



## 2024 Visiting Team Report

**Program: Samford University (M.Arch.)**

**Type of Visit:** Continuation of Candidacy

**Date of Visit:** October 20-22, 2024

### Contents

<b>A. Summary of Visit.....</b>	2
<b>B. Progress Since the Previous Site Visit.....</b>	3
<b>C. Program Changes.....</b>	4
<b>D. Compliance with the 2020 Conditions for Accreditation.....</b>	5
1. Context and Mission.....	5
2. Shared Values of the Discipline and Profession.....	6
3. Program and Student Criteria.....	7
4. Curricular Framework.....	15
5. Resources.....	18
6. Public Information.....	25
<b>E. The Visiting Team.....</b>	28
<b>F. Report Signatures.....</b>	29

## A. Summary of Visit

### a. Acknowledgments and Observations

The Visiting Team extends its sincere thanks to Associate Professor Ryan Misner, Chair of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design; Larry Thompson, Associate Dean of the School of Arts; Provost Dr. David Cimbora; and the university's administration, faculty, staff, and students for their exceptional efforts in preparing for the accreditation visit. The team appreciates the program's responsiveness and warm hospitality throughout the visit.

The program has made considerable progress in developing its M.Arch. curriculum, enhancing resources, and implementing assessment processes toward the goal of Initial Accreditation. The Associate Dean of the School of Arts, who met with the team instead of the Dean, expressed intense enthusiasm for the program, emphasizing its significance within the broader School mission. Provost Cimbora also highlighted the program's role in expanding the university's portfolio of professional programs and its potential for community engagement through service learning. The provost also discussed efforts to address the space needs associated with the program's unexpected enrollment growth were also discussed.

The department is undergoing a leadership transition, with Ryan Misner serving as chair effective fall 2024. The team notes that enrollment has surpassed initial projections, underscoring the need for sustained focus on resource development, particularly in faculty and facilities. The associate dean confirmed completing a facilities study to inform decisions regarding the program's physical resource requirements for supporting its educational and scholarly goals.

The synergy between the Interior Design and Architecture programs remains a distinct strength, creating opportunities for collaboration, resource sharing, and interdisciplinary curriculum development. As the Architecture program enters its fourth year, the team observed a distinct identity emerging within the program. We commend the program's commitment to fostering diversity among its faculty and creating an inclusive academic environment.

On behalf of the National Architectural Accrediting Board, the team thanks the students, staff, faculty, and university leadership for cooperating during this visit. Your dedication to the program's success was evident, and we thank you for making the team feel welcomed and supported throughout the process.

### b. Conditions with a Team Preliminary Finding as Not Achieved (*list number and title, and sub condition.*)

#### **Not Met**

- 5.6 Physical Resources

#### **Not Yet Met**

- PC.1 Career Paths
- PC.2 Design
- PC.3 Ecological Knowledge and Responsibility
- PC.4 History and Theory
- PC.5 Research and Innovation
- PC.6 Leadership and Collaboration

- PC.7. Learning and Teaching Culture
- PC.8 Social Equity and Inclusion
- SC.1 Health, Safety, and Welfare in the Built Environment
- SC.2 Professional Practice
- SC.3 Regulatory Context
- SC.4 Technical Knowledge
- SC.5 Design Synthesis
- SC.6 Building Integration
- 4.3 Evaluation of Preparatory Education (4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.3.3)
- 5.1 Structure and Governance (5.1.2) (The site visit team updated their recommendation to 'Not Yet Met' following the exit meeting with the program.)
- 5.2 Planning and Assessment
- 5.3 Curricular Development (5.3.1)
- 5.5 Social Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (5.5.2; 5.5.3; 5.5.5)
- 6.5 Admissions and Advising

## **B. Progress Since the Previous Site Visit**

### **2020 Conditions Not Met**

#### **6.1 Public Access to Accreditation Reports and Related Documents**

To promote transparency in the process of accreditation in architecture education, the program must make the following documents available to all students, faculty, and the public, via the program's website:

- a) All Interim Progress Reports and narratives of Program Annual Reports submitted since the last team visit
- b) All NAAB responses to any Plan to Correct and any NAAB responses to the Program Annual Reports since the last team visit
- c) The most recent decision letter from the NAAB
- d) The Architecture Program Report submitted for the last visit
- e) The final edition of the most recent Visiting Team Report, including attachments and addenda
- f) The program's optional response to the Visiting Team Report
- g) Plan to Correct (if applicable)
- h) NCARB ARE pass rates
- i) Statements and/or policies on learning and teaching culture
- j) Statements and/or policies on diversity, equity, and inclusion

**Previous Team Report (2022):** The Interim Progress Reports and Program Annual Reports since the last team visit, the Program Annual Reports, the most recent NAAB decision letter, the previous Architecture Program Report, the most recent Visiting Team Report and the response, a Plan to Correct, and NCARB pass rates are not yet available to the program and are not posted. The program states a policy on learning and teaching culture and will post that in Fall or 2022. A Diversity Statement is to be posted by summer of 2022.

#### **2024 Team Analysis:**

The team found that the program now provides sufficient information to meet the NAAB-Accredited Degrees Statement requirements. The program has demonstrated evidence of the required information, and the team verified it on the program's website. The projected year for initial accreditation is listed as Spring 2027, and the earliest graduation date meeting NCARB education requirements is Fall 2026.

## **C. Program Changes**

If the Accreditation Conditions have changed since the previous visit, a brief description of changes made to the program because of changes in the Conditions is required.

#### **2024 Team Analysis:**

The APR does not indicate any significant program changes since the 2022 Initial Candidacy Accreditation.

## **D. Compliance with the 2020 Conditions for Accreditation**

### **1—Context and Mission** (*Guidelines*, p. 5)

To help the NAAB and the visiting team understand the specific circumstances of the school, the program must describe the following:

- The institutional context and geographic setting (public or private, urban or rural, size, etc.), and how the program's mission and culture influence its architecture pedagogy and impact its development. Programs that exist within a larger educational institution must also describe the mission of the college or university and how that shapes or influences the program.
- The program's role in and relationship to its academic context and university community, including how the program benefits—and benefits from—its institutional setting and how the program as a unit and/or its individual faculty members participate in university-wide initiatives and the university's academic plan. Also describe how the program, as a unit, develops multidisciplinary relationships and leverages unique opportunities in the institution and the community.
- The ways in which the program encourages students and faculty to learn both inside and outside the classroom through individual and collective opportunities (e.g., field trips, participation in professional societies and organizations, honor societies, and other program-specific or campus-wide and community-wide activities).

### **Program Summary Statement of 1 – Context and Mission**

Located in Birmingham, Alabama, Samford University is a leading nationally ranked Christian university. Founded in 1841, Samford is the 87th-oldest institution of higher learning in the United States; seeking to nurture persons in their development of intellect, creativity, faith, and personhood.

Samford's new Architecture program is positioned alongside the Interior Design program in the Department of Architecture & Interior Design within the University's School of the Arts. Samford's existing Interiors program is nationally recognized and has been CIDA accredited for over 20 years. The new Architecture program is growing out of the long successful Interiors program; the collaboration between the two programs is at the heart of each.

The Samford program is designed as an accelerated 5-year, single-institution Master of Architecture professional program. Students will be conferred a Bachelor of Science in Architecture following 130 credit hours of undergraduate coursework and matriculate directly into a 38 graduate credit hour Master of Architecture.

