

Landscape Institute Accreditation:

# Procedures and guidelines for higher education accreditation

Information on the accreditation scheme for  
higher education landscape programmes



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 About the procedures and guidelines

The Landscape Institute (LI) *Procedures and Guidelines for Higher Education Accreditation* document, provides a framework for the assessment of all LI accredited programmes in higher education institutions.

High standards remain paramount within the guidelines and procedures described in this document. We rely on our accredited Schools not only to deliver the landscape professionals of the future – designers, managers, planners, scientists/ecologists and urban designers of vision, who will lead the profession in the 21st century – but to contribute to the research, critical thinking and intellectual life of the profession.

While these guidelines contain specific requirements for accredited programmes, it should be stressed that they are not intended to be a straightjacket, or limit change or stifle creativity.

The LI has long recognised and celebrated the fact that, while sharing a commonality in terms of professional core and outcomes, landscape architecture is a diverse and constantly evolving profession and no two programmes are likely to be, or indeed should be, the same.

**"We rely on our accredited Schools not only to deliver the landscape professionals of the future – designers, managers, planners, scientists, ecologists and urban designers of vision, who will lead the profession in the 21st century – but to contribute to the research, critical thinking and intellectual life of the profession."**

This procedures and guidelines document aims to provide currently accredited Schools, as well as potential accreditation partners, with all of the information they need regarding the accreditation scheme. It is a working document which will be reviewed and updated regularly, with updated versions being provided to Schools when required.

If, at any point, an accredited School or other interested party has any questions or queries regarding the LI accreditation scheme, they can contact the LI's head office team by emailing [education@landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:education@landscapeinstitute.org).

The Accreditation Sub-Committee is incredibly proud of the LI accreditation scheme and pleased to be working with such a wide breadth of prestigious higher education institutions to ensure the standards of landscape professionals remains at the highest level.

p.p. 

**Mark Cowell BA(OU), Dip. LA (Hons.), Dip. UD, DA, AMLI**  
Chair LI Accreditation Sub-Committee



## 1.2 About the LI

The Landscape Institute (LI) is the chartered body for the landscape profession. It is an educational charity that promotes the art and science of landscape practice.

The LI's aim, through the work of its members, is to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for the public benefit.

The LI provides a professional home for all landscape practitioners including landscape scientists, landscape planners, landscape architects, landscape managers and urban designers.

LI membership encompasses the full spectrum of professionals concerned with the design, care and maintenance of landscape. This includes landscape, urban and garden designers, planners, ecologists, specialists in management and conservation of urban and rural environments, researchers, academics and many more.

## 1.3 LI accreditation

The LI operates a partnership model of accreditation, working closely with its accredited Schools to ensure that the initial education and training provided for the landscape professionals of the future remains academically challenging, exciting in its own right, and relevant to the needs of the workplace as per the [LI competency framework](#).

The LI accreditation scheme provides higher education providers with a quality mark which means students on landscape architecture and other related courses can be sure their course remains relevant, challenging and provides them with the key skills and knowledge required to enter the world of work, as per the LI's competency framework.

Upon graduating from an LI accredited post-graduate programme, students are automatically eligible for Associate Membership of the LI and are able to progress to the LI's pathway to Chartership – the formal professional qualification for landscape architects.

Working with its supporting committees, the LI has created a specific set of criteria which HE providers will be required to demonstrate they meet in order to have their course or courses accredited. The criteria for accreditation can be downloaded [via the LI's website](#).

The LI welcomes applications from higher education institutions who wish to seek accreditation for their programmes, and from existing institutions who wish to extend the scope of their accreditation into new areas of their provision. Programmes must have completed all internal approval procedures within the School and wider institution, and those required by any relevant external validating bodies, before an application for accreditation can be considered by the LI.

## 1.4 The benefits of LI accreditation

LI accreditation enables graduates from accredited programmes to proceed directly to Associate membership of the LI, the first step towards qualification for chartered status.

The award of accreditation indicates that a programme provides a suitable foundation for a career in the profession. Professional endorsement of a programme adds considerable value to academic programmes, making them more desirable to students from both the UK and overseas.

Programmes benefit from professional membership support and links to local LI branches and networks. Accreditation also provides a career path for students in a growing profession and is a valuable marketing tool in promoting courses.



Accredited programmes are promoted extensively as part of the LI's careers strategy, which includes school engagement, UCAS fairs and the #ChooseLandscape website.

Upon enrolling on an LI accredited course, students automatically have free access to Student membership, and it is expected that Schools will encourage their students to engage with membership and the wider landscape profession. Schools should, themselves, be actively engaged with the LI and support its mission and work to shape the future of the landscape profession. The emphasis is in terms of a partnership between the two institutions.

LI accreditation offers a wide range of benefits to both students and the course team, including:

- Automatic eligibility for Associate membership upon graduation (at post-graduate level)
- Free Student membership for the duration of study (with benefits to include access to LI campus; LI connect; digital copies of Vista, the LI's journal; free attendance to LI events)
- Promotion of the accredited course(s) via LI channels
- Peer support via a professional review group of local practitioners
- Digital assets to promote the accreditation to potential students
- Access to a network of peers in landscape practice and academia
- Regular opportunities for students to hear from, and connect with, representatives of the LI

## 1.5 Full accreditation and Candidate accreditation

The LI offers two modes of accreditation - **full accreditation** and **candidate accreditation**.

**Candidate accreditation** is awarded when a course meets the LI accreditation criteria but the first cohort of students studying on the course have not yet graduated. Candidate status can be awarded prior to students enrolling on the course if validation has been confirmed by the university.

**Full accreditation** is awarded once a course which meets the LI accreditation criteria and has been awarded candidate status has at least one cohort of students which has graduated from the course.

