



Acreditadora  
Nacional de  
Programas de  
Arquitectura y  
Disciplinas del  
Espacio  
Habitable A.C.

# Acreditadora Nacional de Programas de Arquitectura y Disciplinas del Espacio Habitable A.C.

## NATIONAL ACCREDITING BOARD FOR ARCHITECTURE AND DISCIPLINES OF THE HABITABLE SPACE

### ANPADEH-CANBERRA ACCORD SELF ANALYSIS

José de Jesús Jiménez Jiménez PhD  
President

Antigua Academia de San Carlos  
Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México

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Antigua Academia de San Carlos, Emiliano Zapata 37, Centro Histórico,  
Cd.México, C.P. 06000, Tel/Fax 55 42 66 05, [www.anpadeh.org.mx](http://www.anpadeh.org.mx)



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## SELF ANALYSIS OF ANPADEH'S ACTIVITIES AND FUNCTIONS ACCORDING TO THE CANBERRA ACCORD'S BASIC QUESTIONS OF PERFORMANCE

### Foreword

This document describes ANPADEH's criteria upon which its accrediting processes are based and seeks to associate these to the guidelines established by other national and international institutions engaged in the measurement and validation of quality in educational programs of higher education.<sup>1</sup>

1. **What are the mission statement, goals, and objectives of the accreditation agency? Please share a short statement of how objectivity and integrity are assured in your accreditation system.**

### *Mission Statement*

The General Manual for the Accreditation Processes of the ANPADEH, Version 3.0, states that the objectives of the accreditation for academic programs for Architecture and Disciplines of the Habitable Space in Mexico are, among others, the following:<sup>2</sup>

- Publicly recognize the quality of academic programs and promote their improvement.
- Encourage institutions, through its academic programs, the culture of continuous improvement.
- Ensure that the performance parameters of the academic programs reach national and international quality standards.
- Promote communication and interaction between the different sectors of society in search of a higher quality education with social relevance.
- Promote substantial changes in the institutions teaching practices to form Architects according to society's needs.
- Provide information to society about the quality of study programs towards architect educational programs.
- Contribute to programs that have sufficient resources, and appropriate mechanisms to ensure the fulfillment of its purposes.

Likewise in the same normative document it is pointed out that the accreditations must have the following characteristics<sup>3</sup>:

- Voluntary
- Integral (comprehensive: inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes of the program)
- Objective, fair and transparent
- External (Product of the collegiate work of external peers)

<sup>1</sup> Among them at the national level we have COPAES, ASINEA and FCARM; at the international level are considered among other the UIA/UNESCO Chart on Architectural Education, INQAAHE criteria and the Canberra Accord guidelines.

<sup>2</sup> ANPADEH, *General Manual for the Accreditation Processes of the ANPADEH, Version 3.0, p-3f, México City, 2015.*

<sup>3</sup> Idem p.3-4





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- Ethical and responsible
- Temporary (valid for five years)
- Trustworthy. The accreditation process should always be based on the recognition of existing diversity of institutions (public, private, technological, state and regional, among others)

Hence, the ANPADEH assumes itself as an organism that shall carry out its work as:

- External.
- Responsible, clear and ethical standards and regulations.
- In pursuit of the confidence of those it serves, as well as of the Mexican Society as a whole.

The above is based on the criteria marked by COPAES<sup>4</sup>, which is the Mexican National Board for regulating and endorsing the accreditations given by the Accrediting Agencies in Mexico.

### 2. How do you achieve effectiveness in accreditation without unduly burdening the institution under review (issues of costs, time, and complexity)?

The second set of criteria expressed in the previous section establishes the guidelines to comply with this goal; especially when noticing the points in which it defines the process as **voluntary and trustworthy**

The process of evaluation for accreditation in higher education in Mexico begins at the end of the 20th century, but its enforcement really started with the beginning of the new century. At this time there are 29 Accrediting Boards in Mexico. The general guidelines for the evaluation and accreditation of High Education school programs are defined by COPAES in 10 different categories of parameters. The specific content of each is specified by each accreditation board, depending upon the discipline to evaluate.

