



IFLA EUROPE
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

THE COMMON TRAINING FRAMEWORK FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE OF IFLA EUROPE AND ECLAS

A Common Training Framework (CTF) defines the knowledge, skills, and competences necessary for the pursuit of a specific profession, defining what a person is able to know, to understand and to do. In the years 2021 and 2022 the InnoLAND project carried out a collaborative process that included the delegates of IFLA Europe and representatives of LA schools in the EU and beyond. This proposed CTF was accepted by the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools in its General Assembly on September 14, 2021, and the Executive Committee of the European Region of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA Europe) in spring 2023.

Article 1. Scope

This Common Training Framework (CTF) refers to the profession of Landscape Architect working within the European Union and sets the minimum standard of requirements for the professional recognition of landscape architect within the EU. The CTF promotes common standards for landscape architects and supports mobility of professionals. Besides this the standards as set out here aim to act as a benchmark for professional landscape architects in Europe and beyond. The CTF covers education, professional practice and continuous professional development requirements for landscape architects to have a smooth and barrier-free access to practicing the profession within the EU.

Article 2. The task of landscape architects

Landscape architects plan, design and manage natural and built environments, applying aesthetic and scientific principles to address ecological sustainability, quality and health of landscapes, collective memory, heritage and culture, and territorial justice. By leading and coordinating other disciplines, landscape architects deal with the interactions between natural and cultural ecosystems, such as adaptation and mitigation related to climate change and the stability of ecosystems, socio-economic improvements, and community health and welfare to create places that anticipate social and economic well-being (IFLA World, 2020).

Article 3. Academic and practice requirements

To meet the requirements of national or state recognition for the professional qualification of landscape architects, the level of graduation must be at least level seven of the European Qualification Framework, a master diploma or equivalent in the field of landscape architecture. For professional qualification as a landscape architect, candidates must complete a post graduate professional traineeship.

Article 4. The core areas of landscape architecture education

To be recognised as a component of professional qualification recognition, landscape architecture programmes must be delivered by university-level institutions and teach competences in the core areas of the discipline, which are landscape planning, landscape design, and landscape management. This is carried out through the conception, development, communication and implementation of landscape projects, programmes and policies, involving intervention in the landscape at different scales of time and space. It requires the acquisition of a range of transversal and transformative competences for sustainable development of landscapes.

Article 5. Fields of knowledge, understanding and skills

Landscape architecture projects, programmes and strategies need to be both feasible and sustainable. They should grow out of and fit into their social, environmental, economic and cultural context, with the participation of all relevant actors. For this, landscape architecture study programmes must result in acquiring competences in landscape planning, landscape design and construction, and landscape management as established by the guidance documents of the European landscape architecture organisations for higher education and professional practice:

- a. Landscape Planning for developing plans, policies, strategies, scenarios, and visions for sustainable urban and rural landscapes;
- b. Landscape Design for the creation of sustainable, functional, meaningful landscapes of an outstanding design quality;
- c. Landscape Management for developing ecological-based tactical, strategic, and operational landscape management plans.

To meet these needs the study programmes shall provide the learners with opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in the following areas:

1. The structure of the physical landscape as well as the natural systems and processes operating to shape and influence it.
2. The historical development and the land use and management systems that have led to today's landscapes systems and patterns .
3. The development, morphology, and function of human settlements, including their characteristic built form, types and structures.
4. The ways in which individuals, social groups, and society as a whole, both past and present, have perceived, and continue to perceive, value, and interact with their landscapes.
5. The legal, political, institutional and policy frameworks which influence the process of conservation, consumption and sustainable development of landscape resources.

6. Approaches, methods, and techniques for representations during the design process, for presenting the analysis and forecast of the structure, systems and processes of the landscape, including its relevant actors and stakeholders.
7. The precedents of historic and contemporary parks, gardens, planned and designed cultural landscapes, landscape designs and plans.
8. Planning, management and design principles and skills for intervening in landscapes, at different scales of time and space to achieve specific restoration, protection, conservation of development objectives as well as for the wider benefit of the environment, society and economy as a whole.
9. Project implementation, both for management and design, including the materials, both living and inert, including native and exotic vegetation, and techniques and construction standards for contracting, realisation, in accordance with the applicable building regulations, and aftercare.
10. The professional practice of landscape architecture, including the professional ethics, the stages of the planning, design process, construction, and technics as well as the practices of project management.
11. Strategies, methodology and tools for research in landscape architecture on planning, design and management.
12. Transversal and transformative competences of landscape architects to contribute to sustainable landscapes and addressing environmental and societal challenges.