Candidate status indicates that the course team is working towards achieving full accreditation after the first cohort of students have successfully graduated. All courses must first achieve candidate status prior to applying for full accreditation, regardless of the number of cohorts of students which have graduated from the course in previous years.





# 2 Accreditation requirements

**Working with its Education and Membership Committee and Accreditation Sub-Committee, the LI has created a specific set of criteria which HE providers will be required to demonstrate they meet in order to have their course or courses accredited, and defined a number of other requirements which providers should meet.**

## 2.1 Accreditation criteria

There are five key criteria which Schools must demonstrate they meet in order to be awarded both candidate and full accreditation, and for accreditation to be re-affirmed during the biennial re-accreditation process. The criteria are equally weighted for the purposes of accreditation. These criteria 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

Detail regarding each criterion and the evidence which Schools must provide in order to demonstrate that they meet the criteria can be found in the Criteria for Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes document, available to download [via the LI's website](#).

## 2.2 Programme content and outcomes

The LI's key concern in accrediting higher education programmes is to ensure that:

- Graduates possess the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to take up entry level positions in the profession, according to the LI competency framework, and apply for [Associate membership](#)
- Programmes provide the foundation for graduates to enter onto the LI's Pathway to Chartership and ultimately meet the requirements for [Chartered membership \(CMLI\)](#)

The work of the profession is described in the LI's [competency framework](#). As part of the application process, Schools will be required to demonstrate that the programme will provide students with a solid foundation of knowledge and skills upon which they can build and work towards developing all of the relevant and requisite knowledge and skills described in the LI's competency framework, as per their individual and personal ambitions and career paths and including progression to Chartered status. See criterion B in Appendix One for more information.

The outcomes delivered by accredited programmes will differ depending on the programme's primary orientation with regard to the career paths and areas of practice encompassed within the profession of landscape architecture.



The structure of the core within a programme and its academic interpretation are matters on which Schools will decide. Schools may also find it useful to refer to subject benchmark statements for landscape architecture, available on the QAA website <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/>.

As part of an application for accreditation, Schools will be asked to provide a rationale for the content and structure of the programmes they wish to put forward, including a full and clear statement as to how the programme meets these requirements, and those detailed in the LI's Criteria for the Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes.

## 2.3 Programme duration and credits

The LI is willing to consider any programme which meets the requirements described in these guidelines and accompanying Criteria document. However, the LI's expectation is that the following will be required to attain the necessary standards for Associate membership of the LI and, therefore, entry to the Pathway to Chartership.

1. Undergraduate programmes			
1.1	Integrated awards	480 credits with at least 120 credits at Level 7 (FHEQ) or equivalent and to include a year in practice prior to such level 7 study.	Flexibility regarding the nature of the year in practice will be adopted when required e.g. periods of recession
1.2	Non-integrated awards	360 credits with an agreed progression path to at least 180 credits at the same school or via a partnership with another school.	To ensure comparability due to the year in practice requirement for integrated programmes, for non-integrated programmes the progression should be to 180 credits at Level 7 (FHEQ) or equivalent.
2. Postgraduate programmes			
2.1	Cognate graduates	180 credits at Level 7 (FHEQ) or equivalent	<p>A cognate graduate, in relation to entry to LI accredited post-graduate programmes, is a graduate from a course or programme that develops:</p> <p>A. Foundation knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to all of the core Landscape Competencies in the LI's Competency Framework</p> <p>B. The key transferable knowledge, skills and understanding underpinning professional practice and working life in general and reflected in the Professional Competencies in the LI's Competency Framework'</p>





2.2	Non cognate graduates	Conversion programmes to be 300 credits - 120 credit conversion plus 180 credits postgraduate	The 180 credits can be the same course as for the cognate graduates and must be at Level 7 (FHEQ) or equivalent.
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## 2.4 Teaching and assessment strategies and programme admissions

The LI believes that Schools should be free to draw on their own expertise when deciding upon the appropriate teaching and learning strategies and the choice of specific teaching, learning and assessment methods for achieving the level of knowledge and skill expected of students graduating from accredited programmes.

However, the LI will expect Schools to demonstrate that:

- Methods are appropriate and robust
- Programmes are led, delivered and assessed by individuals with appropriate expertise
- There is proper integration of teaching and assessment strategies.

The LI will also look for evidence of:

- Active learning and the use of integrated case studies
- Practical project experience
- Input from practitioners
- Clear strategies to develop students' employability

Decisions about the admission of students at appropriate stages within a programme also lie with the accredited Schools. Schools must ensure that all students graduating from an accredited programme receive a comparable breadth and depth of education and outcomes whatever their path through the programmes.

## 2.5 Partnership – the memorandum of understanding

The LI sees its relationship with accredited Schools as one of partnership. Schools are accordingly expected to be interested in and concerned about the profession, and be active participants in the Institute. As such, Schools are expected to:

- Encourage students to engage with their LI membership as well as local and wider professional landscape communities
- Support students in becoming involved in the wider landscape community
- Play an active role in the LI's work to boost student recruitment, spread awareness of landscape architecture, and generate intelligence to inform careers work
- Engage with their local LI branch
- Contribute to the intellectual development of the profession, not only through provision of accredited programmes, but where possible looking for opportunities for knowledge transfer to the wider profession
- Engage with the LI's work to establish strong relationships between the LI and students on accredited courses

This document together with LI 'Criteria for the Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes', constitute a memorandum of understanding between the LI and accredited Schools, describing what each will bring to the partnership. Making an application for accreditation constitutes an undertaking on the part of the School to abide by these guidelines and the accreditation criteria, as a condition of accreditation.