The Samford Architecture program is distinct in three ways:

1. Providing an architectural education opportunity for students who attend a Christian university is important.
2. Responds to market demands for shorter graduation times and curbing costs in higher education; providing students a financially responsible option for an advanced architectural degree to pursue licensure and other opportunities in the built environment.
3. The cooperation and intentional integration between the Architecture and Interior Design programs creates a unique pedagogical approach to studio culture and to the design of a “complete” building, better preparing students to work in a collaborative design environment after graduation.

### **Team Findings: Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** Samford University's Architecture program aligns with the institution's mission of fostering intellectual, creative, and spiritual growth within a Christian framework. During the visit, the team verified this alignment through meetings with faculty, students, and administrators who articulated a shared commitment to integrating faith-based values with architectural education. The collaboration between architecture and interior design fosters interdisciplinary learning, which is particularly visible in studio culture, and strengthens students' preparation for collaborative practice in the built environment. The program's structure addresses market demands for accelerated graduation and affordability, a value students and alumni emphasize. Overall, the program's mission and distinct identity align well with accreditation standards.

## **2—Shared Values of the Discipline and Profession** (*Guidelines*, p. 6)

The program must report on how it responds to the following values, all of which affect the education and development of architects. The response to each value must also identify how the program will continue to address these values as part of its long-range planning. These values are foundational, not exhaustive.

**Design:** Architects design better, safer, more equitable, resilient, and sustainable built environments. Design thinking and integrated design solutions are hallmarks of architecture education, the discipline, and the profession. ([p.7](#))

**Environmental Stewardship and Professional Responsibility:** Architects are responsible for the impact of their work on the natural world and on public health, safety, and welfare. As professionals and designers of the built environment, we embrace these responsibilities and act ethically to accomplish them. ([p.7](#))

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** Architects commit to equity and inclusion in the environments we design, the policies we adopt, the words we speak, the actions we take, and the respectful learning, teaching, and working environments we create. Architects seek fairness, diversity, and social justice in the profession and in society and support a range of pathways for students seeking access to an architecture education. ([p.7](#))

**Knowledge and Innovation:** Architects create and disseminate knowledge focused on design and the built environment in response to ever-changing conditions. New knowledge advances architecture as a cultural force, drives innovation, and prompts the continuous improvement of the discipline. ([p.8](#))

**Leadership, Collaboration, and Community Engagement:** Architects practice design as a collaborative, inclusive, creative, and empathetic enterprise with other disciplines, the communities we serve, and the clients for whom we work. ([p.8](#))

**Lifelong Learning:** Architects value educational breadth and depth, including a thorough understanding of the discipline's body of knowledge, histories and theories, and architecture's role in cultural, social, environmental, economic, and built contexts. The practice of architecture demands lifelong learning, which is a shared responsibility between academic and practice settings. ([p.8](#))

## **Team Findings: Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The Samford University's Architecture program identifies the values with the program's planning processes of current and future goals.

**Design:** The program lays out a clear five-year curricular structure for a sequence of design studios and other experiences that provide for acquiring discipline specific knowledge and skills in architecture and opportunities to collaborate with interior design as a complementary design discipline. Please see PC.2 for more detail.

**Environmental Stewardship and Professional Responsibility:** The program refers to the abiding Christian belief in the active practice of stewardship of both the natural and built environments and loving our neighbors as ourselves which extends to their health, safety, and welfare. These established tenets sit at an intersection of this shared value of the profession and the faith-based mission of the program and university. Please see PC.3 for more detail.

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** The program described and provided evidence of how it responds to and addresses long range planning for equity, diversity and inclusion in their March 2024 APR. The program considers this value in studio and classroom culture, financial accessibility, career preparation, and collaboration. The program also describes future opportunities for collaboration and growth to address this value.

**Knowledge and Innovation:** The team finds that the program effectively supports responsible inquiry and an entrepreneurial spirit, integrating advanced digital design and research-based learning throughout the curriculum. Faculty and students confirmed this commitment through interactions during the visit. The development of a Digital Fabrication Lab and practitioner involvement supports a strategic plan for knowledge expansion and innovation.

**Leadership, Collaboration, and Community Engagement:** The program described and provided evidence of how it responds to and addresses long range planning for leadership, collaboration and community engagement in their March 2024 APR. The program identifies collaboration across disciplines that began during its development. The program details leadership opportunities through classes, architecture associations, and university groups and identifies opportunities for community and civic engagement.

**Lifelong Learning:** The team confirms the program's dedication to lifelong learning through its integration of architecture, liberal arts, fine arts, and biblical foundations. Faculty and students highlighted courses linking architecture with history and theory, supporting a well-rounded education that establishes a foundation for ongoing professional growth. The program's curricular flexibility and interdisciplinary opportunities support adaptation to evolving industry needs.

### **3—Program and Student Criteria *(Guidelines, p. 9)***

These criteria seek to evaluate the outcomes of architecture programs and student work within their unique institutional, regional, national, international, and professional contexts, while encouraging innovative approaches to architecture education and professional preparation.

#### **3.1 Program Criteria (PC) *(Guidelines, p. 9)***

A program must demonstrate how its curriculum, structure, and other experiences address the following criteria.

##### **PC.1 Career Paths**

How the program ensures that students understand the paths to becoming licensed as an architect in the United States and the range of available career opportunities that utilize the discipline's skills and knowledge. (p.9)

##### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The program addresses career paths through courses such as ARCH 101 - Survey of the Profession, ARCH 505 – Internship (not yet offered), and ARCH 515 - Professional Practice in these courses introduce students to various licensure processes and professional pathways via firm visits, internships, and exam preparation. However, only ARCH 101 has been offered through Fall 2024, as the program has not yet commenced its fifth-year courses.

The program does not yet provide evidence of assessment outcomes or indicate improvements made based on student learning assessments.

The team found evidence in the supplement documents in the digital evidence. Yearly career panels with local practitioners and graduates, as well as NCARB's 2023 outreach event, supplement these courses. Students confirmed that ARCH 101 provides foundational insights into architectural career pathways.

### **PC.2 Design**

How the program instills in students the role of the design process in shaping the built environment and conveys the methods by which design processes integrate multiple factors, in different settings and scales of development, from buildings to cities. (p.9)

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The team found evidence of a clear curricular studio structure throughout the four-year undergraduate program and the fifth-year graduate program component. The team noted the sequence starting with a broad treatment of overarching design themes that pertain to both disciplines of architecture and interior design after which they separate and architecture students' progress through increasingly focused architecture specific themes in years two and three. Architecture and interior design students then come together again in a collaborative studio in the fourth year and, finally, architecture specific studio projects dominate the last two semesters in the fifth year. The online course ARCH 507 - Faith & World View of Architecture (not yet offered), in conjunction with the internship experience provides another studio-based experience to integrate studio and non-studio specific skills and knowledge in the education of future professionals.

In the APR, the program refers to the existence of a regular practice where "faculty internal evaluation of each academic year's co-curricular and Additional Means opportunities, their effectiveness and application to the program and criteria, and evaluation of new opportunities or ways to modify/expand/adjust." The program has, however, not yet finished its first assessment report nor identified targets or benchmarks, results, planned improvements, or internal links to any evidence regarding this self-assessment.

The team found evidence of a robust design process at work over multiple scales during the studio observations. This was happening in architecture-specific projects in second- and third-year studios and in collaboration with interior designers in a collaborative fourth-year studio.

