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Canberra Accord on Architectural Education Ratified

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Accreditation and validation agencies from Australia, Canada, China, Korea, Mexico, the United States, and the Commonwealth Association of Architects announce the ratification of an Accord declaring substantial equivalency of professional degrees in architecture covered by their accreditation/validation systems. The Accord was signed by representatives of these systems in Canberra, Australia on 9 April 2008.

The Canberra Accord establishes that as of 1 January 2010 academic qualifications in architecture accredited/validated by The Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA), the Canadian Architectural Certification Board/Conseil canadien de certification en architecture (CACB/CCCA), the National Board of Architectural Accreditation (NBAA) of China, the Korea Architectural Accrediting Board (KAAB), the Consejo Mexicano de Acreditación de Enseñanza de la Arquitectura (COMAEA), the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) of the USA, and the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA) will be considered substantially equivalent by those agencies. Degrees, or qualifications, awarded prior to 1 January 2010 are not included in this agreement.

Quoting from the Accord:

“Having exchanged information on, and examined their respective criteria and procedures for accrediting/validating academic qualifications in architecture, the signatories have concluded that their systems are substantially equivalent. Through the Canberra Accord.....the signatories recognize the substantial equivalence of their systems in terms of accrediting/validating the academic requirements for the practice of architecture at the professional level.

“This being the case, academic qualifications in architecture accredited/ validated by one of the signatories should be accepted as having substantial equivalency and recommended for recognition by all signatories, subject to additional requirements imposed by local regulations.

“It is anticipated that the Accord will facilitate international mobility of graduates in architecture and contribute to improving the quality of architectural education through benchmarking.

“The Accord is a transparent (peer review) system for determining substantial equivalence of architecture degree program/mes. It is considered to be reflective of the core principles of the UNESCO-UIA Charter for Architectural Education (Revised Version 2005) and the relevant sections of the UIA Accord on Recommended International Standards on Professionalism in Architectural Practice (Revised Version 2005).”

‘Substantial equivalency’ is defined as follows:

“The term ‘substantial equivalency’ identifies a program/me as comparable in educational outcomes in all significant aspects, and indicates that it provides an educational experience meeting acceptable standards, even though such a program/me may differ in format or method of delivery. Substantial equivalency is not accreditation or validation.”

At the first general meeting of the signatories in Canberra, George Henderson of the CAA was elected to chair the Accord for the next year and the NAAB was selected to serve as the secretariat for the Accord through 31 December 2012. The next general meeting will be hosted by the KAAB in Seoul, Korea in April 2009. Further information will be available in November 2008 at www.CanberraAccord.org or through the offices of the NAAB at smatthews@naab.org.

