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Art, Architecture, and Design Information Competencies

Landscape Architecture

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Introduction

Landscape Architecture is the design of open space, drawing upon both art and science to create meaningful experiences in the environment. It is a truly interdisciplinary field, requiring professionals to apply sustainable principles at a range of scales and to proficiently navigate the sciences, social sciences, humanities, visual arts and design fields. Landscape architects must be strong communicators and problem solvers, demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of environmental factors, consider community populations and needs, be visually literate, and be comfortable and confident in their understanding and adherence to laws, codes, and industry standards in their designs. Considering the scope of their information needs, landscape architects must be comfortable navigating and evaluating information sources from a wide range, including both quantitative and qualitative data, graphs, charts, maps, plans, details, sections, models, professional practice, and an ever-growing field of digital tools. Students and professionals must become critical users of information with sound research skills, demonstrating both conceptual and analytical thinking.

It is important for learners to be aware of the landscape architecture schools accredited through the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board (LAAB) and LAAB's accreditation standards, by which all landscape architecture programs are evaluated. The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) is the principal professional organization, producing research, publications, awards, resources, and the organization's professional code of ethics. The Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB) prepares, administers, and scores the Landscape Architect Registration Exam (L.A.R.E.) which assesses the ability of prospective licensees to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare. These organizations are among those which can provide ongoing support to those working in the field of landscape architecture.

Information Competencies

NOVICE

Learners are able to:

- Research, evaluate, and analyze information through the lens of landscape architecture using a variety of tools for assembling and analyzing ideas and information from prior practice and scholarship, and from primary and secondary sources
- Seek out landscape-specific information, through databases (e.g.,), government resources (e.g.,) and periodicals (e.g.,) through building iterative search strategies
- Identify interdisciplinary resources and authorities outside of landscape architecture that address a problem or research question

- Identify and critically evaluate historical and contemporary design approaches in order to appropriately frame problem-based design questions
- Seek multiple perspectives and design solutions
- Search library catalogs, databases, and the Internet effectively using thesauri, controlled vocabularies, call numbers, and subject headings
- Explore print and digital resources (e.g.) for plans and design ideas and to create meaningful image groups or collections
- Locate local, national, and international codes and standards and use them to inform original plans and designs
- Collaborate in and across teams on projects, plans, and processes
- Synthesize and distill data and research through visual communication techniques such as infographics, diagrams, charts, matrices, bubble diagrams/schematics, sketches/drawings and narrative
- Articulate the message behind their design choices and understand how a design's message shapes perceptions and experience within a space; may align with organizational goals, values, or mission; can help build a brand; is shaped by historical and cultural contexts
- Show their underlying design creation process and provide rationale developed in the design process through annotated ideation drawings and sketches
- Develop an information organization strategy for documenting notes, research, and observations through sketchbooks and photography
- Understand how to cite and attribute the ideas of others, both texts and images, properly in both scholarly writings and visual presentations

Learners are aware of:

- The motivations and impact that landscape architecture can have on communities; understand, represent, and use appropriate planning ideas and information, including appropriate perspectives from history, social science, design and other allied fields
- Language and terminology used to describe planning and affiliated design professions, such as within the built environment, sustainability, architecture, ecology, engineering, construction, and urbanism
- The basic drawing, pictorial, and representational conventions, which include plans, sections, elevations, and details, and how they are used to represent architecture, planning, and design concepts
- Landscape architecture as an interdisciplinary field combining the humanities, social sciences, sciences, arts, and design fields, requiring spaces and places to be aesthetically pleasing, structurally sound, sustainable, and invigorating to communities
- Image, map and data repositories for both contemporary and historical city, regional, and urban planning resources
- Library of Congress subject classification numbers that cover landscape architecture and related fields including ecology, urban planning, engineering, construction, photography, and the visual arts
- Professional publications dealing with landscape architecture, planning, and related fields and the type of content they contain

- Methods of idea generation and design thinking
- The broad range of problem identification and problem-solving methods
- The value of both formal and informal sources of information within landscape research
- The influences affecting historical changes in design of the built environment

EXPERT

Learners are able to:

- Take complex problems, research, and break them down into smaller, simpler ones, in order to achieve project outcomes and priorities
- Recognize that there are specialized areas of expertise within landscape architecture (e.g.,) and articulate their own specialization
- Present alternative theories, solutions, or lines of inquiry based on planning principles
- Conduct original research and fieldwork, synthesize information with secondary research and prior/tacit knowledge
- Seek out and evaluate the usefulness of qualitative and quantitative data, such as precedent studies, case studies, surveys, observations, peer-reviewed literature, and focus groups
- Question the canon of landscape planning, urbanism, suburbanism, geography, and the built environment in order to move in new directions
- Integrate legal and regulatory standards of the profession into design solutions and articulate the purpose of those standards
- Offer and accept critique of the logic and meaning of a message, underlying assumptions of the message, and value of the message within peer research and design documentation
- Exhibit a sophisticated understanding of ethics and intellectual property rights, including their own as creative practitioners
- Understand theories of human-centered design and identify, analyze, and apply information from a variety of sources to develop a successful response to user needs
- Express project solutions using a variety of visual communication techniques (sketches, samples, etc.) and technologies appropriate to a range of purposes and audiences
- Create and design research and programming documents with detailed attention to how their choices impact the overall message and purpose
- Develop a range of presentation skills to communicate their ideas both verbally and visually to a variety of audiences including laypersons, peers, instructors, and invited critics in a variety of contexts and situations

Learners are aware of:

- Current trends and technologies in the landscape architecture discipline

- The social responsibility of landscape architects and the social, political, and physical impact of design
- Landscape architecture as a collaborative ecosystem built upon shared resources, both technical and inspirational
- The global dimensions of landscape architecture planning, interactions, flows of people and materials, cultures, and differing approaches to planning across world regions; the effects of global politics, international markets, labor practices, and climate change on planning practice
- Quantitative and qualitative methods that inform the field, including data collection, analysis and modeling tools for forecasting, policy analysis, and design of projects and plans
- The benefits and usefulness of archives including academic library special collections, museum collections, and municipal/state archives to find architectural and planning documents and information
- The origins and intent of laws, codes, and standards
- The need for professional landscape architects to embrace a lifelong learning mentality as well as intellectual humility and flexibility
- Current trends and technologies in planning and affiliated disciplines (e.g., architecture, ecology, landscape architecture, construction, and engineering)
- The requirements to become a landscape architect in their respective city, county, state, and country
- The basic concepts of intellectual property rights including licensing, copyright, and fair use
- That landscape architects must work with architects, urban planners, ecologists, engineers, legal and city officials, and construction management professionals as equal partners engaged in a collaborative endeavor
- The need of planning and affiliated practices to continue to embrace and promote gender, socio-economic, and ethnic diversity within the profession and with communities of practice