### **PC.3 Ecological Knowledge and Responsibility**

How the program instills in students a holistic understanding of the dynamic between built and natural environments, enabling future architects to mitigate climate change responsibly by leveraging ecological, advanced building performance, adaptation, and resilience principles in their work and advocacy activities. (p.9)

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The team found some evidence in the coursework documents (ARCH 214 – Building Systems I and ARCH 224 – Building Systems II; ARCH 319 – Materials & Methods and ARCH 419 – Advanced Materials & Methods; and ARCH 422 – Architecture Design Studio VI: Historic Preservation and Adaptive Reuse [not yet offered]) connecting the work and responsibilities of the architect to the natural environments. The other experiences listed, including symposia and electives address the more specific ties between the profession and ecological themes but, as these experiences are not mandatory, there is no guarantee that all students will benefit from them.

In the APR, the program refers to the existence of a regular practice where “faculty internal evaluation of each academic year’s co-curricular and Additional Means opportunities, their effectiveness and application to the program and criteria, and evaluation of new opportunities or ways to modify/expand/adjust.” The program has, however, not yet finished its first assessment report nor identified targets or benchmarks, results, planned improvements, or internal links to any evidence regarding this self-assessment.

The team found evidence of understanding of the dynamic between “built” and “natural” environments during the studio observations. Multiple studio projects integrate buildings into natural sites. During the site visit, the team confirmed through discussions with faculty, staff, and academic leaders that a clear process for assessing these outcomes once the courses are offered is in place, and there is a commitment to modifying the curriculum based on these assessments to ensure continuous improvement.

#### **PC.4 History and Theory**

How the program ensures that students understand the histories and theories of architecture and urbanism, framed by diverse social, cultural, economic, and political forces, nationally and globally. (p.9)

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The program’s narrative provides a structured approach to history and theory through coursework such as ARCH 210, ARCH 220, and ARCH 620 (not yet offered), alongside experiential learning opportunities like ARCH 414, which involves international travel. These courses and experiences build a comprehensive foundation in historical and theoretical contexts and expose students to global architectural practices.

Systematic assessment tools, including course evaluations, faculty reviews, and graduating student surveys, will eventually monitor the curriculum’s effectiveness. While the assessment framework is in place, it is still in its initial stages and lacks fully implemented assessment outcomes.

During the site visit, the team confirmed through discussions with faculty, staff, and academic leaders that a clear process for assessing these outcomes once the courses are offered is in place, and there is a commitment to modifying the curriculum based on these assessments to ensure continuous improvement.

#### **PC.5 Research and Innovation**

How the program prepares students to engage and participate in architectural research to test and evaluate innovations in the field. (p.9)

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The program narrative demonstrates that it prepares students to engage in architectural research and innovation through a well-defined curriculum. Courses such as ARCH 310 (offered) and ARCH 510 (not yet offered) focus on research methodologies and evidence-based design. These courses will foster students' ability to critically engage with innovative architectural challenges. The thesis studios, particularly ARCH 610 (not yet offered), will further reinforce the importance of research by allowing students to explore original topics through extensive analysis and creative investigation. The program will also introduce students to emerging technologies and materials in courses like ARCH 419, (not yet offered) which deepens their understanding of sustainable and resilient design.

The program's assessment mechanisms, including end-of-course evaluations, grading assessments, and annual exit surveys, will provide a recurring method for measuring student learning related to PC.5 once an assessment cycle is fully implemented. These assessments will ensure that faculty can review and modify course content based on student engagement and the effectiveness of teaching strategies.

During the site visit, the team confirmed through faculty discussions that these evaluations are conducted regularly and that improvements to the curriculum are made in response to assessment findings, ensuring continuous enhancement of the program's approach to research and innovation especially as it relates to teaching various architectural subject matter.

#### **PC.6 Leadership and Collaboration**

How the program ensures that students understand approaches to leadership in multidisciplinary teams, diverse stakeholder constituents, and dynamic physical and social contexts, and learn how to apply effective collaboration skills to solve complex problems. (p.9)

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The program identifies ARCH 414 Architecture Design Studio V: Senior Project as the primary course to address leadership and collaboration although the syllabus does not address this PC. The program offers access to a cross-listed Interior Design course focusing on design leadership, though it does not provide information on this course. The program also notes a required internship, and student leadership opportunities in the program and student organizations.

The program did not yet indicate assessment outcomes or how it makes improvements to its approach in response to the assessment of student learning.

During the site visit, the team confirmed the evidence through faculty discussions.

#### **PC.7 Learning and Teaching Culture**

How the program fosters and ensures a positive and respectful environment that encourages optimism, respect, sharing, engagement, and innovation among its faculty, students, administration, and staff. (p.9)

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The program demonstrates a commitment to a respectful learning and teaching environment through the Studio Culture Statement, which emphasizes respect, diversity, inclusion, collaboration, and wellness. The collaborative process involving student and faculty input reflects the program's proactive approach to shared responsibility for studio

culture. The shared studio format for upper-level students encourages peer learning and a collaborative environment.

The program has implemented regular assessment mechanisms, including end-of-course evaluations, annual faculty reviews, and graduating student exit surveys, to measure how well the learning and teaching culture is maintained. These assessments are used to identify areas for improvement and ensure that the program continuously responds to student needs and feedback.

During the site visit, the team confirmed through interactions with faculty and students that the program is committed to maintaining and improving this culture through ongoing evaluation and modification based on these assessments. The studio culture policy is posted as three large posters in the third-year and fourth-year studios.

### **PC.8 Social Equity and Inclusion**

How the program furthers and deepens students' understanding of diverse cultural and social contexts and helps them translate that understanding into built environments that equitably support and include people of different backgrounds, resources, and abilities. ([p.9](#))

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The program identifies ARCH 214 Building Systems I as the primary course to address social equity and inclusion, and the team observed a current design project that addressed this PC.

This course addresses accessibility and aging in building design. In addition, the program indicates that interior design studio projects have addressed aspects of diverse cultural and social contexts, which is intended to be replicated in this program, though they have not seen evidence of that happening yet. Although not mentioned in the program's APR for this PC, Arch 414 addresses this PC, as it describes designing a project that embraces cultural challenges different from the students.

The program offers travel and Christian service opportunities within the program, Partnerships with the institution's Office of Student Success and Diversity, and the students' access to the institution's culturally diverse organizations such as the Black Student Union. The program did not yet indicate how this helps students translate their understanding of various contexts into the built environment, except a lecture hosted in 2023.

The program did not yet indicate assessment outcomes or how it makes improvements to its approach in response to the assessment of student learning.

### **3.2 Student Criteria (SC): Student Learning Objectives and Outcomes ([Guidelines, p. 10](#))**

A program must demonstrate how it addresses the following criteria through program curricula and other experiences, with an emphasis on the articulation of learning objectives and assessment.

#### **SC.1 Health, Safety, and Welfare in the Built Environment**

How the program ensures that students understand the impact of the built environment on human health, safety, and welfare at multiple scales, from buildings to cities. ([p.10](#))

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The program indicates that HSW topics are (or will be) addressed in the following courses:

ARCH 214 – Building Systems I

ARCH 224 – Building Systems II

ARCH 414 – Architecture Design Studio V: Senior Project

ARCH 422 – Architecture Design Studio VI: Historic Preservation & Adaptive Reuse (not yet offered)

ARCH 512 – Architecture Design Studio VII: Urban Design (not yet offered)

ARCH 610 – Architecture Design Studio VII: Thesis Studio (not yet offered)

These courses address HSW at multiple scales. Course syllabi, assignments, exams, lectures, and resource reading materials were provided. The program indicates benchmarks for student learning outcomes but does not yet provide evidence of gathering, assessing, and modifying them and/or curricula and courses.