## 2.6 LI membership information sessions

In order to provide students on LI accredited courses with the opportunity to engage with their representative professional body and reap the benefits of Student membership, accredited Schools will be asked to register for 'Introduction to the LI' sessions at the start of the new academic year (for new cohorts) and 'Upgrading to Associate member' sessions at the end of the academic year for graduating cohorts. These sessions will provide students with insights into their professional body as well as the landscape profession as a whole and the steps they will need to take in order to gain Chartered status following graduation from their accredited programme. All accredited Schools will have access to a registration sheet ahead of the start of the new academic year in order to register for sessions at a suitable date and time.

## 2.7 Learning in work related contexts and work experience

Programmes accredited by the LI are expected to include a significant element of learning in work-based and/or real-life contexts, with the aim of developing an understanding of professional practice and enhancing student employability.

Schools have the flexibility to decide whether this should be achieved via a year in practice, by integrating work experience into the programme structure, or through other methods which bring students into contact with real life contexts and issues.

The LI is particularly keen to encourage innovative approaches to work-based learning and will look for evidence of relationships with local practitioners and groups to ensure that programmes include opportunities for the exploration of real-life contexts and scenarios.

Where offered, work-based experience must be seen as a constituent part of the comprehensive programme structure, and assessed accordingly, with a measured outcome.

## 2.8 Access and equal opportunities

The LI aims to encourage people from all sections of the community to take up places on accredited programmes and to go on to build successful careers in the profession. Schools are required to show that their programmes are free from unnecessary barriers to access and open to all who meet the required standards for entry.

As part of the application for accreditation, Schools will be asked to submit a statement on equal opportunities and comment on how this is being actively pursued within the School.

## 2.9 Staffing

The quality of education delivered ultimately depends on the quality of teaching. In considering programmes for accreditation, the LI will wish to satisfy itself that:

- Programmes are led, taught and assessed by staff appropriately qualified and experienced in relevant fields.
- Staff to student ratios are sufficient to ensure the professional standard of the course will be maintained throughout the period of accreditation.

All Schools are expected to adopt a staff development policy which ensures that teaching staff are able to keep abreast of innovations in education and practice.

It is particularly important that staff are encouraged to engage in activities such as research and consultancy, professional practice, writing and travel, to ensure that teaching remains in touch with new ideas and techniques, current trends and the needs of the workplace and the wider profession. The LI publishes academic work in a variety of media and encourages staff in landscape schools to take advantage of these to promote their work and foster links between research and practice, and to have been actively involved in the Institute through taking up membership.



To this end, Academic membership of the LI provides, via its online and print media, a forum for the dissemination of academic research to the wider professional community and a network for those involved in relevant areas of teaching and research.

See criteria A in the Criteria for Accreditation of Higher Education programmes document for more detailed information.

## 2.10 Professional Review Group (PRG)

Once full or candidate accreditation is confirmed at a School, the LI will write to the School inviting them to nominate a panel of at least three members who will form their Professional Review Group (PRG). If the new course is run at a currently accredited school, the LI will recommend whether the School's PRG requires additional members. As a condition of accreditation Schools must ensure they maintain a quorate PRG. Further information on the composition and requirements of the PRG can be found in section 5 of this document.

## 2.11 Facilities

Schools will need to demonstrate that studios, lecture and seminar rooms, workshops and laboratories are sufficient and appropriate to meet all teaching and study needs. Technical equipment must be appropriate to the academic and professional needs and requirements of the programme. This level of provision must be maintained throughout the period of accreditation. Where the accredited programme is design based, the LI expects the programme to be provided with dedicated studio space for students.

Information technology (hardware and software) should be up to date in all areas relevant to the course's emphasis and sufficient for the needs of the programme and the number of students attending.

Schools are expected to have good library and information facilities, covering relevant topics and stocking appropriate journals, with study facilities which are readily accessible to students.

Technical and administrative staff must be suitably qualified and in sufficient number to support the School's activities.

See criteria A in the Criteria for Accreditation of Higher Education programmes document for more detailed information.

## 2.12 Reporting requirements

The LI makes a number of basic requirements in relation to administration of the accreditation partnership. The LI staff team will send a timetable of key dates to Schools at the beginning of each academic year. Reporting requirements are as follows:

### 2.12.1 Biennial Re-Accreditation Report

Schools are required to submit a re-accreditation report to the LI on a biennial basis. Schools will be required to provide information regarding PRG meetings which have taken place within the last academic year; comments from the PRG and external examiner and actions taken by the School in response to such comments; any changes to the programme and the rationale for such changes; and the ways in which the programme continues to meet the LI accreditation criteria. This report must be prepared in partnership with the respective PRG and returned to the LI education manager as per the relevant deadline.

### 2.12.2 Annual Statistical Report

Schools are required to submit an annual statistical report which provides the LI with data regarding entry requirements; student applications; current student figures; student nationalities; awards and employment statistics.



From time to time the LI may also request other updates to assist in its work to monitor and promote landscape education – for example, number of students who have so far applied for places for the coming academic year.

This information is gathered to give an overall picture of landscape education for the benefit of both the LI and the accredited Schools. All information submitted by Schools is treated in confidence and will not be provided in disaggregated form to other parties. Aggregated statistics will, however, be made more widely available.

The statistical report will be embedded within the re-accreditation report during full re-accreditation reporting years.

## 2.13 Accreditation fees

The LI charges a fee for all applications for accreditation. A biennial re-accreditation fee is also payable for renewal of accreditation. The fees contribute to the cost of the administrative support and careers promotional work undertaken by the LI.

