UHM SOA Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) Program Assessment

The MLA curriculum aims to provide its graduates with a deep and thorough knowledge, core skills, and applications of contemporary landscape architecture with a focus on sustainable built environment design in (sub)tropical, Hawaiian, and Asia/Pacific environments. It fosters creative problem solving, critical thinking, and advanced design communication. Further, in an educational context enriched by other disciplines, MLA students acquire competency in landscape architectural research and scholarly methods.

The curriculum strives for educational excellence in exploring the role of landscape architectural design as a medium of aesthetics, place, infrastructure, resources, ecology, sustainability, culture, heritage, community, and social and environmental equity. Graduates will be prepared to succeed in a changing world, enter professional practice or other careers in landscape architecture, and influence the future trajectory of the local, national, and international profession in innovative ways.

The MLA program's goals, curricular structure, and assessment of quality of student learning are closely guided by the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board's (LAAB) Accreditation Standard 3 "Professional Curriculum," which identifies key components of a professional landscape architecture curriculum.[1] The MLA's educational goals and student learning objectives include, but are not limited to:

MLA SLO 1: History, theory & criticism
This SLO combines knowledge and skills in the areas of design history, design theory, criticism, critical thinking; interdisciplinarity; sustainability, resiliency, stewardship; and health, safety, welfare.

MLA SLO 2: Design processes and methodology
This SLO combines knowledge and skills in critical thinking, analysis, ideation, synthesis, site program and iterative design development at various scales, and design communication.

MLA SLO 3: Natural and cultural systems and processes
This SLO combines knowledge and skills in plants and ecosystems sciences, with a focus on tropical climates and Asia/Pacific; built environment and infrastructure; human factors and social and community systems; human health and well-being; as well as Hawaiʻian sense of place and cultural practices.

MLA SLO 4: Communication and documentation
This SLO combines knowledge and skills in written communication, oral communication, visual and graphic communication/representation; design and construction documents; numeracy, quantitative problem-solving/communication; and community and client engagement.

MLA SLO 5: Implementation
This SLO combines knowledge and skills in construction technology and site engineering; site materials; use and management of plants and vegetation; and policies and regulation.

MLA SLO 6: Computer applications and advanced technologies
This SLO combines knowledge and skills in 2D and 3D visualization and modeling; design communication from conceptual to construction drawings; and geospatial analysis.

MLA SLO 7: Assessment and evaluation
This SLO combines knowledge and skills in site assessment, pre-design analysis, landscape performance, post-occupancy evaluation, and visual and scenic assessment.

MLA SLO 8: Professional practice
This SLO combines knowledge and skills in leadership; values, ethics; practice; and construction administration.

MLA SLO 9: Research and scholarly methods
This SLO combines knowledge and skills in quantitative and qualitative methods; establishing a research hypothesis; framing research questions; literature/case study review/precedent review; research integrity and protection of human subjects; and communication of research.

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[1] LAAB 2016 *Accreditation Standards for First-Professional Programs in Landscape Architecture*, p. 10

In addition to these MLA-specific SLO that are closely guided by LAAB expectations, MLA courses and syllabi also incorporate Mānoa Advanced Degree Institutional Learning Outcomes:

Knowledge and Understanding
1. Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge in one or more general subject areas related to, but not confined to, a specific area of interest.
2. Demonstrate understanding of research methodology and techniques specific to one's field of study.

Intellectual and Applied Skills
3. Apply research methodology and/or scholarly inquiry techniques specific to one's field of study.
4. Critically analyze, synthesize, and utilize information and data related to one's field of study.

Communication Skills
5. Proficiently communicate and disseminate information in a manner relevant to the field and intended audience.

Professional Responsibility
6. Conduct research or projects as a responsible and ethical professional, including consideration of and respect for other cultural perspectives.
7. Interact professionally with others.

MLA SLO and Mānoa Advanced Degree ILO are included in all MLA course syllabi. Admission of applicants into the three MLA program tracks with their respective programs of study acknowledges student competency and varying levels of preparedness.

As is common practice in professional design degree programs, the evaluation of students during their final studio presentations by invited professionals, as well as the participation of committee members (disciplinary experts from within and outside of UH) on thesis and capstone committees and design juries, play important roles in the assessment of MLA student learning at various key stages throughout the program (also see curriculum map below).

Additionally, as has been a long-standing and successful tradition in the School of Architecture's NAAB-accredited DArch program and the BEnvD program, at the end of each semester, MLA program faculty engage in an all-faculty review of the semester's program course work, specifically focusing on MLA design studio outcomes. During this assessment session, all School of Architecture faculty and the Dean gather for one day and evaluate/discuss how studio courses and the overall program curriculum might be adjusted to better align course content with SLO and improve overall program learning outcomes.

Curriculum Map
The following page includes a curriculum map that illustrates the alignment of instruction with student learning outcomes (SLO) throughout the MLA curriculum. Individual course syllabi further specify which aspects of the SLO are emphasized in courses.

Key:

SLO = student learning outcome

"I" = Introduced (students are introduced to the outcome)

"R" = Reinforced and opportunity to practice (the outcome is reinforced and students afforded opportunities to practice)

"M" = Mastery at the exit level (students have had sufficient practice and can now demonstrate mastery)

"A" = Assessment evidence collected (evidence might be collected and evaluated for program-level assessment)

Curriculum Map			Desired MLA Student Learning Outcomes								
Requirements: MLA I Track	Requirements: MLA I AP Track	Requirements: MLA II Track	SLO 1	SLO 2	SLO 3	SLO 4	SLO 5	SLO 6	SLO 7	SLO 8	SLO 9
ARCH 381	-	-	I	I	I	I	I	I	I		
ARCH 631	-	-		I	I	I					
ARCH 633	-	-		I		I					
ARCH 651 studio	-	-	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	A
ARCH 352	-	-	R		I	R					I	
ARCH 483	-	-		R	R	R	I					
ARCH 484	-	-	I	I	R	R	I	I	I		I	
ARCH 652 studio	-	-	R	R	R	R	R	R	R			A
Core: ARCH 634			I	I	I	I	I					
Core: ARCH 635			R	R		I	I	I	R	I		
Core: ARCH 695			R	R	R	R					I	
Core: ARCH 761 studio			R	R	R	R	R	R	R			A
Core: ARCH 6XX Seminar/ Elective			Varies by topic								
Core: ARCH 682			I		R	R					R	
Core: ARCH 739			R			R					R	
Core: ARCH 743 interdisciplinary studio			R	R	R	R	R	R	R		R	A
Core: ARCH 763 comprehensive studio			R	M	M	R	M	M	R	R		A
PLAN 620	PLAN 620	PLAN 620	R		R	R	M	R			M	
-	-	or: ARCH 636	R	R	R	M	R			M		
ARCH 636	ARCH 636		R			M	R			M		
		ARCH 699 thesis prep	M	M		M					M	
ARCH 6XX Seminar/ Elective	ARCH 6XX Seminar/ Elective	ARCH 6XX Seminar/ Elective	Varies by topic								
-	-	or: ARCH 696	Varies by topic								
ARCH 696	ARCH 696		Varies by topic								
ARCH 764 capstone studio	ARCH 764 capstone studio		M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	A
		ARCH 700 MLA Thesis	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	A