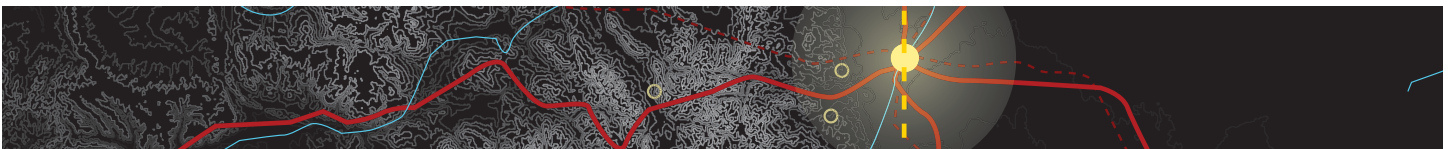




CHAPTER 3

PROFESSIONAL CURRICULUM



3. PROFESSIONAL CURRICULUM

STANDARD 3: The first professional-degree curriculum shall include the core knowledge skills and applications of landscape architecture.

- a. *In addition to the professional curriculum, a first professional degree program at the bachelor's level shall provide an educational context enriched by other disciplines, including but not limited to: liberal and fine arts, natural sciences, and social sciences, as well as opportunities for students to develop other areas of interest.*
- b. ***In addition to the professional curriculum, a first professional degree at the master's level shall provide instruction in and application of research and or/scholarly methods.***
- c. *A first professional degree at the master's level that does not require all students to have an undergraduate degree before receiving the MLA shall meet the requirements for a and b.*

INTENT: *The purpose of the curriculum is to achieve the learning goals stated in the mission and objectives. Curriculum objectives should relate to the program's mission and specific learning objectives. The program's curriculum should encompass coursework and other opportunities intended to develop students' knowledge, skills, and abilities in landscape architecture.*

State whether paragraphs a, b, or c (above) are relevant to this review:

Paragraph "b" is relevant to the Master of Landscape Architecture program at the University of Colorado Denver.

A. MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

1. **How does the curriculum address the program's mission, goals, and objectives?**

The curriculum offers a complement of classes that support the professional and academic core competencies desired for students in our master's program. We map the five learning objectives through the curriculum to make sure that students have been exposed to the key abilities, pursuits, contexts and practices of design, research, communication, ethics and content knowledge.

The professional scope of the curriculum ranges from technical courses introducing grading, drainage, and site work, construction materials, and plant materials to courses that address professional practice, ethics, and communication skills. A student's abilities to identify the appropriate technical skills and apply professional metrics and practices should evolve as they progress through the sequence of courses outlined in Appendix B.

Our focus on communication refines the students' abilities to use oral, written, and graphic means to convey ideas to different audiences. These fundamental skills are applied in design reviews, seminars and discussion scenarios, service learning situations, and courses or opportunities in which students are required to share their insights through writing. Graphic media and computer applications are taught, and employed throughout the program, as are presentation skills.

Research and inquiry constitute an essential framework of the curricular content and delivery. The ability to identify an issue and determine ways to find solutions is a process that operates in design studios and technical classes as well as in history and theory courses. The curriculum requires students to take courses that pursue inquiry and research issues to find viable alternatives and solutions. Research is fundamental to our mission and goals; a reflective, inquiring mind is developed through practice, and our focus on pressing critical issues allows students to engage the capacity for design to improve circumstances and conditions.

2. How does the program identify the knowledge, skills, abilities and values it expects students to possess at graduation?

We utilize our five learning objective categories (design, research, communication, ethics and content knowledge) to identify the overarching areas in which the skills, abilities, and values are delivered. These are explained in more detail in Chapter 4, Section A. Each of these areas has specific learning outcomes and attributes attached to it, which are then mapped into specific courses throughout the curriculum, with emphasis on the core courses and design studios. Faculty are then asked to develop more detailed emphasis on these metrics and objectives, and to develop means of assessing and measuring the students' level of attainment.