During the site visit, the team confirmed through interactions with faculty.

### **SC.2 Professional Practice**

How the program ensures that students understand professional ethics, the regulatory requirements, the fundamental business processes relevant to architecture practice in the United States, and the forces influencing change in these subjects. (p.10)

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

##### **2024 Team Analysis:**

The program primarily addresses this criterion through the following courses and the design studios are expected to contribute to practical application of professional ethics and practice in a “real world” context.

ARCH 515 – Professional Practice I (not yet offered)

ARCH 615 – Professional Practice II (not yet offered)

ARCH 505 – Internship (not yet offered)

Additionally, documents from ARCH 101 Survey of the Profession were available, reflecting the incomplete development of ARCH 515/615 at the time of the visit.

In the APR, the program refers to the existence of a regular practice where “faculty internal evaluation of each academic year’s co-curricular and Additional Means opportunities, their effectiveness and application to the program and criteria, and evaluation of new opportunities or ways to modify/expand/adjust.” The program has, however, not yet finished its first assessment report. It has identified targets or benchmarks for success of 90% scoring above 70/73% in all courses as measured over graded course assignments, quizzes/exams, and papers. Not yet provided are any results, planned improvements, or internal links to any evidence regarding this self-assessment.

During the student interviews, the students shared how much they appreciated the insights they received through participating in the ARCH 101 - Survey of the Profession course. One of the strengths they mentioned was the exposure they were given to real practitioners. The upper-level classes were not available to review at the time of the team visit.

### **SC.3 Regulatory Context**

How the program ensures that students understand the fundamental principles of life safety, land use, and current laws and regulations that apply to buildings and sites in the United States, and the evaluative process architects use to comply with those laws and regulations as part of a project. (p.10)

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The APR states that this will be primarily addressed in the following courses:

ARCH 214 – Building Systems I  
ARCH 224 – Building Systems II  
ARCH 515 – Professional Practice I (not yet offered)  
ARCH 615 – Professional Practice II (not yet offered)

Additionally ARCH 505 – Internship and the design studios will also likely address this student criteria in a “real world” context; this course is not yet offered. ARCH 214 and ARCH 224 do address the fundamental principles of life safety, land use, and current laws and regulations for buildings and sites. The program provided course syllabi, assignments, exams, lectures, and resource reading material for those courses. The program provided syllabi only for the not yet offered ARCH 515 and ARCH 615 courses; these did not indicate how those classes address this SC.

The program indicates benchmarks for student learning outcomes but does not provide evidence of gathering, assessing, and modifying them and/or curricula and courses.

During the site visit, the team confirmed through interactions with faculty.

#### **SC.4 Technical Knowledge**

How the program ensures that students understand the established and emerging systems, technologies, and assemblies of building construction, and the methods and criteria architects use to assess those technologies against the design, economics, and performance objectives of projects. (p.10)

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** = The team found evidence the program has addressed this student criterion in the syllabi and course materials from the following courses:

ARCH 221 – Architectural Design Drawing II  
ARCH 214 – Building Systems I  
ARCH 224 – Building Systems II  
ARCH 316 – Structural Systems I  
ARCH 326 – Structural Systems II  
ARCH 319 – Materials & Methods  
ARCH 419 – Advanced Materials & Methods

These courses cover technical topics needed in architectural practice including MEP, structures and building construction. ARCH 419 is missing the full array of course materials but may be due to the fact that it is a new course in the sequence. Technical documentation and communication through BIM taught in ARCH 221 also provides a strong foundation to support the eventual integration and synthesis of all technical elements in an architectural whole.

In the APR, the program refers to the existence of a regular practice where “faculty internal evaluation of each academic year’s co-curricular and Additional Means opportunities, their effectiveness and application to the program and criteria, and evaluation of new opportunities or ways to modify/expand/adjust.” The program has, however, not yet finished its first assessment report. It has identified targets or benchmarks for success of 90% scoring above 70/73% in all courses as measured over graded course assignments, quizzes/exams, and papers. Not yet provided are any results, planned improvements, or internal links to any evidence regarding this self-assessment.

Both faculty and students discussed the ongoing development and integration of the architectural technical courses within the curriculum. One comment from the students concerns the need for discipline specific tutoring to be available for students who need extra help in technical as well as non-technical subject matters.

### **SC.5 Design Synthesis**

How the program ensures that students develop the ability to make design decisions within architectural projects while demonstrating synthesis of user requirements, regulatory requirements, site conditions, and accessible design, and consideration of the measurable environmental impacts of their design decisions. [\(p. 12\)](#)

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The site visit team acknowledges that, while the program outlined future courses in the APR-C that aim to address this criterion, these courses have not yet been taught.

ARCH 610 - Architecture Design Studio VIII: Thesis Studio

These courses have not yet been offered, and as a result, there is no current evidence of student learning outcomes associated with this criterion being developed or assessed. The program is aware of the need for systematic assessment of these outcomes once the courses are implemented. The team encourages the program to follow through on the planned assessment procedures and ensure ongoing evaluation and modification of the curriculum based on the findings, to support continuous improvement in addressing this criterion.

During the site visit, the team confirmed through discussions with faculty and administrators that this criterion will be met in a single architectural design project.

### **SC.6 Building Integration**

How the program ensures that students develop the ability to make design decisions within architectural projects while demonstrating integration of building envelope systems and assemblies, structural systems, environmental control systems, life safety systems, and the measurable outcomes of building performance. [\(p. 12\)](#)

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The accreditation team acknowledges that while the program outlined future courses that aim to address this criterion, such as ARCH 610 - Architecture Design Studio VIII: Thesis Studio, these courses have not yet been offered, and as a result, there is no current evidence of student learning outcomes associated with this criterion being developed or assessed. During the site visit, the team confirmed through discussions with faculty and administrators that the program is aware of the need for systematic assessment of these outcomes once the courses are implemented. The team encourages the program to establish

clear assessment procedures and ensure ongoing evaluation and modification of the curriculum based on the findings, to support continuous improvement in addressing this criterion.

During the site visit, the team confirmed through discussions with faculty and administrators that this criterion will be met in a single architectural design project.

#### **4—Curricular Framework** (*Guidelines*, p. 13)

This condition addresses the institution's regional accreditation and the program's degree nomenclature, credit-hour and curricular requirements, and the process used to evaluate student preparatory work.

##### **4.1 Institutional Accreditation** (*Guidelines*, p. 13)

For the NAAB to accredit a professional degree program in architecture, the program must be, or be part of, an institution accredited by one of the following U.S. regional institutional accrediting agencies for higher education:

- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)
- New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)
- Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
- WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)

##### **Team Findings: Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The APR provides documentation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) effective through the 2027 process of reaffirmation. It is noted that the University's SACS-COC Quality Enhancement Plan focusing on student learning through targeted teaching and professional development has the potential to create opportunities for student learning through faculty and staff development.

##### **4.2 Professional Degrees and Curriculum** (*Guidelines*, p. 13)

The NAAB accredits professional degree programs with the following titles: the Bachelor of Architecture (B. Arch.), the Master of Architecture (M. Arch.), and the Doctor of Architecture (D. Arch.). The curricular requirements for awarding these degrees must include professional studies, general studies, and optional studies.