### 2.13.1 Applications for accreditation

An application fee is charged in respect of all applications for accreditation of programmes, including direct applications for candidate accreditation, and applications to move from candidate to full accreditation. The initial application fee is fifty per cent of the fee for two years of accreditation, with the remaining fifty per cent payable upon successful application. If an application is unsuccessful, the application fee will not be refunded to the institution.

1. Applications for accreditation			
1.1	Initial application fee	£1,125 per course	Payable upon submission of application
1.2	Upon completion of application process	£1,125 per course	Payable upon confirmation of accreditation

### 2.13.2 Biennial renewal of accreditation

All accredited institutions are required to pay a biennial renewal fee which is payable at the point of re-accreditation application. For details of the biennial re-accreditation fees, please email [sarah.magee@landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:sarah.magee@landscapeinstitute.org).

## 2.14 Programme evolution

Just as the LI acknowledges that no two programmes will be the same, it is also expected that programmes will develop and evolve over time in response to the changes in the workplace, in higher education and in society.

The LI's prime concern is that programmes continue to provide a solid foundation for a career in landscape architecture as per the LI's competency framework. The LI positively encourages course evolution and innovation and expects Schools to ensure that their programmes remain fresh, stimulating, relevant, and aligned to the competency framework.

Where it is clear that developments are evolutionary (natural progression), not revolutionary (such that a substantially different programme results), developments can often be encompassed within the existing accreditation arrangements.



Where changes are proposed, Schools are expected to involve Professional Review Groups (PRGs) in the review process (further information about the role of PRGs is given in section 4). The LI's Accreditation Sub-Committee will also be happy to give feedback and advice where the changes proposed are more substantial.

Where changes are significant, such as a change of title, award or major change in programme structure, or involve substantial changes in staffing levels and expertise, the School is required to notify their PRG and LI staff team of the changes in writing. The School should outline the proposed changes, indicate the likely impact of the change and the rationale for the change. In some cases, it may be necessary to arrange a new visit to the School by an Accreditation Panel.



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## 3 Overseas programmes, dual accreditation, joint awards and shared units

**The LI is able to establish reciprocal arrangements for recognition of qualifications with a number of countries and welcomes approaches from overseas institutions interested in exploring the possibilities of accreditation, mutual recognition of qualifications, or adoption of some of the entire UK model for qualification.**

The boundaries between the professions are becoming increasingly permeable and working as part of an interdisciplinary team on projects is now common practice. The LI accordingly believes that interdisciplinary learning with students training in related professions and disciplines is an important part of the learning experience and of preparation for working life, and Schools are encouraged to look for opportunities for joint project work where possible.

The LI also welcomes applications for accreditation of dual awards and those which may also lead to qualifications accredited by other professional bodies. In cases where a dual arrangement is proposed, the university will be expected to provide a rationale for the dual award or linked routes as part of their explanation of the ethos of the programme and the graduates it is seeking to produce.

Where two subjects are linked in one award, the LI will expect to see evidence that they are fully integrated rather than two disparate areas bolted together. Students will be expected to show awareness that they are studying on an integrated programme, discuss links between the two and exhibit joined up thinking.

Universities must demonstrate that landscape elements are maintained throughout any such programme.



## 4 Applying for candidate accreditation and full accreditation

The LI's accreditation processes are overseen and managed by the LI's Accreditation Sub-Committee (ASC). On policy issues, the ASC works in consultation with the Standing Committee of Heads of Schools of Landscape Architecture (SCHOLA). The ASC reports directly to the LI's Education and Membership Committee (EMC) which is responsible for ratifying recommendations regarding accreditation of new courses.

The tables below describe the various stages of the application process for candidate and full accreditation:

1. Stage one: Expression of interest		
Step	Description	Documentation required
1.1 Expressing your interest in LI accreditation	Schools wishing to apply for candidate or full accreditation should, in the first instance, provide the LI with information about the School and outline programme documentation, including information regarding programme level, credits, and relationship to LI competency framework by emailing <a href="mailto:sarah.magee@landscapeinstitute.org">sarah.magee@landscapeinstitute.org</a>	Any relevant documentation which provides details of the programme
1.2 Initial ASC meeting	The LI will arrange a time for representatives of the ASC to meet with the School for initial, informal discussions. The meeting provides the opportunity for the School and the LI, without commitment, to explore how the programme content, ethos, structure and other aspects might relate to the LI's accreditation criteria, and how the relationship between the LI and the School might be taken forward. The meeting in no way pre-empts the LI's ultimate decision as to whether a programme will be accredited. As part of these discussions, the ASC may indicate areas in which further development may be required. Where no major issues are identified, discussions may culminate in an invitation to the School to submit a formal application for accreditation.	

## 2. Stage two: Submitting an application

Step	Description	Documentation required
<p>2.1 Completing the application form and collating relevant supporting documentation</p>	<p>The accreditation application form can be requested via an online enquiry form via email to the LI education manager at <a href="mailto:sarah.magee@landscapeinstitute.org">sarah.magee@landscapeinstitute.org</a>. Exemplar applications can be made available via a request in writing to the same email address. Information provided via the application form should clearly indicate how programmes and administrative or other arrangements will meet the LI’s accreditation guidelines and criteria.</p> <p><i>Applications for candidate accreditation and full accreditation should be made using the same application form.</i></p>	<p>Clearly labelled supporting documentation required at the point of application includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of the ways in which the course maps to the LI’s Competency Framework</li> <li>• The programme’s relationship to the professional standards and any other benchmarks set by the LI</li> <li>• Programme specifications, including full details of its structure, modules taught and the specific content of these modules</li> <li>• Copies of all external examiner reports for the last three years (where available)</li> <li>• Reports on all validations and reviews conducted in the last three years (where available)</li> <li>• Details of staffing and staff CVs</li> <li>• Statistics on the staff student ratio</li> <li>• Reports and details of processes for enhancing access, diversity and inclusion</li> <li>• PRG member nominees’ – or indicative nominees’ - CVs</li> </ul>
<p>2.2 Submitting the application form and supporting documentation</p>	<p>Completed application forms and supporting documentation should be submitted via one, single email to <a href="mailto:sarah.magee@landscapeinstitute.org">sarah.magee@landscapeinstitute.org</a>.</p> <p>Once the application has been received, it will be checked for completeness by the LI’s staff team. It will then be referred to the ASC who will conduct an initial paper assessment.</p> <p>Where no major concerns arise from the initial paper assessment, the application will proceed to the second stage of assessment, an accreditation visit by a specially convened Accreditation Panel. The LI will liaise with the institution to agree a suitable time for this visit to take place.</p>	



