香 港 城 市 設 計 學 會
Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design

Professional Core Competencies Framework Guidelines

Version 2 – May 2019

Contents

<u>Introduction</u>

The Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design (HKIUD) is concerned with promoting the awareness and quality of urban design in Hong Kong, including the raising of standards in practice, in pursuit of the Institute's Urban Design Objectives (Appendix1).To this end, the HKIUD grants accreditation to programmes that provide urban design education and training that achieve the objectives of HKIUD. These include programmes in urban design, planning or architecture, indeed, courses of study in any related subject area whose graduates are likely to become urban design practitioners.

This document sets out the requirements that HKIUD-accredited programmes need to meet. The requirements are described by two elements of a Professional Core Competencies Framework. The first element (A.1.) describes the Urban Design Topics that a graduate of an accredited programme should be competent in. The required Level of Competency (A.2.)is set by the HKIUD, and depends on different classes of accreditation they wish to bestow upon different types of programmes. As a general requirement for considering the application, the programme to be accredited must posses a track record of graduates of not less than 5 years.

<u>The Professional Core Competencies Framework (PCCF)</u>

A.1. Urban Design Topics
Urban Design Topics describe areas of knowledge that accredited courses should impart to their graduates. The Topics allows us to organize thinking about how urban configurations deliver the Urban Design Objectives. Topics are organized under four Sub-headings: Substantive Knowledge, Techniques and Skills, Transferable Knowledge and Values.

I. **Substantive Knowledge:**
   a) Theories of configuration-objective relationships: **Urban morphologies and their impacts**
   b) Histories of urban design theories: **Urban Design histories**
   c) Techniques for studying configuration-objective relations: **Research methods and techniques about urban design**
   d) Urban Design Products and Processes by which Urban Design delivers on Objectives;
   e) Urban Design Actors involved in the Processes, or have an interest in them or Urban Design Objectives.

II. **Techniques and Skills[1]**
   Designing is the overarching activity that includes:
   a) Site and policy analysis[2]
   b) Brief and objectives formulation
   c) Form-making,

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[1] Techniques and Skills should apply to and across Substantive Knowledge in I.
[2] a) and b) can be considered 'research for design'

d) Evaluation of design i.e. deploying existing knowledge and formulated objectives to assess the quality and impact of design[3]. This includes including ongoing evaluation of forms created[4]

e) Communication: not just of designs, but creating and facilitating the flow of ideas, information, and understanding between and among individuals and groups, using all relevant media.

III. Transferable Knowledge
a) Conflict resolution
b) Decision-making
c) Project Management
d) Managing collaboration
e) Negotiation & Communication
f) Political awareness and ability

IV. Values
a. Ethical commitment to the mission of urban design
b. Remaining current and relevant
c. Contributing to advancing the profession
d. Mentoring others

Explanations for each of the four Topic Sub-headings

I. Urban design-specific Substantive Knowledge: Urban design Objectives set by HKIUD are the foundation of the Competency Framework, because the Role of urban design configurations or form is important only to the extent it delivers these Objectives. Topics are packages of 'Configuration-Objective' relationships. Topics are organized under Sub-headings: Substantive Knowledge, Techniques and Skills, Transferable Knowledge and Values. Many theories on urban design configuration-and-objective causal relations have been proposed in recent years, which urban designers needs to know. The History of urban design, in part, is a history of these theories, although it is also a history of the systemization of observed urban form patterns. Each Sub-heading can also therefore have associated Theories and Historical contexts.

II. Urban design Techniques and Skills that designers require: Particular Techniques and Skills are associated with particular UD Sub-headings, although many will also cut across Topics. Techniques enable urban design or its constituent actions – researching context and precedents, formulation of design brief, form-making, communication of design, and evaluation of the urban design proposal. Skill is required to operate these Techniques.

III. Transferable Knowledge, Skills and Techniques which are critical to be an effective urban designer：They relate to the management of both projects and people, and require political nous, given the multi-stakeholder nature of urban design.

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[3] d) can be considered 'research about design'.
[4] c) can be considered 'research by design'

V. **Values** that urban design professionals are expected to hold and act upon.

A.2. Levels of Competence
Levels of competence are assigned to each item in this Framework.
- **Level 1 'awareness'**: Knowledge of and role of competency.
- **Level 2 'understanding'**: Demonstration of how the competency applies from a theoretical or observational viewpoint. Whilst the personal experience of the competency is not essential, your understanding of how and why the competency applies should be apparent.
- **Level 3 'competence'**: Demonstration of how the competency is integral to actions as an urban designer. This is more than just the application of knowledge, it should demonstrate how it is operated and imbedded throughout while deploying depth of knowledge.