Article 6. Balance between practical and theoretical aspects of education

The study programmes should maintain a balance between practical and theoretical aspects of landscape architectural education. The definition of the learning aims and outcomes of the study programme shall clarify this balance between theoretical aspects and the practical part that concerns the core competences for planning, design, and management of landscapes.

Article 7. Common Training Test and recognition of professional qualification

Professionals complying with the requirements of this CTF are entitled to apply for recognition of their professional qualification by taking a Common Training Test according to Article 49b in the Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC).

Article 8. National and international registration

Landscape architects that meet the requirements of Articles 3 - 7 of this CTF, shall be included in a professional landscape architects register in the country where they usually practise. Registered Landscape Architects are eligible to receive the Landscape Architect's European Professional Card.

Article 9. Continuous Professional Development

Registered landscape architects are required to maintain and update their competence and knowledge base through participation in Continuous Professional Development courses and have these registered according to the national regulations.

Article 10. Compliance with code of professional standards and ethics

Registered landscape architects are required to comply with the internationally recognised [code of professional standards and ethics that is in force and provided by IFLA Europe](#).

Annex 1. Guidance on the implementation and the details of the CTF for LA

Ad Article 1. IFLA Europe has published a procedure to facilitate the mobility of landscape architects within Europe (IFLA Europe 2015).

Ad Article 2. The IFLA World 2020 definition will act as a basis for the next definition by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) which is revising the current definition.

Ad Article 3. A minimum of 300 ECTS for a full landscape architecture education is advised. Depending on the national context level 7 is a master, but can also be a postgraduate degree or diploma. The professional training, both as part of the curriculum and the post-graduate traineeship should be supervised by a landscape architect and include a final test/exam. A period of two years is advised for the professional traineeship.

Ad Article 4. While the regular landscape architecture programmes should be delivered by university-level institutes, the post graduate traineeship and continuous professional development can also be delivered by professional and other organisations.

Ad Article 5. The elaboration of the areas is presented in the following entries:

1. The structure of the physical landscape as well as the natural systems and processes operating to shape and influence it (analysing landscape systems, processes, patterns with their characteristics, meaning and challenges).
2. The historical development and the land use and management systems that have led to today's patterns of vernacular and cultural landscapes. Taking into account the material and immaterial cultural heritage and how landscape character arises from the local interaction between natural and cultural factors.
3. The development, morphology, and function of human settlements, including their characteristic built form and building types, built structures and forms of infrastructure, and in particular their associated open space structures.
4. The ways in which individuals, social groups, and society as a whole, both past and present, have perceived, and continue to perceive, value, and interact with their landscapes, and imbue them with diverse meanings and values.
5. The legal, political, institutional and policy frameworks which influence the process of conservation and development of the landscape and its resources. The way these frameworks come into being and are applied, as well as the contemporary discourse relating to environmental planning, design, and management.
6. Approaches, methods, and techniques for (1) representing, analysing and forecasting the structure, systems and processes of the landscape, including the services it provides; (2) reflective practice using representations in an iterative way during the design and planning process; (3) assessing possible impacts on the landscape; and (4) for understanding the needs and expectations of its actual and potential users and other relevant actors and stakeholders, both human and non-human.
7. The precedents of historic and contemporary parks, gardens, planned and designed landscapes, landscape designs and plans together with the ideas and individuals behind them, and the wider cultural and intellectual context in which they have developed.
8. Planning, management and design principles and skills for intervening in landscapes, at different scales of time and space, to achieve specific restoration and maintenance, protection, conservation or development objectives as well as for the wider benefit of environment, society and economy as a whole, by integrating the relevant characteristics of people and place in an innovative manner on the basis of the appropriate theoretical underpinning.
9. Project implementation, both for management and design, including the materials, both living and inert, including native and exotic vegetation, and techniques and construction standards for contracting, realisation, and aftercare.
10. The professional practice of landscape architecture, including the development and role of the profession, professional ethics, the stages of the planning and design process and the practices of project management and interdisciplinary collaboration, while taking account of the wider considerations of public and environmental health, and safety and consumer protection.
11. An appropriate set of methods and tools for landscape architecture research, including 'research for design', 'research on design', and 'research through design' which can be applied both on planning, design and management of landscapes.

12. Transformative competences of landscape architects practiced in a transversal way: systems thinking, anticipatory competence, normative competence, strategic competence, collaboration competence, critical thinking, self-awareness, and integral problem-solving in order to contribute to sustainable landscapes that help to face current challenges interactions between natural and cultural ecosystems, such as adaptation and mitigation related to climate change and the stability of ecosystems, socio-economic improvements, and community health and welfare to create places that anticipate social and economic well-being. The transformative and transversal competences are based on the GreenComp of the EU.