### 3. Stage three: The accreditation visit

Step	Description
<p>3.1 Convening the panel and arranging the visit</p>	<p>An accreditation panel will be convened by the ASC and will typically consist of five members, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A chair, who will be a CMLI or FLI and will be a member of the ASC</li> <li>• An additional CMLI and Associate member with relevant professional specialisms</li> <li>• Three other members who may be practitioners or educationalists (to a maximum of two on any panel including the mandatory academic member)</li> </ul> <p>Where possible, the LI will aim to include members drawn from relevant or adjacent LI branches. A member of the LI staff team will act as Secretary to the Panel.</p> <p>Accreditation visits will normally be of one day in duration. The timetable and length of the visit will depend on the number and breadth of programmes submitted for accreditation and whether particular issues have been identified which need to be explored as part of the visit. The detailed programme for the visit and a draft timetable will be discussed with the university as part of the arrangements to convene the visit. Visits should take place in person as standard but arrangements can be made for virtual visits where necessary, such as in the case of universities outside of the UK.</p>
<p>3.2 Preparing for the visit</p>	<p>It is essential that the university make arrangements to enable a proper assessment to be conducted by the LI. Universities must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the panel is able to meet with key staff, including the Head of Department and Head of Faculty</li> <li>• Provide a representative cross section of graduate (i.e., final year) work covering the full spectrum of ability and achievement, the main elements of the programme, the way in which students' knowledge, skills and understanding are developed, and the programme outcomes</li> <li>• Arrange for the panel to meet in a closed session with a fully representative group of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>current students in the case of full accreditation application visits, or where the course is already running</i></li> <li>❖ <i>graduates drawn from the last three years of the programme (if applicable)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Where universities are applying for full accreditation, graduates must be well represented in the group met in closed session</li> </ul> <p>In order that the Panel may speak freely to staff about student work and any issues identified during the course of the visit, students should not be invited to participate in other sections of the programme, except by prior agreement with the LI.</p> <p>Institutions must ensure that they keep any presentations to allocated times in the programme, so that time available for questions from the panel is not compromised. Where these conditions are not met, it will be within the power of the chair of the panel to either declare the visit invalid or incomplete. No refund will be given in respect of the accreditation fee for a visit which is declared void or incomplete. A further visit may be convened at the expense of the university.</p> <p>Schools are asked to provide the accreditation panel with a lockable base room which can be used for panel discussions during the visit, and refreshments.</p>
<p>3.3 Following the visit</p>	<p>Informal feedback on the outcome of the visit will normally be provided on the day of the visit.</p>

The LI will then write to the School to formally notify them of the accreditation panel’s recommendations with regard to the course or courses. In the case of an entirely new programme, the panel’s recommendations will be subject to final ratification by LI’s Education and Membership Committee.

Where the recommendation is that a course cannot be accredited at the present time, further information will be provided on the reasons for this decision and the steps which the panel recommends should be taken by the School should they wish to reapply.

#### 4. Stage four: Formalising accreditation

Step	Description	Documentation provided / required
4.1 Confirmation of accreditation	<p>Schools making a successful application for full or candidate accreditation will receive a formal letter and certificate from the LI confirming accreditation. Schools should advise the LI if they wish the certificate to be given in a formal presentation at the School.</p> <p>Once accreditation has been granted the programme will be added to the list of LI accredited programmes on the LI’s careers website <a href="http://www.chooselandscape.org">www.chooselandscape.org</a> and will be promoted as part of the LI’s ongoing recruitment activity.</p> <p>The School will also be sent details of, and invited to join, SCHOLA, the representative body for LI accredited institutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation confirmation letter</li> <li>• Accreditation certificate</li> <li>• LI membership information for students</li> <li>• ‘Introduction to the LI’ session sign-up sheet</li> <li>• Promotional assets to be included in course promotional materials e.g., ‘LI Accredited’ badge</li> </ul>
4.2 Promoting accreditation of the course(s)	<p>Schools are expected to update relevant literature as soon as possible to indicate that programmes or courses have LI accreditation. Current accreditation status must be clearly and accurately indicated. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a programme has candidate status rather than full accreditation, this must be clearly stated</li> <li>• Where accreditation has been granted to a programme which consists of a ‘package’ of two courses (for example BA (hons) Landscape Architecture + Dip Landscape Architecture), the requirement to take both must also be made clear</li> <li>• A link to <a href="http://www.chooselandscape.org">www.chooselandscape.org</a> must be provided on the course homepage</li> </ul> <p>The http for the relevant page of the School website should be provided to the LI for listing on <a href="http://www.chooselandscape.org">www.chooselandscape.org</a></p> <p>Schools should also use the ‘LI Accredited’ badge in promotional material, on their websites or in other suitable locations. The logo should appear with the words "An accredited programme of the Landscape Institute". The LI staff team can provide logotypes</p>	

in a variety of formats. However, copies of publications, and hyperlinks to web pages featuring the logos must be provided to the LI staff team for approval.

