student work.</p>





## Criterion D: Programmes must provide a foundation for progression to the workplace and professional practice.

### Criterion description:

Accredited programmes are expected to provide students with an introduction to professional life and a foundation for progression, in due course, to Chartered status. Schools must demonstrate that programmes develop students' employability. In particular, this will include evidence of:

- Strategies and learning opportunities to develop students' understanding of professional practice and awareness of the ways in which it is evolving, including:
  - relevant legal, institutional and ethical frameworks (e.g., the LI's Code of Practice)
  - management and business procedures
  - the work of related professions
  - professional career paths, and the requirements for becoming fully qualified, in particular, an introduction to the syllabus areas in the Pathway to Chartership
  - the work of related professions
- Input from practitioners, including opportunities for students to present their work in a professional context and receive feedback from practitioners.
- Strategies to expose students to real life problems and issues and familiarise students with the complexities and expectations of professional working life.

### Indicators (evidence demonstrating that this criterion is being met):

Indicators for programmes applying for candidate or full accreditation for the first time	Indicators for annual reaffirmation of accreditation
<p><b>D1:</b> Strategies are in place to develop students' employability.</p> <p><b>D2:</b> Programmes incorporate specific modules or integrated learning focusing on professional practice issues and topics.</p> <p><b>D3:</b> Programmes incorporate a significant element of assessed learning in work based or real-life contexts.</p> <p><b>D4:</b> Programmes include opportunities for students to present their work in a professional environment and receive feedback from practitioners.</p>	<p><b>D1R:</b> Strategies are in place to develop students' employability.</p> <p><b>D2R:</b> Programmes incorporate specific modules or integrated learning focusing on professional practice issues and topics.</p> <p><b>D3R:</b> Programmes incorporate a significant element of assessed learning in work based or real-life contexts.</p> <p><b>D4R:</b> Programmes include opportunities for students to present their work in a professional environment and receive feedback from practitioners.</p>





**D5:** Students have the opportunity to engage in multidisciplinary or cross disciplinary studies and projects.

**D6:** Students are provided with advice about their career choices and the next stages in their professional development.

**D5R:** Students have the opportunity to engage in multidisciplinary or cross disciplinary studies and projects.

**D6R:** Students are aware of professional opportunities, career paths, and next steps to qualification (including the Pathway to Chartership) and are provided with advice about their career choices and professional development.





## Criterion E: Schools must demonstrate a commitment to working in partnership with the Landscape Institute and the profession.

Criterion description:	
<p>LI accreditation is intended to be a mutually beneficial relationship. Schools applying for accreditation are accordingly expected to be genuinely concerned about, and involved in, the profession, and committed to working in partnership with the LI.</p>	
Indicators (evidence demonstrating that this criterion is being met):	
Indicators for programmes applying for candidate or full accreditation for the first time	Indicators for annual reaffirmation of accreditation
<p><b>Administration and reporting</b>  <b>E1:</b> School provides a designated representative who will be responsible for coordinating the relationship between the LI and the school.</p> <p><b>Working with the Professional Review Group (PRG)</b>  <b>E3:</b> School indicates suitable practitioners who might be nominated to form or join the PRG.</p>	<p><b>Administration and reporting</b>  <b>E1R:</b> Annual reports and statistical information (programme applicants, joiners, graduates, graduate destinations) are provided by the school in a complete and timely manner, in accordance with deadlines.</p> <p><b>E2R:</b> School provides a designated representative who will be responsible for coordinating the relationship between the LI and the school.</p> <p><b>Working with the Professional Review Group (PRG)</b>  <b>E3R:</b> Schools provide all information required within the LI’s accreditation guidelines to PRG members in a timely manner.</p> <p><b>E4R:</b> Schools provide the PRG with appropriate access to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A cross section of coursework reflecting the range of abilities across current and graduating students</li> <li>• A cross section of students to discuss their coursework and experiences on the programme</li> <li>• Staff to discuss the development, delivery and outcomes of the programmes</li> </ul> <p><b>E5R:</b> Schools ensure that PRGs have the required number of members to remain quorate throughout the academic year, nominating new members where required to maintain quoracy and continuity.</p>



**E7:** Key staff hold or are willing to take up membership of the LI (Chartered member, Academic member or other appropriate membership grade)

**E6R:** Schools provide a full and considered response to feedback provided by the PRG and ASC.

**Involvement in the LI and the professional community**

**E7R:** Key staff hold LI membership (Chartered member, Academic member or other appropriate membership grade)

**E8R:** Students are actively encouraged to take up membership of the LI and Schools engage with the LI to arrange relevant 'Introduction to the LI' sessions.

**E9R:** The School builds links with relevant LI branches.

**E10R:** Students and staff participate in professional and community activities, including branches, SLIC, committees and the LI's various fora and networks.

**E11R:** Schools take advantage of the LI's facilities and publications to raise awareness of their research activities and play an active role in developing knowledge and promoting learned debate within the profession.

**Representation of accredited status**

**E12R:** Programme and programme publicity material:

- includes information about the Landscape Institute
- clearly and unambiguously states:
  - which programmes are accredited by the LI
  - which courses must be undertaken (in instances where the accredited programme is a composite made up of more than one award e.g. degree + diploma, or graduate diploma + MA)
  - The exit award which must be achieved for individuals to be eligible for Associate membership of the LI.

**Marketing**

**E13R:** Schools actively support and participate in initiatives to promote landscape architecture as a profession and promote accredited programmes.