Ad Article 6. As a guidance the practical and theoretical forms of learning should be balanced. The practical aspects should comprise at least 50% of the ECTS of the whole landscape architecture programme, either in the integrated master or in the combination of a bachelor and master programme. The practical aspects of landscape architecture are taught in studios. Studios are a form of teaching in which students are involved in the development of design or planning proposals working to a given brief or one which they develop themselves, either individually or in small groups. Supervision, involving consultations and intermediate presentations, takes place on a regular but flexible basis by one or more staff.

Ad Article 7. The common training test shall be organised by the competent national body. It will take place according to the necessity but should be offered at least once per calendar year. The contents of the test shall allow verifying all theoretical and practical competences of the landscape architect's profession as laid down in Articles 4 and 5.

Ad Article 9. Per year a minimum of 8 hours of continuous professional development is advised, for which the registered landscape architect needs to collect and provide proof in the form of certificates or other relevant documents. The providers of continuous professional development should meet the standards set by the national competent regulatory body. The national organisation for this vary, can be the chamber, a national registration organisation, the national association of landscape architecture, or other bodies.

Ad Article 10. It is advised that the national codes of conducts refer to and comply with the [IFLA Europe code of Ethics and Professional Conduct](#).

Definitions

For the purposes of this Common Training Framework for Landscape Architecture, the following definitions apply:

- (a) 'EQF': European Qualifications Framework for Life Long Learning, with the descriptors of 8 levels of competences: knowledge, skills and Responsibility and autonomy (see: <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page>).
- (b) 'Common Training Test': A standardised aptitude test available across participating Member States and reserved to holders of a particular professional qualification. Passing such a test in a Member State shall entitle the holder of a particular professional qualification to pursue the profession in any host Member State concerned under the same conditions as the holders of professional qualifications acquired in that Member State (PQD, Article 49b, 1).
- (c) 'Competent Authority': Any authority or body empowered by a Member State specifically to issue or receive training diplomas and other documents or information and to receive the applications, and take the decisions, referred to in the Professional Qualifications Directive (PQD, Article 3, 1d).
- (d) 'CPD': Continuous Professional Development. The activities of professionals to update their competences.
- (e) 'Design' (noun): The design process in which a product (that is, the design) is projected and sometimes also implemented. The design can take the form of a plan of multiple geographic scales ranging from regions to site projects, it can be a regional plan, a strategy, open space design, garden design. Design here also implies the technical design.
- (f) 'Design' (verb): The act of projecting future environments or objects, for instance through drawings or other representations. In landscape architecture the verb 'design' means giving four-dimensional form and function to landscapes at multiple geographic scales and the development of landscapes in time.

- (g) 'ECT': European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System or ECTS credits: The credit system for higher education used in the European Higher Education (PQD, Article 3, 1n).
- (h) 'European Professional Card': An electronic certificate proving either that the professional has met all the necessary conditions to provide services in a host Member State on a temporary and occasional basis or the recognition of professional qualifications for establishment in a host Member State (PQD, Article 3, 1k).
- (i) 'Evidence of formal qualifications': Diplomas, certificates and other evidence issued by an authority in a Member State designated pursuant to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions of that Member State and certifying successful completion of professional training obtained mainly in the Community. Where the first sentence of this definition does not apply, evidence of formal qualifications referred to in paragraph 3 shall be treated as evidence of formal qualifications (PQD, Article 3, 1c).
- (j) 'Full landscape education': Education that is focused on the discipline of landscape architecture and includes learning activities where the graduate acquires the competences listed in 'Article 5. Fields of knowledge, understanding and skills' of this CTF, while allowing for elective subjects. A full landscape education is completed by graduation on EQF level 7.
- (k) 'Internship': Extended period of supervised residency on the part of the student in a design or planning office or in a nursery or contracting firm to gain practical work experience. Frequently accompanied by the keeping of a diary and/or the preparation of a report.
- (l) 'Landscape': an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. It ... covers natural, urban and peri-urban areas, whether on land, water or sea. It concerns not just remarkable landscapes but also ordinary or everyday landscapes and degraded areas (European Landscape Convention). Landscape includes amongst other things, rural and peri-urban regions, cultural landscapes, infrastructure in the landscape, green and blue infrastructure, green spaces, nature conservation areas, recreation areas, public and semi-public open space, individual parks, squares, and (historic) gardens.
- (m) 'Landscape architect': The professional who plans, designs and manages natural and built environments, applying aesthetic and scientific principles to address ecological sustainability, quality and health of landscapes, collective memory, heritage and culture, and territorial justice. (Based on IFLA, 2020).
- (n) 'Landscape Architecture Research': The type of research that is carried out by and for the discipline of landscape architecture which can be categories in (1) Research for design: Research is used to inform or validate the design. In other words, knowledge is acquired in a targeted manner as input for the design (2) Research on design: Plan analyses are used to study and organize operational design. It involves finding specific design concepts, principles, precedents, or types as a foundation for future design. (3) Research through design: A form of research where designing and designs are applied as a research strategy to explore, identify, and map possibilities. (4) Research about design: This primarily concerns understanding and identifying design processes through the observations, interviews, and other activities of designers (Nijhuis en De Vries, 2018).
- (o) 'PQD': Professional Directive Qualification Directive.
- (p) 'Professional qualifications': Qualifications attested by evidence of formal qualifications, an attestation of competence referred to in Article 11, point (a) and/or professional experience;(PQD, Article 3, 1b).
- (q) 'Professional training': Activities of professional practice, either during, in between or after landscape architecture education. For learners this take the form of an internship or a professional traineeship.
- (r) 'Professional traineeship': A period of professional practice carried out under supervision provided it constitutes a condition for access to a regulated profession, and which can take place either during or after completion of an education leading to a diploma (PQD, Article 3, 1j).
- (s) 'Professional Recognition': The way a profession is regulated on a European or a national level according to a set of standards of the recognizing organisation. The effect of this recognition varies, depending on the legal authorization of the recognizing body. On a national level it may result in the right to use the title of landscape architect, the right to work as a landscape architect or to work a specified type of commissions or to be allowed to formally "sign" a plan.