## 5. Stage five: Moving from candidate to full accreditation

Step	Description	Documentation required
5.1 Moving from candidate to full accreditation	<p>Where a programme is seeking to move from candidate to full accreditation, the following criteria must be met. As with all applications for full accreditation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The programme must have had at least one graduating cohort.</li> <li>• Cohorts graduating from the programme seeking accreditation must be of a sufficient size for a reasonable assessment of the programme to be conducted.</li> <li>• The institution must clearly demonstrate that the programme meets the LI's accreditation criteria in full.</li> </ul> <p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any conditions stipulated at the time that candidate status was granted (or specified by accreditation committee during the period of candidate accreditation) must have been met.</li> <li>• A move to full accreditation must be recommended and/or supported by the PRG.</li> </ul> <p>Candidate programmes or courses <b>must apply for full accreditation within 3 years</b> of their first cohort graduating.</p> <p>If an institution does not apply for full accreditation within this period or fails to meet the above conditions in full, its candidate status will lapse. The LI also reserves the right to decline reaffirmation of candidate accreditation where the accreditation relationship is not developing satisfactorily or insufficient progress is being made towards fully accredited status. Should the programme or course wish to regain candidate status, it will be required to make a new application for accreditation. This application will incur any associated accreditation fees.</p>	Application form

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# 5 Professional Review Group (PRG)

Once full or candidate accreditation is confirmed at a School, the LI will invite them to form their Professional Review Group (PRG). If the new course is run at a currently accredited school, the LI will recommend whether the School's PRG requires additional members. As a condition of accreditation, Schools must ensure they maintain a quorate PRG.

## 5.1 PRG composition

PRGs must contain a minimum of three members to be quorate and meet the LI's accreditation requirements. PRGs must:

- Include at least two fully qualified Chartered Members of the LI.
- Reflect the professional focus of the programme and consist of practitioners with significant, relevant professional experience.
- Have at least one member or one third of members drawn from those working or practicing in the region wherever possible.
- Include at least one member of the panel nominated by the local LI branch (the School should liaise with the branch with regard to nomination).
- Remain quorate throughout the year.

Where a school offers a range of accredited programmes the PRG's size and composition should reflect this, especially if the accredited portfolio has differing areas of emphasis (e.g. an MA in Landscape Architecture and BA in Landscape Management). This would normally entail an additional PRG member with a background relevant to each additional accredited course.

Although the PRG is a professional panel, the LI welcomes involvement of academics in PRGs, to a total not exceeding one third of the members of the panel. Where possible, it is helpful if the PRG also includes practitioners or academics with experience of lecturing or external examining. Current external examiners may serve on PRGs. Practitioners participating in the course as guest lecturers may also serve on PRGs provided that they are not contracted to the School as staff members and the School can demonstrate that the relationship is such that there is no conflict of interest.

PRG members are asked to serve in the group for a minimum of four and no more than eight years, unless they have dispensation from the LI. Schools must ensure that there is continuity between panels for successive years - a situation should not arise where all members of the panel are new in any given year.

## 5.2 Approval of PRG members

Schools must forward CVs of the proposed panel, and any new members nominated during the period of accreditation, to the LI for review. Schools will also be asked to comment on any current or previous links with proposed PRG members, where applicable, and, in particular, where there may be potential issues with regard to conflict of interest.

Nominated CVs will be forwarded to the ASC for consideration and approval. If approved, the School will be informed and asked to confirm the approval with the nominee.

### 5.3 Information provided by the LI to PRG members

Once a nomination of a new PRG member has been received from the School and approved by the ASC, the LI staff team will send new members an introductory pack which will include this document, the LI accreditation criteria, copies of PRG reports for the previous two years, and any additional current guidance.

All PRG members are expected to ensure they have a working knowledge of the LI's accreditation guidelines and reporting requirements. The LI staff team will be pleased to assist with any questions.

The LI runs training events for new PRG members twice annually. Any new PRG members will be expected to attend this event unless they have substantial previous experience on an LI PRG. To find out the date of the next available PRG training session, please contact the LI Education Manager.

### 5.4 Information provided by the School to PRG members

Schools are expected to provide new PRG members with full information about the accredited course or programme. For new members, this should include:

- Up to date copies of the School's handbook and Course handbook, details of the programme structure and content and any other relevant information.
- Up to date information on staffing levels and areas of expertise.
- School assessment criteria for modules or units.
- The last three internal verification reports or equivalent.
- The last three years' external examiners reports.
- A statement of funding available for student trips, expenses, etc.
- Confirmation of their tuition fees.

Schools must ensure that established members are provided with any new updated documentation as it becomes available including: any recent internal verification and external examiners' reports, programme statistics and any other relevant information.

### 5.5 The role of the PRG

The PRG is a professional panel, the key functions of which are to:

- Work with the school during the year as a critical friend and sounding board.
- Provide advice on current developments in practice.
- Submit a report in partnership with the School during full re-accreditation years, and an independent report during statistical report years, on whether, in their view;
  - ❖ A programme continues to meet the LI's accreditation criteria
  - ❖ Accreditation should be reaffirmed for the coming academic year
  - ❖ Any concerns or issues have arisen throughout the year or are beginning to emerge.

In carrying out their role, a key consideration for the PRG will be whether, as practitioners, they consider that graduates from a programme have received initial professional education such that they have the foundation knowledge and understanding to take up their first employment in an area of the profession relevant to the focus of the programme.

Although members of PRGs will often have experience in higher education, through lecturing or acting as an external examiner, the role of the PRG is not to conduct an academic assessment of the programme or course (although they may want to comment on these areas). Instead, members should consider and monitor the performance of the programme as a recipient of the skills the course delivers - that is, as a professional practitioner and potential future employer and mentor of graduates from the programme.