HKIUD Post-Graduate Programme/Course Accreditation
Competencies matrix for a Post-Graduate course of Urban Design

	Core Competencies	Level 1 - Awareness	Level 2 - Understanding	Level 3 - Competence
I. Urban Design specific knowledge	Urban morphologies and impacts			v
	Urban design histories		v	
	Research methods and techniques		v	
	Urban design products and processes		v	
	Urban design stakeholders and actors		v	
II. Urban design techniques and skills	Site and policy analysis			v
	Brief and objectives formulation		v	
	Form - making			v
	Evaluation of design			v
	Communication			v
III. Management knowledge, skills and	Conflict resolution	v		
	Decision-making process		v	

techniques	Project management	v		
	Managing collaboration		v	
	Negotiation and communication		v	
	Political awareness and ability to deliver the mission of urban design	v		
IV. Values	Ethical commitment		v	
	Continuing professional development	v		
	Contributing to advancing Urban Design profession	v		
	Mentoring others	v		

Appendices

Appendix 1: HKIUD Urban Design Objectives

An important urban design objective is the pursuit for quality for urban spaces and places through urban design. The HKIUD has committed to these as a vision statement. These form the Foundations of the Professional Core Competence framework.

- Vibrant and interesting
- Organic and adoptable
- Healthy and safe
- Connected and integrated
- Convenient and comfortable
- Valuable yet low maintenance
- Green and sustainable
- Respectful of heritage
- Diverse and sociable

Appendix 2: The definition of urban design

The transformation of existing configurations to preferred one by changing the relationships between different buildings; the relationships between buildings and the streets, public spaces, waterways and other spaces which make up the public realm; the relationship of one part of a village, town or city with other parts; the patterns of movement and activity which are thereby established; in short, the complex relationship between all the elements of built and un-built space.

These transformations could apply to the configurations of first (geography), second (built environment) and third (nature), and will involve marshalling the corresponding multiple stakeholders' values to deliver acceptable spatial configurations and achieve acceptable distribution of values amongst stakeholders.

Appendix 3: Urban design Post-Graduate Teaching programme learning outcomes outline

I. Urban design (substantive) knowledge

1. Reflect on the arguments for and against urban design and particular theoretical approaches.
2. Assess what can be learnt from experience of urban design in different contexts and across spatial scales.
3. Demonstrate effective research, analytical, and evaluative skills and the ability to reach appropriate, urban design evidence based decisions.

II. Urban designing Techniques and Skills

1. Evaluate the principles and processes of urban design for creating high quality places and enhancing the public realm for the benefit of all in society.
2. Generate integrated and well substantiated responses to urban design challenges.
3. Evaluate different urban design strategies and the practical application of development finance; assess the implications for generating added urban design value for the community.
4. Explain the contribution that urban design can make to the built and natural environment and in particular recognise the implications of climate change.
5. Demonstrate how efficient resource management helps to deliver effective urban design.
6. Recognise the role of communication skills in the urban design processes

III. Transferable management knowledge, skills and techniques

1. Explain and demonstrate how urban design operates within the context of institutional and legal frameworks.
2. Debate the concept of rights and the legal and practical implications of representing these rights in urban design decision place making process.
3. Recognise the importance of working in an interdisciplinary context, and be able to demonstrate team working, negotiation, mediation, advocacy and leadership skills.

IV. Values

1. Explain the political and ethical nature of urban design and reflect on how urban designers work effectively within decision-making structures.
2. Explain the principles of equity and equality of opportunity in relation to urban design in order to positively promote the involvement of different communities, and evaluate the importance and effectiveness of community engagement in the urban design decision process.
3. Distinguish the characteristics of an urban design professional, including the importance of upholding the highest standards of ethical behaviour and a commitment to lifelong learning and critical reflection so as to maintain and develop professional competence.

Appendix 4: Urban Design topics capacity check for Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

A. Foundations of urban design
• A1 The objectives of urban design and the qualities of successful places
• A2 How the elements of development form contribute to achieving the objectives of urban design
• A3 Collaborative and participative processes
• A4 How design relates to different spatial scales
• A5 Assessing design quality
• A6 The role of urban design in local government

• A7 The other systems and agencies that shape the built environment
• A8 How to use, read and interpret urban design documents and plans
• A9 Implementing urban design
• A10 Caring for the place
B. Urban Design Topics: A further checklist of Urban Design issues in shaping places
Form and context
• B1 Natural setting
• B2 Legislative and policy context
• B3 Historical, cultural, social and economic context
• B4 Land ownership
• B5 Urban form
• B6 Types of building
• B7 Materials
• B8 Green space
• B9 Movement and inclusive access
• B10 Parking
People
• B11 Emotional needs
• B12 Sensory experience
• B13 Factors contributing to health
• B14 Safety and security
• B15 Equality
Servicing
• B16 Water
• B17 Energy
• B18 Telecommunications
• B19 Waste
• B20 Utilities
Management
• B21 Management and maintenance
C. Roles in Urban Design: These are some of the urban design activities that professional Urban Designers undertake, need to have awareness, understanding or competence.
• C1 Carrying out urban design studies and appraisals
• C2 Preparing urban design policy, guidance and statements
• C3 Master-planning
• C4 Designing
• C5 Communicating design in two dimensions
• C6 Communicating design in three dimensions
• C7 Providing urban design advice
• C8 Managing urban design processes
• C9 Promoting place making