In AY 2015-16 we will be introducing a "Threshold Portfolio," an evaluative submittal that has been in the planning stages for a few years. This submission, to occur at the end of their third semester in the program, will allow students to compile a reflective portfolio of their work thus far in the program. Faculty will review these to assess the student's demonstration of core competencies and skills. Moreover, through feedback the students will receive, this portfolio can become a formative experience as they move forward in the program and make decisions about areas of interest, elective courses, and realms of inquiry.

B. PROGRAM CURRICULUM

1. How does the program curriculum include coverage of:

Note: Catalogue descriptions of courses referred to in this section are found in Appendix B.

History, theory and criticism. These content areas are fundamental to the curriculum and are the venue for much of the focused teaching for critical and theoretical paradigms guiding our mission. The curriculum requires students to take a series of three courses that deal directly with these areas (LDAR 5521 Landscape History; LDAR 6620 Landscape Theory; LDAR 6949 Research Tools & Methods). In addition, students must take two additional electives within this track from a roster of course offered in the program and college.

Further, aspects of history, theory and criticism are offered as supporting learning outcomes within a number of other core and elective classes offered by the program. Diverse examples include the popular course LDAR 6722 Contested Terrains, and the landscape thesis track described in Section H of this chapter.

Natural and cultural systems including principles of sustainability. Natural and cultural systems are covered in LDAR 5572 Landscape Ecology, and in the variety of courses that deal with green roofs and living systems, as well as specific studios in which these issues and content come to the fore such as the advanced design studios dealing with water in the west. The concept of sustainability is treated as an ethical concern as well, and thus would be covered in courses that engage issues of environmental balance. Cultural systems are covered in design studios dealing with local communities.

Public policy and regulation. This is not an area of focus for the program; nevertheless these topics are introduced in LDAR 6630 Site, Society and Environment. Students may elect to take courses to

address these topics from the offerings across the college, particularly those offered in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program.

Design, planning and management at various scales and applications including but not limited to pedestrian and vehicular circulation, grading, drainage, and storm water management. These topics are at the heart of a set of core competencies for professional design skills. They are addressed in classes throughout the curriculum, and will appear as topics or areas of content in multiple design studios after the first semester. Design is a core program objective so students will encounter many ways to think about the design and planning processes as they progress through the curriculum sequence. Faculty will bring these issues to bear in the design of studios and the selection of a diverse range of project sites and studies.

LDAR 5532 Landform Manipulation introduces the interface of landform and storm water. Several recent advanced design studios focused on issues of storm water design and management at scales ranging from a small site to a major engineered watershed in the City of Denver. Storm water and drainage are also covered in elective courses such as LDAR 6712 Green Roof/Living Systems.

Grading, a fundamental design practice for landscape architecture, is also exercised in design studios. One example was an LDAR 6607 Advanced Design Studio that engaged landform as an artistic and functional directive for an international competition in Copenhagen.

Site design and implementation: materials, methods, technologies, applications. These topics are introduced in required core classes and form a basis of professional practice skills that every student should know and demonstrate. LDAR 5532 Landform Manipulation introduces students to aspects of site design and implementation. LDAR 6632 Construction Materials and Methods introduces technical and practical aspects of details and materials, and presents some new technologies and materials for design implementation. Finally, LDAR 6641 Computer Applications in Landscape Architecture gives students digital tools to explore and record their work in this content area.

A "Design:Build" project undertaken in 2011 allowed students to construct the award-winning "Shade Structure" in Bluff, Utah. This effort partnered two consecutive classes – a section of LDAR 6608 Advanced Landscape Design Studio and a Maymester class that constituted the time on site for the installation.

Construction documentation and administration. LDAR 6750 Professional Practice, a required core class, introduces students to construction contracts and specifications, and briefly covers considerations for construction administration. More directly, the required class LDAR 6632 Construction Materials and Methods requires students to produce a construction document package.

In some cases, these topics are covered by advanced courses and studios. One example is classes associated with the Learning Landscapes initiative, when students partnered with local licensed practitioners to help produce construction documents for the Denver Public Schools playground sites.