4.2.1 **Professional Studies.** Courses with architectural content required of all students in the NAAB-accredited program are the core of a professional degree program that leads to licensure. Knowledge from these courses is used to satisfy Condition 3—Program and Student Criteria. The degree program has the flexibility to add additional professional studies courses to address its mission or institutional context. In its documentation, the program must clearly indicate which professional courses are required for all students. (p.13)

4.2.2 **General Studies.** An important component of architecture education, general studies provide basic knowledge and methodologies of the humanities, fine arts, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. Programs must document how students earning an accredited degree achieve a broad, interdisciplinary understanding of human knowledge.

In most cases, the general studies requirement can be satisfied by the general education program of an institution's baccalaureate degree. Graduate programs must describe and document the criteria and process used to evaluate applicants' prior academic experience relative to this requirement. Programs accepting transfers

from other institutions must document the criteria and process used to ensure that the general education requirement was covered at another institution. (p.14)

4.2.3 **Optional Studies.** All professional degree programs must provide sufficient flexibility in the curriculum to allow students to develop additional expertise, either by taking additional courses offered in other academic units or departments, or by taking courses offered within the department offering the accredited program but outside the required professional studies curriculum. These courses may be configured in a variety of curricular structures, including elective offerings, concentrations, certificate programs, and minors. (p.14)

NAAB-accredited professional degree programs have the exclusive right to use the B. Arch., M. Arch., and/or D. Arch. titles, which are recognized by the public as accredited degrees and therefore may not be used by non-accredited programs.

The number of credit hours for each degree is outlined below. All accredited programs must conform to minimum credit-hour requirements established by the institution's regional accreditor.

4.2.4 **Bachelor of Architecture.** The B. Arch. degree consists of a minimum of 150 semester credit hours, or the quarter-hour equivalent, in academic coursework in general studies, professional studies, and optional studies, all of which are delivered or accounted for (either by transfer or articulation) by the institution that will grant the degree. Programs must document the required professional studies courses (course numbers, titles, and credits), the elective professional studies courses (course numbers, titles, and credits), the required number of credits for general studies and for optional studies, and the total number of credits for the degree.

4.2.5 **Master of Architecture.** The M. Arch. degree consists of a minimum of 168 semester credit hours, or the quarter-hour equivalent, of combined undergraduate coursework and a minimum of 30 semester credits of graduate coursework. Programs must document the required professional studies classes (course numbers, titles, and credits), the elective professional studies classes (course numbers, titles, and credits), the required number of credits for general studies and for optional studies, and the total number of credits for both the undergraduate and graduate degrees.

4.2.6 **Doctor of Architecture.** The D. Arch. degree consists of a minimum of 210 credits, or the quarter-hour equivalent, of combined undergraduate and graduate coursework. The D. Arch. requires a minimum of 90 graduate-level semester credit hours, or the graduate-level 135 quarter-hour equivalent, in academic coursework in professional studies and optional studies. Programs must document, for both undergraduate and graduate degrees, the required professional studies classes (course numbers, titles, and credits), the elective professional studies classes (course numbers, titles, and credits), the required number of credits for general studies and for optional studies, and the total number of credits for the degree.

### **Team Findings: Met**

#### **2024 Team Analysis:**

**4.2.1:** The team confirmed that the M.Arch. program structure satisfies the minimum total requirement of 168 semester credit hours. Students complete 130 credits in their pre-professional undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Architecture program and 38 credits in its professional

graduate Master of Architecture program as published in the University Catalog. Of these 168 credits:

Professional studies account for 96, including all 32 graduate credits.

**4.2.2:** Sixty (60) credits are provided in General Studies with 22 as part of the University Core, 19 General Education and 19 School of the Arts Foundations

**4.2.3:** Twelve (12) credits are provided in Optional Studies with 6 offered as undergraduate electives in architecture, interior design, art, or general studies; and 6 as graduate architecture electives.

**4.2.4:** N/A

**4.2.5:** See 4.2.1

**4.2.6:** N/A

### **4.3 Evaluation of Preparatory Education** (Guidelines, p. 16)

The NAAB recognizes that students transferring to an undergraduate accredited program or entering a graduate accredited program come from different types of programs and have different needs, aptitudes, and knowledge bases. In this condition, a program must demonstrate that it utilizes a thorough and equitable process to evaluate incoming students and that it documents the accreditation criteria it expects students to have met in their education experiences in non-accredited programs.

- 4.3.1 A program must document its process for evaluating a student's prior academic coursework related to satisfying NAAB accreditation criteria when it admits a student to the professional degree program.
- 4.3.2 In the event a program relies on the preparatory education experience to ensure that admitted students have met certain accreditation criteria, the program must demonstrate it has established standards for ensuring these accreditation criteria are met and for determining whether any gaps exist.
- 4.3.3 A program must demonstrate that it has clearly articulated the evaluation of baccalaureate-degree or associate-degree content in the admissions process, and that a candidate understands the evaluation process and its implications for the length of a professional degree program before accepting an offer of admission.

### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

#### **2024 Team Analysis:**

**4.3.1:** The team reviewed the proposed process to review the preparatory education from various paths for admission into the M.Arch. program. There is no way to determine if this process is being followed yet since according to the APR, "The program does not intend to admit any students into only the 5<sup>th</sup> year Master of Architecture portion of the program *until after the program has received its initial NAAB Accreditation.*"

**4.3.2:** The program states that "students who have successfully completed the B.S. in Architecture (years 1-4 of the program) from Samford University with an overall minimum GPA of 2.0, and a minimum GPA of 2.5 in the major will be eligible to progress directly into the fifth year of the architecture program." It is not clear from the documents available, including the

graduate catalog, what the relationship is between admissions standards for internal and external candidates.

**4.3.3:** The admissions site currently does not list the M.Arch. as a choice so the team could not verify the clarity of any public message regarding the evaluation process and its implications for the length of a professional degree program before accepting an offer of admission.

## 5—Resources

### 5.1 Structure and Governance (*Guidelines*, p. 18)

The program must describe the administrative and governance processes that provide for organizational continuity, clarity, and fairness and allow for improvement and change.

- 5.1.1 **Administrative Structure:** Describe the administrative structure and identify key personnel in the program and school, college, and institution.
- 5.1.2 **Governance:** Describe the role of faculty, staff, and students in both program and institutional governance structures and how these structures relate to the governance structures of the academic unit and the institution.

#### Team Findings: Not Yet Met

##### 2024 Team Analysis:

**5.1.1. Administrative Structure:** The program provides a comprehensive description of its organizational and administrative structure, represented through a detailed diagram that outlines relationships from the University Board of Trustees down to departmental adjunct teaching faculty.

**5.1.2 Governance:** According to the bylaws included in the APR (Bylaws, A1.5 Faculty Governance Structure), governance responsibilities at the university are shared among the administration, faculty, staff, and student body. Conversations with stakeholders during the visit revealed that both students and faculty feel confident in their roles and believe they have meaningful input within the program and university governance structures. However, this input structure does not extend equally to staff. Discussions with staff indicated that there currently needs to be a formal mechanism for their direct involvement in decision-making processes at the school level despite their significant role in managing day-to-day operations and implementing policies.

### 5.2 Planning and Assessment (*Guidelines*, p. 18)

The program must demonstrate that it has a planning process for continuous improvement that identifies:

- 5.2.1 The program's multi year strategic objectives, including the requirement to meet the NAAB Conditions, as part of the larger institutional strategic planning and assessment efforts.
- 5.2.2 Key performance indicators used by the unit and the institution.
- 5.2.3 How well the program is progressing toward its mission and stated multiyear objectives.
- 5.2.4 Strengths, challenges, and opportunities faced by the program as it strives to continuously improve learning outcomes and opportunities.
- 5.2.5 Ongoing outside input from others, including practitioners.