The categories of evaluation are as follows:

These categories of indicators are:

1. Academic staff;
2. Students;
3. Curriculum;
4. Methods and tools to assess the learning process;
5. Comprehensive training (integral education);
6. Support services for the teaching-learning process;
7. Institutional linkage and service extension;
8. Research activities;
9. Infrastructure and equipment;
10. Administrative and financial management

<sup>4</sup> COPAES, Marco General de Referencia para los Procesos de Acreditación de Programas Académicos de Tipo Superior, Versión 3.0, México City, 2015.





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The effectiveness of ANPADEH's accreditation process is achieved by carrying out the following stages of the process, which is subject to a rigorous calendar in a year time cycle. The stages of the evaluation-accreditation process goes as follows:

1. Signature of ANPADEH's Code of Ethics is required by all participants in each visit.
  2. Special funding as an official policy to convince all universities to participate includes different types of incentives be used by the programs to be accredited
  3. Allowing the accredited programs to publicly inform their communities and society at large of their achievements when accredited.
  4. Divulging all pertinent information regarding the accreditation process, criteria, timetables, against which they will be assessed, by way of web page, and distribution of a Guide to Performance Criteria to all programs.
  5. Promoting induction workshops held at any institution who solicits it
  6. Promoting a yearly workshop to support the self-study process held at ANPADEH's headquarters.
  7. Maintaining one general calendar for all processes, starting in November with the call to the accreditation process and ending in September with the handing of certificates to those accredited.
  8. Maintaining identical program of activities and time duration for each visit, Sunday thru Wednesday, for most of the visits.
  9. Negotiating final visiting agendas between the visiting team coordinator and the director of the program within the four-day in situ evaluation limit.
  10. Celebrating a yearly Reflection and Analysis Encounter for all visiting team members who participated in the in situ evaluation of that year. They are invited by ANPADEH as a means of an exchange of experiences and learning.
  11. Carrying out a Magna Ceremony to recognize the achievement of the accreditation by the institutions that had positive evaluations and to stimulate the improvement of quality in Higher Education.
  12. Participating in the events organized by the school and professional associations (ASINEA, SMI, FCARM, etc.) at the national and international level.
3. **How do you respect diversity of culture and mission of institutions under review while maintaining minimum standards for the profession?**

All architecture programs in Mexico are required to demonstrate compliance of the 10 general criteria established by COPAES (see above). The specific contents of these criteria depend upon the disciplines each accrediting board handles. ANPADEH's specific guidelines are originally based on UIA's



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(International Union of Architects) Architectural Education Charter, ASINEA's<sup>5</sup>, (Association of Institutions and Schools of Architecture) basic criteria for architectural education in Mexico and the recommendations by the Mexican Federation of Colleges of Architecture (professional). Also the guidelines of the INQAAHE's<sup>6</sup> Guidelines of Good Practice are shared, together with the Canberra Accord's Rules and Regulations. Since all architecture programs in Mexico will lead to a Professional Degree and a *Cedula* (license to perform), ANPADEH is required to ensure that all accredited programs comply with a basic "indicative curriculum" (field areas and its proportion), a five year full time professional education or 400 academic course credits (theoretical and practical), which are considered to be sufficient to demonstrate the competences required for the students as for knowledge, abilities, attitudes and values to practice as architect. Up to now, programs from large and small schools, mature and new programs, public and private institutions, religious or lay oriented, all have been able to demonstrate the quality of the study program. No two study programs are completely alike.

#### 4. How does your agency inform itself about the needs of the profession, worldwide developments in the discipline of accreditation, and developments in education?