Written, verbal and visual communication. Strong and effective written, oral and visual communication is a core value and foundational objective of the program. This means that some component of communication is embedded in every course offered in the curriculum. The level at which it is emphasized will vary depending on the stated focus of the class. One example would be the emphasis on visual/graphic communication in design studio, partnered with the ability to give an oral presentation on the design in a review or public meeting setting. Another facet would be the emphasis on strong clear written communication in the history and theory classes, although writing is present in many other core and elective classes. For example, in LDAR 6630 students are

required to make use of the campus Writing Center to produce written submissions for the course projects.

Professional practice. The required course dedicated to this topic is LDAR 6750 Professional Practice, typically taken in the final year of study. The new Extern Program will also afford students an introductory glimpse into facets of professional practice in design and planning firms and professional offices.

Professional values and ethics. LDAR 6750 Professional Practice addresses these topics through the lens of contracts, project administration, CLARB, and the identification of the ASLA mandate for health, safety and welfare. Ethics – a program objective – means more than professional ethics of practice and behavior. It is woven into courses as students encounter the ideas of a personal ethic, the ethics of a community, an ethic for how to treat the land and environment.

In this sense, courses ranging from LDAR 5572 Landscape Ecology to LDAR 6630 Site, Society and Environment play a role in helping our students develop their ethical frameworks. LDAR 6630 “is grounded in the proposal that the sites we work with are best considered not as discreet places but rather as sets of environmental and social relationships. As such, our approach to site should be primarily ethical and secondarily technical. Site analysis should set up the case for design work that not merely responds to the technical and logistical demands of a particular program but more importantly takes into account the claims that the parties to the various relationships which define the site have on each other and – where necessary – makes value judgments about these claims.”

Plants and ecosystems. Two required core classes specifically address this content, notably LDAR 5572 Introduction to Ecology and LDAR 6670 Plants in Design. LDAR 5521 History of Landscape Architecture includes content on plants in design. Additionally, studio courses address this through projects where this knowledge is applied.

In summer of 2012 an Advanced Plants elective course allowed students to create and implement a planting plan for the courtyards at Auraria Library on our campus. Students in this class worked with a faculty member and a local landscape contractor to accomplish this visible and important installation.

Computer applications and other advanced technologies. LDAR 6641 Computer Applications in Landscape Architecture gives student digital tools to explore and record their work, with emphasis on AutoCad and its digital interfaces. In an LDAR 6686 Advanced Digital Representation course offered in Fall 2014, students explored innovative new uses for software and created movies as well as 2-D and 3-D visuals.

2. *How does the curriculum address the designated subject matter in a sequence that supports its goals and objectives?*

The curriculum is consciously and tactically structured to address several of the program's goals and objectives. One example is specific sequencing that allows students to learn a skill and then apply it. For example in the first year sequence, the Introduction to GIS course occurs in the fall, and is followed by Studio 2 in the spring where this program and its attendant skills and inquiry methods are applied. Another example is found in the technical sequence; computer applications are introduced in the second semester before they are applied in Materials and Methods in the third term.

Other courses are also sequenced to build a body of knowledge and develop methods of inquiry and practice writing, as seen in the triumvirate of courses starting with the History of Landscape Architecture, followed by Landscape Theory, and then Research Methods.

Careful structuring also operates the location of specific sets of courses within a particular semester, and particularly in the first three semesters. An example of this is first semester, with the bundling of graphics and Studio 1, ecology, and then the supporting courses teaching history and GIS. To give more insight, the formal language of design is taught in history and can then be applied to studio; concepts of ecology are studied and can then be mapped with basic GIS; studio engages the idea of a transect which is presented in ecology; and so on.

A similarly tight linking of classes is also evident in the second semester with Studio 2 and "Site, Society and Environment," which introduces students to ideas of community, and the ethics and politics of place, and site.