- (t) 'Project implementation': The process of putting a plan or design into effect. This includes preparing technical drawings and specifications, putting the project out to tender, evaluating the bids and selecting a contractor as well as supervising and overseeing the progress of the works on site and finally certifying that they have been satisfactorily completed.
- (u) 'Regulated education and training': any training which is specifically geared to the pursuit of a given profession and which comprises a course or courses complemented, where appropriate, by professional training, or probationary or professional practice (PQD, Article 3, 1d).
- (v) 'Regulated profession': A professional activity or group of professional activities, access to which, the pursuit of which, or one of the modes of pursuit of which is subject, directly or indirectly, by virtue of legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions to the possession of specific professional qualifications; in particular, the use of a professional title limited by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions to holders of a given professional qualification shall constitute a mode of pursuit. Where the first sentence of this definition does not apply, a profession referred to in paragraph 2 shall be treated as a regulated profession (PQD, Article 3, 1a).
- (w) 'Studio': Form of teaching in which students are involved in the development of design or planning proposals working to a given brief or one which they develop themselves, either individually or in small groups. Supervision, involving consultations and intermediate presentations, takes place on a regular but flexible basis by one or more staff.

References

- Council of Europe, 2000. **European Landscape Convention**. <https://rm.coe.int/16807b6bc7>
- ECLAS (Bruns, D. et al). 2010. **ECLAS Guidance on landscape architecture education**. The Tuning Project, ECLAS - LE:NOTRE
- EU, 2005. **Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications**.
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32005L0036>
- EU, 2021. GreenComp. **The European sustainability competence framework** - Bianchi, G., Pisiotis, U. and Cabrera Giraldez, M., GreenComp The European sustainability competence framework, Punie, Y. and Bacigalupo, M. editor(s), EUR 30955 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, ISBN 978-92-76-46485-3, doi:10.2760/13286, JRC128040.
<https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC128040>
- European Commission, 2018. **Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC). The European Qualifications Framework: supporting learning, work and cross-border mobility**. ISBN 978-92-79-80382-6.
doi:10.2767/385613 KE-01-18-211-EN-N
- IFLA Europe, 2022. **Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**, consulted on the 15th of December 2022:
https://www.iflaeurope.eu/assets/docs/150218_IFLA_Europe_Code_of_Ethics_CBr.pdf
- IFLA World, 2020. **Definition of the profession of landscape architect**.
https://www.iflaeurope.eu/assets/docs/210120_IFLA_LA_Definition_Final.pdf
- InnoLAND. 2022. **Pan-European Common Training Framework for Landscape Architecture**. Report Output 2 of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership InnoLAND.
- UNESCO, 2017. **Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives**. UNESCO Education Department. Paris. ISBN 978-92-3-100209-0

Websites

- UN Sustainable Development Goals
<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>, The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, consulted on the 7th of December 2020.
- Overview of the documents with guidance and standards for landscape architecture education
<https://www.eclas.org/cooperation-with-ifla/>