##### a) Needs of the profession

In general, ANPADEH has to ensure that it stays current regarding the needs of the profession. To do so, representatives of the FCARM (Federation of Colleges of Architects of Mexico, officially organized practitioners) are active members of ANPADEH's General Assembly which meet at least twice yearly. Through these meetings the ideas upon which the criteria of ANPADEH's evaluation should be revised are compiled. Also the Technical Committee of the ANPADEH meets five times a year to carry out the technical duties but also can analyze the changes necessary to consider in the regulatory framework for the accreditations. Another source of updating issues comes from the annual workshop on ANPADEH's evaluating experiences pointed out in section 2 above. Recently the general framework for the evaluation and accreditation processes was renewed by the technical committee considering the opinions of accredited schools, professional practitioners, evaluators, members of related professions, evaluators and authorities.

##### b) Developments in the discipline of accreditation;

Representatives of ANPADEH have participated in UNESCO-UIA Education Commission, in the Washington Accord Reunions, in three international Conferences organized by The Centre for Quality Assurance in International Education, held in Mexico City, San José, Costa Rica, and Santiago de Chile, as well as supporting Central American architectural educators in five Forums leading to the establishment of the Central American accreditation Board for

<sup>5</sup> Asociación de Instituciones de Enseñanza de la Arquitectura-México

<sup>6</sup> International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education,

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Architecture and Engineering. In Mexico, our Board has organized since 2005, an “*Encounter of Architectural Programs Accredited by ANPADEH*”, to exchange experiences, share new education models and be updated in the discipline. Also there is a workshop every year at the end of January that gathers the teams in charge of carrying out the accreditation process of the programs to be evaluated during the coming period of evaluations that goes from April to June of every year.

### c) *Developments in education;*

ANPADEH is one of the 29 Mexican Accrediting Boards recognized by COPAES. Every year it has to inform on its work and every five years has to go through a process of renewed recognition by COPAES. Twice yearly, ANPADEH participates in the educators nationwide ASINEA Assembly. Likewise every year ANPADEH participates in at least one International Congress to keep updated on the most recent trends on the disciplinary as well as the educational fields.

### 5. **In addition to the assessment of institutional resources and how they are allocated with respect to the institutional mission, how does your agency assess student performance outcomes?**

As part of its Requirements for Accreditation, ANPADEH has defined a list of 24 indicators that students must demonstrate to acquire the competencies to have a minimum profile. These must met either at a level of “awareness”, “understanding” or of “ability” for all programs seeking accreditation.

An important event in the preparation to the accreditation visit, is the assembly of an exposition of student work from all required courses of all semesters of the current school period. Exhibits must include examples of minimum requirements to pass, average and high achievement. The works should reflect the universe of criteria to support the academic program and the integral formation of the student; these should be of sufficient quantity to ensure that all students are meeting the performance criteria. ANPADEH provides a “technical index card” where specific information on each work is provided, including the objective of the exercise and the opinion of the faculty, to aid the evaluators’ appreciation of the work exposed.

Besides the above, all along the 10 categories of parameters there are many indicators referring to the activities and the achievements the students must have to reach the comprehensive profile at the end of their school formation.

### 6. **How are your governance and secretariat functions organized to assure integrity and professionalism in the conduct of their operations?**

In Mexico accreditation is voluntary. The organizations that have authority for setting standards and accrediting professional programs of education are officially recognized boards under the endorsement of the Mexican Government through the *Consejo para la Acreditación de la Educación Superior, A. C., COPAES* (National Council for the Accreditation of Higher Education-governmental). The ANPADEH is an autonomous organization recognized



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officially (October 9, 2002, November 5, 2007) by the COPAES and is subject to evaluation every five years by this board.

ANPADEH is an autonomous self supported organization that is structured in three levels; a) A General Assembly, composed of representatives of academia, and practicing architects (ASINEA and FCARM). b) A Directive Council and; c) A Technical Committee. This Committee is composed of about 10 academic evaluators and the Executive Director. It is charge of the evaluation process and the decision on accreditation. Each member of this committee coordinates the visiting team along with two other academics from a region different of the school, a practicing architect and one recent graduated student from el program being evaluated.