The faculty also has given careful consideration to the learning outcomes and thematic foci for the sequence of studios. We address the unfolding development of skills starting with how we think about sites. Studio 1 considers "space, composition and experience." They explore how the landscape appears and can be understood as a medium, and consider its poetic and artistic qualities and aspects, using the lens of the student or individual. Studio 2 is about "systems, scales, and performance." The focus expands to understand the landscape from the point of view of others – communities and constituents, and uses GIS and other tools to explore the concepts. Studio 3 is about "place and materiality." Here, students explore the scale and feeling of spaces for people, typically in a site-based context. From this juncture, students move into the "vertical studios" which offer a variety of choices based on faculty and student interests. This occurs in the spring of both the second and third year. Studio 6 returns to the core outcomes, with a focus on infrastructure and community.

3. *How do student work and other accomplishments demonstrate that the curriculum is providing students with the appropriate content to enter the profession?*

This evidence is provided in several ways. First, there is external evidence. Our students are finding employment in professional design and planning offices and agencies; almost 100% of the graduating class of 2014 found work in the field, as have 50% of the graduates from 2015 at the time of this report. Additionally, many of the currently enrolled graduate students found employment in design and planning offices or in related disciplinary jobs for summer 2015. Supporting this, our survey of professionals (see Addendum G of this document) indicates that skills we emphasize are relevant: critical thinking, communication especially skills with writing, and first and foremost, design.

Other external validation is awards and honors. Each year we host professionals to review the students we nominate to receive ASLA Awards of Honor and Merit. These professionals consistently provide us feedback about the quality of our nominees. Further, we annually nominate a student to the LAF's Olmsted Scholar program. In 2010, our student Amanda Jeter was a finalist.

A team of our students won a 2012 National ASLA Student Award for Community Engagement; two teams of students took first place honors in two of the four categories in the national ASCA Haiti Ideas Design Challenge in 2010; and in 2014 a team of students was recognized with a 1st Place award in the National Park Service HALS Documentation Competition. Our students also win externally vetted scholarships and internship positions, such as the very competitive EDSA Internship (2013).

Internally, we formally evaluate our students' work in design reviews, and informally review their portfolios and dossier. We are in the final stages of implementing the "Threshold Portfolio," which will be required of every student entering the program in Fall 2015. This portfolio will give us specific metrics and provide evidence to review and assess the level of student learning for core competency acquisition. That said, we also assess each class in our core curriculum, including identifying student achievement (high, average, below average). (See Question D1 below)

Because the core curriculum includes courses that will provide students with the professional basics for entry level, we can then extrapolate student preparedness.

4. *How do the curriculum and other program opportunities enable students to pursue academic interests consistent with institutional requirements and entry into the profession?*

The required course of study will provide students with the introductory skills needed to enter the profession; they will all have been exposed to the basics, with some level of practice. Students are encouraged to pursue internships, and to find work over the summers, which gives them the practical and professional experiences they desire. Note that not all of our students are desirous of entering a traditional professional office; we have students who choose to enter public sector work or non-profits, or who wish to teach, or who simply wish to use their design training in other venues.

Students in our graduate program are encouraged to identify areas and topics for which they have a passion, and we advise them as to how they can move towards these goals and areas for their work. Every student is unique and brings some special talent or lens to bear on his or her graduate studies and aspirations for how to best use these skills.

C. SYLLABI

1. *How do syllabi include educational objectives, course content, and the criteria and methods that will be used to evaluate student performance?*

Although the appearance and design of a syllabus is individual to each faculty member, and expressive of the course's content and topics, all faculty members should be including certain standard items of information in their syllabi: course number and meeting time; faculty contact information; office hours; a description of the course and its objectives including some background and context for the material; details about evaluation of student work, attendance and classroom expectations; and references to key university policies (Title IX, disabilities, FERPA, etc.).

In recent semesters, the faculty has been asked to include direct reference to the departmental learning outcomes specifically being addressed in the course – the main objectives, with more detailed areas of measureable outcomes and criteria for evaluation and learning targets. This allows students to be more aware of how these objectives play out within the curriculum, and gives guidance to key learning expectations for this particular course.

Faculty review syllabi together at a faculty meeting; all syllabi are available to faculty on the shared server, and are placed on the CAP website once finalized for the semester.