The program must also demonstrate that it regularly uses the results of self-assessments to advise and encourage changes and adjustments that promote student and faculty success.

#### Team Findings: Not Yet Met

**2024 Team Analysis:** The program must still implement its assessment strategy fully; thus, this criterion is deemed Not Yet Met. According to the APR-C, some courses that meet the Program Criteria (PCs) and Student Criteria (SCs) have yet to be offered or completed an entire assessment cycle. Meetings with program and university leaders confirmed that the program has a structured plan and assessment process for continuous improvement, aligning with the university's strategic plan and assessment procedures. However, the incomplete implementation of the assessment process highlights an area for further development to ensure sustained alignment with NAAB Conditions.

**5.2.1:** The program's narrative in the APR-C and APR RFI provides a clear planning process for continuous improvement through its strategic initiatives, categorized as "Now," "Next," and "Big" goals. While the program has not yet developed a fully articulated strategic plan, it actively aligns with the institution's mission and NAAB accreditation requirements, focusing on goals such as enrollment stabilization, faculty and space expansion, and course development. These initiatives reflect a commitment to growth and innovation that supports continuous improvement.

**5.2.2:** The program narrative outlines a framework for ongoing improvement by defining key performance indicators (KPIs) that align with Samford University's mission. By tracking metrics like student retention, graduation rates, licensing exam outcomes, job placement, and internship opportunities, the program demonstrates its commitment to evaluating student success and program effectiveness. The potential for additional KPIs as the program develops is noted, and further elaboration on how these indicators will be regularly assessed could enhance ongoing improvements. Overall, the foundation is in place for using KPIs to inform programmatic decision-making and amplify impact.

**5.2.3:** The program narrative provides evidence of its progress toward mission-aligned objectives through the evaluation of KPIs, specifically retention rates and internships. Current retention rates suggest that effective support and engagement strategies are in place. While the internship program for the initial cohort is set to begin in 2025, the proactive initiative of students independently pursuing internships indicates a positive trajectory toward job readiness and practical experience. Collecting more comprehensive data on additional KPIs could further reinforce the program's ability to demonstrate continuous improvement.

**5.2.4:** The program narrative demonstrates a well-considered approach to planning and assessment by identifying strengths, challenges, and opportunities. Integration with the CIDA-accredited Interior Design program provides a strong basis for developing learning outcomes and assessment methods, leveraging established insights for the new curriculum. Rapid enrollment growth, supported by the university, reflects positive program reception. Challenges, including defining a unique program identity, expanding faculty, and securing space, must be addressed to sustain this growth trajectory. The program shows adaptability in refining its curricula through real-time feedback, supporting a commitment to improvement as it evolves.

**5.2.5:** The program effectively demonstrates engagement with external practitioners from the Birmingham architecture and interior design communities through career panels, guest lectures, and studio critiques. These interactions facilitate a feedback loop that informs programmatic adjustments based on practitioner insights and evolving industry needs. Furthermore, the program benefits from the School of the Arts Advisory Board, which includes alumni and practicing professionals, supporting structured integration of external perspectives into program development.

In summary, the program demonstrates a structured approach to planning and assessment for continuous improvement. Student evaluations contribute meaningful feedback on course goals and teaching effectiveness, with instructors expected to use this input to refine their approaches. Integrating these evaluations into tenure, promotion, and faculty assessments supports accountability and professional growth. Additionally, faculty annual self-assessments foster reflective practice and goal-setting, contributing to a robust framework for advancing student and faculty success.

### **5.3 Curricular Development** (*Guidelines*, p. 19)

The program must demonstrate a well-reasoned process for assessing its curriculum and making adjustments based on the outcome of the assessment. The program must identify:

- 5.3.1 The relationship between course assessment and curricular development, including NAAB program and student criteria.
- 5.3.2 The roles and responsibilities of the personnel and committees involved in setting curricular agendas and initiatives, including the curriculum committee, program coordinators, and department chairs or directors.

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

##### **2024 Team Analysis:**

**5.3.1:** While overarching curricular objectives are provided in the APR, the program has not articulated how their own assessment process influences an iterative curricular development life cycle. During the visit, the team was provided a verbal description of the well-reasoned two-year cycle of individual course review and improvement. This can be formalized in future reports from the program.

**5.3.2:** The program's curricular decision-making structure is clear and the composition of the School's curriculum committee is composed of a mix of architecture and interior design tenure and tenured faculty. This was verified during the faculty meeting with the team.

### **5.4 Human Resources and Human Resource Development** (*Guidelines*, p. 19)

The program must demonstrate that it has appropriate and adequately funded human resources to support student learning and achievement. Human resources include full- and part-time instructional faculty, administrative leadership, and technical, administrative, and other support staff. The program must:

- 5.4.1 Demonstrate that it balances the workloads of all faculty in a way that promotes student and faculty achievement.
- 5.4.2 Demonstrate that it has an Architect Licensing Advisor who is actively performing the duties defined in the NCARB position description. These duties include attending the biannual NCARB Licensing Advisor Summit and/or other training opportunities to stay up-to-date on the requirements for licensure and ensure that students have resources to make informed decisions on their path to licensure.
- 5.4.3 Demonstrate that faculty and staff have opportunities to pursue professional development that contributes to program improvement.
- 5.4.4 Describe the support services available to students in the program, including but not limited to academic and personal advising, mental well-being, career guidance, internship, and job placement.

#### **Team Findings: Met**

**5.4.1:** The program's typical faculty load of 12 credits per semester, as noted in the APR, aligns with standard practices at teaching-focused universities, where there are fewer expectations for

faculty to pursue funded research. This workload balance supports the program's primary teaching mission and promotes student and faculty achievement.

**5.4.2:** The Team finds this sub condition Met. Associate Professor Ryan Misner is the Architect Licensing Advisor and a registered architect in Alabama and the District of Columbia. His experience with NCARB, including work on the Internship Development Program and Architecture Experience Program and participation in the NCARB Licensing Advisor Summit, positions him as well-qualified to support students in navigating licensure requirements.

**5.4.3:** The program offers extensive faculty development opportunities, primarily coordinated through the Faculty Success Collaborative (FSC), which strengthens faculty skills and aligns with the institution's teaching mission. Developmental initiatives include:

- INNOVATE/RENOVATE course development workshops
- Quality Matters training sessions
- Monday Morning Mentor resources
- Writing retreats
- New faculty orientation and mentoring
- Early career faculty seminars
- Faculty Connect and Canvas (LMS) support

Funding for faculty development is provided through the Provost's Office and departmental budgets. Four budgeted sources for faculty development include:

- Departmental and school budgets for travel to professional meetings and workshops.
- The Faculty Enrichment Fund for travel related to major professional presentations or curriculum development, subject to approval by the Provost.
- The Academic Fund, which supports faculty development grants recommended by the Academic Affairs Committee.
- Specially designated gifts for innovative faculty development, overseen by the Provost or deans.

The Employee Tuition Benefit program also allows faculty and staff to pursue undergraduate or part-time graduate degrees. Faculty expressed general satisfaction with these resources, noting support from both their department and university administration in pursuing professional growth and academic scholarship.

**5.4.4:** The program provides a centralized support model for Samford students, offering resources outlined in the APR, including the Academic Success Center, Career Development Center, Counseling Services, University Health Services, and various student involvement programs. While the APR details these services, it does not specify how these resources apply to graduate students, who may have distinct needs, particularly regarding career guidance, internships, and job placement tailored to architecture.