Accredited Schools will already have a wide range of links with the profession and practices, but the LI also asks PRGs to use their regular and formal contact with the Schools wherever possible to help develop and support a meaningful and mutually beneficial partnership between Schools, the profession and the LI.

PRGs can contribute by:

- Using their own connections in the profession to help support the School in developing links with practice, local branches and other networks
- Encouraging Schools to make the most of LI facilities and support, and helping them identify new opportunities.
- Facilitating links between the LI and students by delivering 'Introduction to the LI' sessions on behalf of the LI at pertinent points throughout the programme and enabling students to sign up to free LI Student membership.
- Supporting the School in the delivery of its professional practice content by providing industry insight sessions, facilitating work experience opportunities where possible, or sharing opportunities via their network.

The aim of both Schools and PRGs should be to develop and foster a positive, open and honest relationship. The LI staff team is on hand to provide advice and support to PRGs and Schools.

### 5.5.1 Candidate programmes

In the case of candidate courses or programmes, the PRG has a particular role in mentoring and advising the School, helping to steer the programme such that it will, on successful completion by the first cohort, meet the LI's guidelines for full accreditation.

### 5.5.2 Scope of authority

Accredited Schools will be expected to involve PRGs in discussions about changes to programme content, balance and format which may substantially affect the content, quality, assessment or delivery of the programme.

While PRGs are expected to discuss, advise and make suggestions to Schools on the full range of issues relevant to their role, only the ASC has the authority to award, vary, or stipulate conditions for accreditation.

In the event of major concerns arising during the academic year, such that bring into question the School's ability to continue to meet the LI's accreditation criteria, the chair of the PRG should formally voice its concerns to the School and LI Education Manager in the first instance. If necessary, a meeting will be convened between the ASC, the PRG and the School to consider what steps should be taken.

## 5.6 The PRG Chair

The PRG should elect a Chair to act as the main contact with the School. While the PRG should work as a team, the Chair has particular responsibility for coordinating its activities, welcoming and onboarding new members and ensuring that relevant reports are submitted in a timely manner i.e., the re-accreditation report, including PRG comments and feedback, during full re-accreditation years, and the annual report of the PRG during statistical report return years. The Chair should be a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI).

The PRG is ultimately responsible to the LI's ASC. The Chair of the PRG is expected to remain in contact with the Chair of the ASC to discuss any points of interest or concern which develop during the year. If any major concerns arise which they feel may potentially threaten the programme's accredited status, they should initially contact the LI Education Manager.

## 5.7 Visits by the PRG

### 5.7.1 PRG requirements

The PRG is expected to maintain contact with the School such that it can fulfil the role described in section 5.5 and develop an understanding of the accredited programmes offered by the School and monitor how they are operating.

It is therefore expected that the PRG undertakes a minimum of two full board visits to the School each academic year. The first visit should include a review of the feedback provided by the LI and the PRG and any issues they wish to monitor during the year. The second will normally be towards the end of the final term of the year, in preparation for the submission of the PRG's annual report.

This should be supplemented by contact by individual PRG members during the course of the year. Not all visits need to be full and formal – contact can involve a variety of activities such as attending lectures and end of year shows, sitting in on seminars, crits or liaison seminars, depending on the nature of the course and what issues need to be discussed.

### 5.7.2 School requirements

The School must provide the PRG with an events programme indicating suitable visit dates for the PRG throughout the coming academic year. This should include:

- A timetable of crits and seminars or programme of events.
- Suggestions of areas where PRG members could get involved (e.g. tutorials, lectures etc.)
- An event programme/diary.

The School must ensure it provides opportunities during the year to:

- Meet with students.
- View student work.
- Discuss the course with key staff, including the Head of School if requested by the PRG.

## 5.8 The annual School and PRG reports

At the end of the academic year, the School is required to submit an annual report on accredited programmes at the School. Following this the PRG will conduct its final visit, before delivering its own report and recommendations. The staff team will write to PRG chairs and heads of School advising them of the deadlines for submission.

### 5.8.1 The School report

The annual School report covers aspects such as;

- Actions taken in response to previous recommendations.
- Developments to the programme and facilities.
- Anticipated changes for the future.

This report must be prepared in advance of the end of year visit by the School's PRG, in accordance with the advised deadlines for submission, and copied to the LI staff team.

Schools are asked to take particular note of the deadlines for submission: the annual report constitutes the School's application for reaffirmation of accreditation of their programme. Late submission or failure to submit the annual report may result in suspension or withdrawal of accreditation.

## 5.8.2 The end of year meeting and PRG report

The PRG report presents the PRG's assessment of the programme and is completed following the end of year visit.

As part of the report, the PRG will comment on developments during the year and whether, in the PRG's view, the programme continues to meet the LI's accreditation criteria. The report is produced by the Chair of the PRG in discussion with members of the PRG and the Head of School and is, in effect, a summative report based on the findings of the PRG in their work with the School each year.

It is the responsibility of Chairs, working with accredited Schools, to ensure that the end of year visit takes place and that the annual report is submitted in good time. Late submission of the report may lead to delays in reaffirmation of accreditation of a course.

The working relationship between PRGs and the School should be such that the end of year visit should be an organic part of the academic year and a continuation of previous discussions. Many of the considerations at the end of year meeting will be similar to those during other visits by the panel or individual members.