2. *How do syllabi identify the various levels of accomplishment students shall achieve to successfully complete the course and advance in the curriculum?*

Syllabi state the grading policy indicating the level of performance required, and should identify the percentage or weight of assignments and deliverables in relationship to the course grade. A syllabus alone may not give the full scope of measure for student level of accomplishment as faculty may employ rubrics, evaluative tools and other forms of feedback to actually assign a grade or performance level for individual assignments or projects.

D. CURRICULUM EVALUATION

1. *How does the program evaluate how effectively the curriculum is helping students achieve the program's learning objectives in a timely way at the course and curriculum levels?*

We use our Faculty Course Evaluations to provide information about student achievement levels in the courses in the core curriculum; this directly relates to their evidenced learning and progress in

the curriculum. Summaries of these for the past three years are provided in Addendum C. This course level knowledge forms part of the discussions held in faculty meetings about our overall curriculum; minimally we devote one meeting per year to this, frequently our end of year retreat.

Further, in concert with our student advisor staff person, we monitor each individual student's progression towards graduation. Opportunities occur at many junctures to intervene and support a student. For instance, at the course level, if a student is struggling in a particular class there is a formal process to alert the student. This process is implemented around the middle of the semester, although a faculty member can engage it at any time and send the student a notification of concern. The formal reporting of a student having difficulties then activates the support system and allows the faculty member, advisor, and Department Chair to take appropriate steps to support the student. We are a small program and make it a point to know and be aware of our students. This also helps.

2. How does the program demonstrate and document ways of:
a. assessing students' achievements of course and program objectives in the length of time to graduation stated by the program?

The effectiveness of the program at the curricular level is demonstrated in our graduation records. Our retention rate is quite high, with very few students leaving the program once they begin. We also post a high number of "on-time graduation" candidates. Note that we consider both spring and summer on-time for graduation given slight variations within individual student tracking (thesis, study abroad, etc.); fall graduates are typically our post-professional students who had advanced standing and so complete the program in fewer than six semesters.

b. reviewing and improving the effectiveness of instructional methods in curriculum delivery?

One agenda for the regularly held faculty meetings is to have a few each year devoted to "improving our teaching." Sessions over the past three years have addressed topics ranging from writing effective syllabi and rubrics to advances in research tools by our dedicated fine arts bibliographer from the library.

Faculty is encouraged to engage multiple modes of teaching evaluation, and to utilize feedback on course delivery, content development, etc. Further, results of the Faculty Course Questionnaires may be discussed with the faculty member during their annual review, with a particular focus on improvement.

c. maintaining currency with evolving technologies, methodologies, theories and values of the profession?

Faculty members are encouraged to attend CELA, ASLA and other conferences where they can engage in conversations with colleagues and participate in discourse, and attend educational sessions that allow them to stay fresh with their materials. Further, faculty attends lectures locally, read, subscribe to journals, use the library, and meet with professionals from our community.

The research faculty members identify in their "Professional Plan" the areas in which they wish to develop, and they are given opportunity and support to do so.

3. How do students participate in evaluation of the program, courses, and curriculum?

Students anonymously evaluate every course they take through the university's mandatory "Faculty Course Questionnaire," which asks questions that directly pertain to the content, value, relevance, delivery, and faculty teaching that course.

Students are given every opportunity to speak openly about the courses and the curriculum with the Department Chair and/or Associate Chair, including informal conversations and convened

discussions. We take pride in being a responsive and open faculty, and are eager to receive feedback from the students. We listen and ask questions – we want to be connected, responsive, and able to address concerns and opportunities as they arise. One way we do this are the recurring department meetings each semester with faculty and students, which offer opportunity for comment on desired courses or topics.

The student chapter ASLA ran a survey in AY 2014-15 seeking student comments and feedback about the curriculum and courses – which ones were effective, what things were missing, and so on. The results of that survey are included in Addendum D of this document.,

E. AUGMENTATION OF FORMAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

1. *How does the program provide opportunities for students to participate in internships, off campus studies, research assistantships, or practicum experiences?*

The program proffers several different options and opportunities for students to augment their educational experiences. The College of Architecture and Planning has a staff person, Chris Nims, dedicated 50% time, who manages the Internship Program, including for landscape architecture students, and maintains a roster of and relationships with local design and planning firms. Students are typically placed in design and planning firms in the Denver metro region, although sometimes they enter internships elsewhere.