During discussions with students, the team observed a high level of appreciation for the support provided by the program for internships and employment opportunities, especially within Birmingham and beyond. While students reported satisfaction with institutional support, a few expressed a need for additional support for underrepresented cohorts. Additionally, when asked, students were generally unfamiliar with NOMAS, indicating a possible gap in awareness of resources specifically supporting diversity and inclusion within the program.

## **5.5 Social Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (*Guidelines*, p. 20)**

The program must demonstrate its commitment to diversity and inclusion among current and prospective faculty, staff, and students. The program must:

- 5.5.1 Describe how this commitment is reflected in the distribution of its human, physical, and financial resources.
- 5.5.2 Describe its plan for maintaining or increasing the diversity of its faculty and staff since the last accreditation cycle, how it has implemented the plan, and what it intends to do during the next accreditation cycle. Also, compare the program's faculty and staff demographics with that of the program's students and other benchmarks the program deems relevant.
- 5.5.3 Describe its plan for maintaining or increasing the diversity of its students since the last accreditation cycle, how it has implemented the plan, and what it intends to do during the next accreditation cycle. Also, compare the program's student demographics with that of the institution and other benchmarks the program deems relevant.
- 5.5.4 Document what institutional, college, or program policies are in place to further Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO/AA), as well as any other social equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives at the program, college, or institutional level.
- 5.5.5 Describe the resources and procedures in place to provide adaptive environments and effective strategies to support faculty, staff, and students with different physical and/or mental abilities.

### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

#### **2024 Team Analysis:**

**5.5.1:** The institution's commitment to racial equity, justice, and diversity is outlined in the APR through Samford's Diversity Action Plan, which builds on the work of the Task Force on Racial Justice. This plan defines the institution's objectives in creating a racially diverse and inclusive environment, underscoring Samford's dedication to these principles.

**5.5.2:** The program's APR does not provide comparative data on faculty and staff demographics relative to student demographics or other relevant benchmarks. While the APR describes efforts to diversify the faculty applicant pool, it does not offer detailed demographic comparisons or progress metrics that align with benchmarks established in similar programs.

5.5.3: The program's APR documents initiatives aimed at enhancing student diversity through recruitment materials, engagement with high school educators and counselors, and financial aid incentives. Future plans include developing stronger high school-to-program pathways, creating a summer architecture camp, and increasing recruitment from community colleges. These efforts reflect a focused approach to broaden the student demographic profile, but specific outcomes or progress metrics are not detailed in the APR.

**5.5.4:** The APR includes the institution's non-discrimination statement, which aligns with state and federal regulations but notes specific exemptions related to its faith-based status. Additionally, the APR references the Campus Initiatives report, which elaborates on the institution's broader diversity efforts and is accessible online. This report is positioned as a resource for understanding Samford's ongoing commitment to racial diversity.

**5.5.5:** The Team observed a design studio that did not have a readily accessible route as an alternative to the stairs. The APR describes resources available to support students with disabilities, including the university's disability resources team, which assists faculty in providing accessible learning environments. Further, the university's ADA compliance council and the

CARE team address accessibility and mental health needs, offering support mechanisms for faculty, staff, and students with diverse physical and mental abilities.

In evaluating these elements during the site visit, the team confirmed that while the program demonstrates a commitment to diversity and inclusion, more detailed reporting on demographic benchmarks and measurable outcomes would strengthen its alignment with the guidelines.

### **5.6 Physical Resources (*Guidelines*, p. 21)**

The program must describe its physical resources and demonstrate how they safely and equitably support the program's pedagogical approach and student and faculty achievement. Physical resources include but are not limited to the following:

- 5.6.1 Space to support and encourage studio-based learning.
- 5.6.2 Space to support and encourage didactic and interactive learning, including lecture halls, seminar spaces, small group study rooms, labs, shops, and equipment.
- 5.6.3 Space to support and encourage the full range of faculty roles and responsibilities, including preparation for teaching, research, mentoring, and student advising.
- 5.6.4 Resources to support all learning formats and pedagogies in use by the program.

If the program's pedagogy does not require some or all of the above physical resources, the program must describe the effect (if any) that online, off-site, or hybrid formats have on digital

#### **Team Findings: Not Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The Team concludes that the current physical resources do not fully support the program's pedagogical goals and the equitable needs of faculty and students, and the condition is not met. The Team recognizes that the program and university leadership were responsive to requests for additional information. The APR referred to an external space utilization study that was in progress. During the review of the APR, the team requested a copy of the report and learned that internal research was being done rather than an external study. While the Team was informed that the university was conducting a space needs assessment, a detailed report was not available.

**5.6.1:** The APR indicates that the program was undergoing a facilities analysis with plans for implementation in Fall 2024. The program is part of the School of Arts, which occupies four buildings on campus. The visiting team verified that studio space is currently shared with the Interior Design program and confirmed through discussions with the provost, associate dean, department chair, faculty, and students that there is an acknowledged need for additional dedicated space. Core studio spaces need to remain co-located to support a cohesive learning environment, yet the designated studio space for year five is inaccessible, creating a barrier to equitable access. The accessible route was blocked by furniture, behind a door, and through another room and thus was not visible to the team. Documentation from the institution's CFO prioritizes facilities improvements, yet specific commitments to remedy current deficiencies remain pending. Currently, most instructional spaces are housed in two adjacent buildings, while Year One foundation art courses are located across campus.

**5.6.2:** The visiting team observed that while the program has various learning and lab spaces, these are adequate for the present student enrollment. However, the program has grown beyond projections, and continued enrollment growth may soon render several spaces undersized, creating limitations that could hinder the program's ability to effectively support pedagogical needs.

**5.6.3:** Observations by the team confirmed that full-time staff have been assigned office spaces. However, there is limited indication that these spaces are sufficient to accommodate future faculty needs for scholarship, mentoring, and advising in a setting that supports privacy and focused work.

**5.6.4:** The program has allocated space for its current learning formats, but these allocations are subject to the limitations noted above regarding accessibility, co-location, and capacity. The constraints identified create significant challenges in meeting the program's pedagogical objectives and in ensuring equitable access to learning resources.

### **5.7 Financial Resources** (*Guidelines*, p. 21)

The program must demonstrate that it has the appropriate institutional support and financial resources to support student learning and achievement during the next term of accreditation.

#### **Team Findings: Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The APR describes adequate financial resources available to support student learning. Further, the APR provides data on revenues and expenditures for the architecture program, projecting forward to cohort five (5). Note that as of Fall 2024, the program currently has four (4) cohorts. Thus far, actual enrollment is exceeding the original projections, and as the program notes, "it is a wonderful position to be in."

In addition to dedicated funding from the university to the program that is tuition-driven, the architecture program also has student fees that support the financial needs of the program and is currently engaging in development initiatives to generate additional funding that may be used for program-specific initiatives. Meetings with administrators and staff confirmed that as the program begins, the university is committed to providing the financial resources for the full implementation of the program.

### **5.8 Information Resources** (*Guidelines*, p. 22)

The program must demonstrate that all students, faculty, and staff have convenient and equitable access to architecture literature and information, as well as appropriate visual and digital resources that support professional education in architecture.

Further, the program must demonstrate that all students, faculty, and staff have access to architecture librarians and visual resource professionals who provide discipline-relevant information services that support teaching and research.

#### **Team Findings: Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The APR outlines that students, faculty, and staff have access to information resources at the institutional level. Students, faculty, and staff are supported by a dedicated library liaison, reference librarians, and qualified faculty who provide in-person and online assistance. Meetings with faculty confirmed the availability and accessibility of these information resources and services.