The budget for the ANPADEH is met by the service fee charged to the education programs to be evaluated, and reviewed yearly. No one, with the exception of office administrative personnel, receives fee or payment. Directives and evaluators have all their travel and lodging expenses covered. All evaluators receive a "Diploma of Participation" for each process, duly recognized both by the educators and the practitioners for their personal certification evaluations. At the end of the accreditation, each program evaluates the whole process and its participants. During the workshop on the experiences of evaluation, carried out usually in September) questionnaires are handed out to the participants to evaluate the process and to make suggestions on possible changes. The information is used to better improve the services and the processes on the administrative as well as the evaluating activities.

**7. What are your mechanisms to insure that expertise and experience in the applications of standards, procedures, and values are present in members of visiting teams, commissions, and staff (please supply an organization chart)?**

To become a member of ANPADEH's evaluators, the candidates must participate though an Open National Call for evaluators and meet several requirements; among other:

- Belong to an accredited program
- To present an application
- To have a letter of recommendation from the school authorities
- Have a Master or Doctorate degree in architecture or related fields
- Have at least 10 years of experience in the academic field
- To have experience in teaching, administration, research, diffusion and extension of academic work

To become eligible to be part of the technical committee

- Must have participated in at least 5 evaluation visits and received excellent performance evaluations



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- Show good performance and dedication to the duties assigned during the evaluation process
- To be committed to ANPADEH's objectives, purposes and philosophy.

The characteristics of the visiting team are established in the ANPADEH's Accreditation Code. This code establishes that there will be five official members appointed by the ANPADEH; three belonging to the academic field (who should be included in the ANPADEH's National Evaluators' Registration and acknowledged by the COPAES). These should pertain to a different geographical region different from that of the institution where the Academic Program is being assessed; one member of the local Architectural Professional Organization and one more member representative of the civil society (representative of the Construction Industry or a recent student graduated from the program), neither of them shall have a current labor or academic link with the institution. Once the team has been appointed, its members shall be introduced to the institution that will be assessed. There is the possibility of objecting up to one member if there is a possible conflict of interests.

One of the academic representatives designated by the ANPADEH, a member of the Technical Committee, will lead the team; he/she will be responsible for the complete procedure of the visit and will act as the speaker during the session of evaluation with ANPADEH's Technical Committee.

To avoid conflict of interests among the members of the visiting evaluation team, the following shall be complied:

- None of the academic members shall belong to the geographic entity of the institution where the Academic Program is under accreditation process;
- None of the members shall have any records that suggest prejudice in favor or against the institution,
- None of the members shall maintain a current liaison with the institution,
- The local members, the one belonging to the Architectural Professional Organization and the Civil Society representative, will be acknowledged in their community for their professional work, for their proceedings in benefit of the local society and for their good standing.

In order to exercise disagreement to a member of the visiting team, the institution shall show accurate proof of the possible conflict of interests.

Upon invitation of the ANPADEH, each visiting team will be able to add a local or international observer.

### Integration of the visiting team

The ANPADEH requires that all members and observers participate in an integration and orientation session prior to the visit, at the site of the evaluation, carried out the first day of activities. In this session the team will get to know each other and will review: the Accreditation Process General Framework, the ANPADEH's Code of Ethics, the complete file of each Academic Program and



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the preliminary comments made by the Technical Committee. During this first session prior to the visit, the visiting team will clearly understand its function, the work extent and the visit's nature.

To this effect, each member of the team will sign a confidentiality and conduct letter in accordance to the ANPADEH's Code of Ethics before starting the visit's work. The team chief will attach these documents to the visit's complete file. The members of the visiting team commit themselves to participate in all the activities of the visit without having any other engagement that distract their participation. It is desirable that the whole team is settled before starting the team's integration and orientation sessions.

It is required that the Executive Director of the ANPADEH have experience as an educator and academic administrator, with awareness in international education systems, as well as a professional manager. The administrative staff should have knowledge of the processes for the positions they fill and support properly the requirements of the visiting team during the visit.

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