However, the end of year visit is a more formal opportunity to assess developments in the course, and, in particular, how effectively the School has addressed any concerns expressed in previous reports in greater detail. If it has not been possible earlier in the year, Schools must ensure that the PRG is able to do all of the following:

- Meet current students and discuss their experiences without School staff present
- View the most recent external examiner reports
- Meet with course staff
- Be provided with any other material they feel is relevant to the PRG assessment (e.g. student work)

## 5.9 Expenses

The LI will pay all reasonable expenses incurred by PRG members in the course of their role, including visits to accredited Schools and attendance at meetings and training events convened by the LI. Expense forms and guidelines are available from the LI staff team.

Schools will be expected to meet the costs of providing information to PRGs and the LI, and for providing appropriate refreshments during accreditation and PRG visits.



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## 6 Re-accreditation

**The LI operates a two-yearly accreditation cycle and accreditation - whether for full or candidate status - is reaffirmed every other academic year, with a statistical report required annually. Decisions regarding the reaffirmation of accreditation for the coming academic year are determined by the Accreditation Sub-Committee (ASC) following review of reports submitted by the School and the School's Professional Review Group.**

### 6.1 Accreditation within the wider quality assurance context

The LI recognises that its accreditation procedures sit alongside a range of other assessments of aspects of teaching and learning within educational institutions (e.g. Quality Assurance Agency assessments, external examining etc.). The LI seeks, as far as possible, to recognise the particular and distinct functions of these assessments and to minimise duplication between them. Its overarching concern is to maintain professional standards amongst new graduates.

### 6.2 Re-accreditation requirements

In order to maintain their accredited status (in full or as a candidate programme), Schools will be required to submit the following:

- An annual statistical report
- A biennial re-accreditation report

The statistical report will be embedded within the re-accreditation report during full re-accreditation reporting years.

Template reports will be sent via email by the LI's education manager and should be completed with as much information as possible and returned by the specified deadline.

### 6.3 Confirmation of re-accreditation

Relevant reports are shared with the ASC in order for the committee to make recommendations for re-accreditation of courses to the LI's Education and Membership Committee (EMC) for ratification. Schools will be notified of the EMC's decision in writing. All correspondence will be copied to the relevant Heads of Department.

### 6.4 Feedback and required actions

In addition to confirmation of the decision made by the ASC, Schools will receive feedback on:

- Areas in which action is recommended or requested
- Areas in which action is required

Recommended or requested actions may include:

- General comments on the direction and operation of the course
- Comments on suggested areas for development
- Requests for clarification, or information to help support or develop the accreditation relationship

Specific actions may be required where the accreditation criteria or guidelines (or the spirit of the accreditation criteria or guidelines) are not being met, followed, or there are other areas of serious concern. The ASC may require the School to provide more information or a formal response to an issue

or take specific remedial action. A deadline by which the required actions are expected to be taken may be specified.

## 6.5 Serious and recurring concerns

Where there are concerns of a serious or recurring nature, the LI may:

- Place a course on notice for a specified period, during which time the LI will expect to see significant progress towards the solution of problems.
- Suspend or delay re-accreditation pending specific actions being taken by the School.

Where issues cannot be resolved by the School, the LI may choose to formally withdraw accreditation. Accreditation will normally only be restored following a new application for accreditation being made by the School.

If the School has been put on notice, a member of the ASC will work closely with the PRG, taking part in visits during the following academic year until such time as all concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

Decisions to suspend or withdraw accreditation will normally not be taken without extended discussion between the LI and the School.

It is open to the LI or the School to call for a full accreditation visit in the event of there being cause for concern.

# 7 Accreditation timetable and key dates 2022/23 – 2023/24

New applications for accreditation should be submitted by the end of March for consideration for the next academic year. Statistical reports and re-accreditation reports are sent to accredited Schools for completion at the start of the November annually as relevant for submission by the following February.

Stage	Deadline	2023 deadline	2024 deadline
New accreditation applications	<p>The LI recommends that Schools wishing to apply for accreditation of a course – either candidate or full – do so one year in advance of wishing to promote the accredited course and by the end of March.</p> <p>i.e. if a School wishes to hold accreditation for the start of the academic year 2024/25, they should submit their application for accreditation before the end of March 2023 to allow for sufficient marketing time.</p> <p>However, applications can be received up until the end of March for confirmation by the start of the new academic year.</p> <p>i.e. applications received before the end of March 2023 <b>should</b> be considered and approved for the start of the academic year 2023/24</p>	End of March 2023	End of March 2024
Stage	Deadline	Academic year 2022/23	
Statistical report return	End of February annually. Schools will receive the statistical report template for completion in November annually.	28 February 2023	
Stage	Deadline	Academic year 2023/24 and 2024/25	
Re-accreditation report return (including statistical report)	End of February biennially. Schools will receive the re-accreditation report template for completion in November biennially.	29 February 2024	
Confirmation of re-accreditation	End of May biennially.	End of May 2024	

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# 8 Glossary

**Accreditation Sub-Committee (ASC)** - The LI committee which oversees accreditation activity

**Accreditation Criteria** - The LI's criteria for accredited programmes, available to download [via the LI website](#)

**Accreditation Guidelines** - This document, the Procedures and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes.

**Education and Membership Committee (EMC)** - The LI Committee responsible for professional education and training, and final decisions concerning course accreditation.

**Professional Review Group (PRG)** - A group of professionals nominated by the School who act as critical friends of the School and work with the School to complete the biennial re-accreditation report in addition to other reporting requirements. See section 5.

**Programme** - A specified combination of courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level and accredited by the LI as providing initial professional education and leading to Associate membership of the LI.

**SCHOLA** - The Standing Committee of Heads of Schools of Landscape Architecture which comprises of Heads of School from all fully accredited LI programmes.

**School** - A Higher Education institution, faculty, or department offering a programme accredited by the LI, or in the process of discussing or seeking accreditation.