Landscape students may take one, 3-credit “Internship” as an optional open elective class; otherwise, internships are simply undertaken for the job exposure, and are typically paid positions. Examples of recent formalized internship placements for our students have included the Denver Regional Transportation District offices, the Denver Zoo, Blu Design (landscape and architecture), RNL Design, and the national competitive EDSA Internship in Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

Off campus studies also supplement our students' education experience. There are many optional Study Abroad opportunities run through CU Denver's Office of International Affairs, a robust and extensive campus resource for both our students seeking to study abroad as well as for the international students who arrive in Denver to study abroad with us. Their home page is: <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/internationalprograms/OIA/Pages/default.aspx>

Recent study abroad courses hosted by College of Architecture and Planning faculty and attended by landscape architecture students have included programs to Finland, Thailand, Guatemala, Copenhagen, Rome, and Turkey. In every academic year the college hosts at least two such programs, which the landscape architecture students typically take for elective credits. An exception to this is our annual Urban Design International Studio; any advanced landscape architecture student accepted to this summer studio program receives 6 credits for LDAR 6606 Advanced Design Studio.

Our landscape architecture students also have attended programs hosted by other units in CU Denver, for which they would receive standard open elective credits. Examples are: Scandinavia by Design (College of Arts & Media); and the Costa Rica Experience (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences).

Research assistantships also support students and offer them direct exposure to projects through close work with a faculty member. Recent examples of externally funded faculty research that has supported a graduate research assistant include work on the Learning Landscapes Initiative, now partnered with the Colorado Center for Health and Wellness at the Anschutz Medical Center, and a National Park Service CESU grant to work on a project at Rocky Mountain National Park.

Other students have been supported to engage research with faculty through funding mechanisms such as the CU Denver InWorks program (funds run through particular courses), and faculty development grants.

Practicums, per se, are not part of the landscape architecture program, however students may be hired to part-time jobs working under a licensed landscape architect in the College of Architecture and Planning's Colorado Center for Community Development. In these positions, students gain hands-on experience on projects throughout the state, ranging from small civic spaces to master plans for rural communities, and from signage and way-finding studies to "main street" designs.

Finally, we have the new Extern Program for the Department of Landscape Architecture being put into place in AY 2015-16. Modeled after the highly successful program at the University of Virginia, our students will have the opportunity to spend a week on a "job shadow" externship in local design and planning offices. We intend to require all students to participate in this program prior to the final semester in their course of studies. As the Extern Program evolves, we anticipate that a student will be able to participate in firms nationally.

2. *How does the program identify the objectives and evaluate the effectiveness of these opportunities?*

The College of Architecture and Planning's Internship Program is quite well developed, with specific criteria in place to help create the most positive outcomes and learning for both the student and the employer/firm. It includes tracking hours, defining job duties and desired areas for exposure and learning, and a reflective assessment from both the employer/ manager and the student. The objective is also quite clear: exposure to and experience in a professional situation.

Similar criteria will be in place for the new Extern Program, including a reflective evaluation by both the host and the participant.

For all the CU Denver study abroad experiences, the application to lead such a program is quite intensive and requires demonstration of the course objectives and outcomes in the application process, along with approval to lead the program from the Department Chair and the Dean of the college. Every study abroad program student participates in a course evaluation, quite similar to the Faculty Course Questionnaire, but with additional questions specific to the study abroad experience. These results are collected through the university's survey mechanisms, with results tabulated and sent to the faculty member and program administrator. In addition, a process for reflective comments is in place for the Urban Design Studio.

3. *Do students report on these experiences to their peers? If so, how?*

No - students do not formally report on these activities to their peers, although there are probably informal exchanges of information. The ASLA Student Chapter may have hosted an informal debriefing discussion following a Career Fair or Portfolio Night.