The university maintains a basic physical collection of architectural books, documents, and reference materials, supplemented by a variety of online resources accessible through the institution's portal. Faculty can request additional books and resources to support research, teaching, and student learning, allowing the library to adapt to evolving academic needs.

Within the studio environment, the program maintains its focused collection of reference materials on codes, standards, and other professional resources directly supporting architectural education. The program's long-range plans include expanding these resources, reflecting its commitment to enhancing information accessibility for students, faculty, and staff.

Discussions with library liaisons emphasized an ongoing effort to broaden the library's collection, moving beyond its historically strong focus on ecclesiastical architecture to incorporate resources on contemporary architecture, non-Western precedents, and essential technical and theoretical materials relevant to 21st-century architectural education. The library staff, considered faculty subject experts, actively support the program's goals to ensure a comprehensive and relevant information resource foundation.

## **6—Public Information**

The NAAB expects accredited degree programs to provide information to the public about accreditation activities and the relationship between the program and the NAAB, admissions and advising, and career information, as well as accurate public information about accredited and non-accredited architecture programs. The NAAB expects programs to be transparent and accountable in the information provided to students, faculty, and the public. As a result, all NAAB-accredited programs are required to ensure that the following information is posted online and is easily available to the public.

### **6.1 Statement on NAAB-Accredited Degrees (*Guidelines*, p. 23)**

All institutions offering a NAAB-accredited degree program or any candidacy program must include the exact *language* found in the *NAAB Conditions for Accreditation, 2020 Edition*, Appendix 2, in catalogs and promotional media, including the program's website.

#### **Team Findings: Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The program provided sufficient information to meet the Statement on NAAB-Accredited Degrees requirements. The program provided evidence of the required information that the Team verified on the website. The narrative in the March 2024 APR provided links to the following pages: Samford's Department of Architecture and Interior Design and Accelerated Master of Architecture. The first location links to the second, which links to a popup, where the exact language of Appendix 2 was found.

### **6.2 Access to NAAB Conditions and Procedures (*Guidelines*, p. 23)**

The program must make the following documents available to all students, faculty, and the public, via the program's website:

- a) *Conditions for Accreditation, 2020 Edition*
- b) *Conditions for Accreditation* in effect at the time of the last visit (2009 or 2014, depending on the date of the last visit)
- c) *Procedures for Accreditation, 2020 Edition*
- d) *Procedures for Accreditation* in effect at the time of the last visit (2012 or 2015, depending on the date of the last visit)

#### **Team Findings: Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The team found active links to the 2020 Edition of both the Conditions for Accreditation and the Procedures for Accreditation as well as the 2022 and 2023 letters and reports on their website.

### **6.3 Access to Career Development Information** (*Guidelines*, p. 23)

The program must demonstrate that students and graduates have access to career development and placement services that help them develop, evaluate, and implement career, education, and employment plans.

#### **Team Findings: Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The program provides students with comprehensive career development resources, including the Samford University Career Development Center, which offers guidance, training, and access to the alum network. Additionally, the program's NCARB Licensing Advisor and internship coordination efforts assist students in job placement, internships, and licensing. Regularly distributed postings of local design community opportunities and hosting of the NCARB outreach team further reinforce career and licensure pathways, demonstrating the program's commitment to supporting students' career readiness.

### **6.4 Public Access to Accreditation Reports and Related Documents** (*Guidelines*, p. 23)

To promote transparency in the process of accreditation in architecture education, the program must make the following documents available to all students, faculty, and the public, via the program's website:

- a) All Interim Progress Reports and narratives of Program Annual Reports submitted since the last team visit
- b) All NAAB responses to any Plan to Correct and any NAAB responses to the Program Annual Reports since the last team visit
- c) The most recent decision letter from the NAAB
- d) The Architecture Program Report submitted for the last visit
- e) The final edition of the most recent Visiting Team Report, including attachments and addenda
- f) The program's optional response to the Visiting Team Report
- g) Plan to Correct (if applicable)
- h) NCARB ARE pass rates
- i) Statements and/or policies on learning and teaching culture
- j) Statements and/or policies on diversity, equity, and inclusion

#### **Team Findings: Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The program website provides access to the Conditions, Procedures, NAAB decision letters and responses, as well as the Department of Architecture & Interior Design STUDIO CULTURE STATEMENT (<https://www.samford.edu/arts/visual-arts/accelerated-master-of-architecture>, link to accreditation, and link to studio culture statement) The are no Interim Progress Reports, Program Annual Reports or ARE pass rates to report at this time.

### **6.5 Admissions and Advising** (*Guidelines*, p. 24)

The program must publicly document all policies and procedures that govern the evaluation of applicants for admission to the accredited program. These procedures must include first-time, first-year students as well as transfers from within and outside the institution. This documentation must include the following:

- a) Application forms and instructions
- b) Admissions requirements; admissions-decisions procedures, including policies and processes for evaluation of transcripts and portfolios (when required); and decisions regarding remediation and advanced standing
- c) Forms and a description of the process for evaluating the content of a non-accredited degrees

- d) Requirements and forms for applying for financial aid and scholarships
- e) Explanation of how student diversity goals affect admission procedures

#### **Team Findings: Not Yet Met**

**2024 Team Analysis:** The team could not find evidence on the university Admissions page of publicly documented policies and procedures governing the evaluation of applicants for admission to the accredited program. This is because the program still needs to accept M.Arch. students to the program. The program still needs to describe the process for evaluating transcripts and portfolios (when required) and decisions regarding remediation and advanced standing. Generally, there is not yet a single location where all forms are available to students to apply for scholarships or financial aid for university undergraduate or graduate programs when navigating from the link provided in the APR. Specific forms may, however, be available behind the CCS Profile page. No explicit statement has yet explained the relationship between diversity goals and admission procedures. There is, however, a robust transfer credit articulation site primarily about general education credits.

Faculty advisors handle Advising for first-year students centrally at the university level and in subsequent years. During conversations with the university admissions and advising, it was clear that there are well-established protocols for maintaining FERPA standards. Banner and DegreeWorks provide the system's backbone for student records and progress to degree self-monitoring. The student records that the team reviewed contain all the expected necessary details.

#### **6.6 Student Financial Information** (*Guidelines*, p. 24)

- 6.6.1 The program must demonstrate that students have access to current resources and advice for making decisions about financial aid.
- 6.6.2 The program must demonstrate that students have access to an initial estimate for all tuition, fees, books, general supplies, and specialized materials that may be required during the full course of study for completing the NAAB-accredited degree program.

#### **Team Findings: Met**

##### **2024 Team Analysis:**

**6.6.1:** Documentation of current student financial information was found on the university website at <https://www.samford.edu/admission/financial-aid>, including types of financial aid available and how to apply. Additional financial information on scholarships is available at <https://www.samford.edu/admission/scholarships>.

**6.6.2:** Information on tuition and fees is found at the university website at <https://www.samford.edu/admission/tuition-and-fees>. Meetings confirmed that the Chair of the Architecture and Interior Design programs provides students with information on expenses specific to architecture and interior design majors.

## **E. The Visiting Team**

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### **Team Member, Former NAAB Board Member Representative**

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**F. Report Signatures**

**Respectfully Submitted,**



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**Robert McKinney, EdD, Architect, NCARB**  
**Team Chair**



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**Jennifer Myers, NCARB**  
**Team Member**



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**John Cays, AIA, NCARB**  
**Team Member**