F. COURSEWORK:

(Bachelor's Level, if responding to Standard 3a or 3c, above)

1. ***In addition to the professional curriculum, describe how students also pursue coursework in other disciplines in accordance with institutional and program requirements.***
N/A
2. ***Do students take courses in the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences or other disciplines?***
N/A

G. AREAS OF INTEREST:

(Bachelor's Level, if responding to Standard 3a or 3c, above)

1. ***How does the program provide opportunities for students to pursue independent projects, focused electives, optional studios, certificates, minors, etc.?***

Although not required we have chosen to answer this:

The program offers several significant opportunities for a student to pursue academic or areas of interest or to attain depth in a topic relevant to their career interests or aspirations. We offer a Landscape Architecture Certificate in GIS [Geospatial Information Systems] that can be accomplished within the framework of the existing curriculum. Certificate opportunities afford our graduate students the choice to pursue areas of interest and attain demonstrated depth in a particular area.

Another way that our students can define areas of depth and focus is through pursuit of independent studies and thesis. Students may take up to two independent studies during their program of study under the dedicated course number LDAR 6840 Independent Study. These independent studies have clearly defined parameters including contact hour requirements, and a "faculty of record" directing the study. The thesis option is detailed below in Section H.

2. ***How does student work incorporate academic experiences reflecting a variety of pursuits beyond the basic curriculum?***
N/A

H. RESEARCH/SCHOLARLY METHODS:

(Master's Level, if responding to Standard 3b or 3c, above)

1. ***How does the curriculum provide an introduction to research and scholarly methods and their relation to the profession of landscape architecture?***

In 2012 the department faculty voted to make our existing optional research methods course a required class. The content of the course was updated to reflect this change. It addresses the scope of research pertinent to the discipline, field, and profession of landscape architecture. As befits a graduate program with a stated objective to pursue research, it considers the process of inquiry fundamental to research – for design studio and the design process, for advanced study in our field. The need for a more rigorous evaluation of built work has long been a demand for our profession, but most attempts have either focused on physical and ecological aspects or on the social impacts. The faculty believes that mixed methods are germane to inquiry, and will best serve the future needs of our field. As such, a variety of relevant methodologies and scholarly practices are covered in this course, including the arts and humanities and the social sciences.

In that sense, many other courses in our curriculum also address research through the practices of scholarship, the processes of inquiry, and the identification of relevant and probing issues worthy of consideration.

3. *How does the program demonstrate that theses or terminal projects exhibit creative and independent thinking and contain a significant research/scholarly component?*

The "Thesis Guidelines" - the material students would need and use – to undertake our optional Master of Landscape Architecture thesis track is provided in Addendum B of this document. The thesis track in our program was begun in the later 1990s, and has undergone several revisions to insure rigor, standards, and clarity of objectives and performance for the student. The thesis guidelines were revised in 2012, with a faculty vote approving them for implementation. To date, we have over three dozen completed Masters theses from our program.

Our thesis track is rigorous and requires several semesters of focused work, commencing with a required "Research Proposal." This is often but not always produced when the student is in the Research Methods course. Once the research topic proposal has been approved by a vote of the faculty, the student then moves to the next phase, which is a semester long independent study class under direction of his or her thesis advisor. If the work is not up to standards at this point, the student may be declined for continuation to complete a thesis; the independent Study is then counted as a single "history/theory elective." The final stage is a 6-credit thesis course taken in lieu of the final design studio in the terminal semester of the student's program of study. During this semester, the student meets established deadlines for submittal of written and visual materials, completes a scheduled thesis defense (open to the school), and makes any required final edits.

The thesis is then printed and bound, and a digital version is submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Colorado Denver and placed in the Auraria Library.

The process described above insures several checkpoints for the faculty and student to assess the depth of inquiry, products, and substance of the work.

Further evidence of the impact, significance, and quality of our theses is evidenced by the students who have presented their thesis research at peer-reviewed national conferences (CELA, ACSA, and so on). Several students also received external funding or fellowships for pursuing their work, and one student has also revised his thesis for publication as a book by a scholarly academic press.