Report on the implementation of recommendations from the Council for Higher Education in Israel, in accordance with the report from the International Union of Architects’ assessment of quality in architectural education

The Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning, Technion - September 2023

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| The Technion Institute must appoint a steering committee to assess the following issues in the field of architecture and formulate a strategic plan with recommendations for implementation. | | |
| Subject | Issue | Response |
| General | There is a need to define and assess research in the field of architecture and its place at the school.  This follows a broad recommendation for discussion on this subject among the heads of departments related to this field. | The primary aim of the architecture department is to link architectural practice and research, in order to promote innovative and experimental ideas that challenge prevailing planning conventions and perceptions regarding architecture and the built environment.  The department is committed to developing new knowledge in the disciplines of architecture, design, and the built environment through cross-disciplinary scientific research using diverse research methods.  Following the implementation of the new program for a master’s degree in architecture, the architecture department now has five teaching and research tracks:   1. Sustainable architecture 2. Technology and digital architecture 3. History, theory, and critique of architecture 4. Built heritage conservation 5. Urban design   Research is conducted and evaluated according to the research culture of the field of study.  A committee, led by the head of the architecture department, will assess the subject of the “research by design”. The research will take place in a (master’s degree) studio, in conjunction with research laboratories.  . |
|  | Criteria for evaluating and promoting faculty members in the field of architecture, in accordance with the above definition. | Faculty members who are in a research track are evaluated according to criteria generally accepted at the Technion: excellence in research, teaching, and service to the institution and the community. The promotion process takes into account the distinctive culture of each field.  Practitioner faculty members, who come to the Technion from professional work in the field, are an integral part of the institution. They are evaluated according to their excellence in practice and teaching, contribution to the faculty, professional achievements, and national and international status and recognition.  The faculty currently employs seven practitioner faculty members in half-time positions, and seven practitioner faculty members in quarter-time positions. Two additional practitioner faculty members are undergoing a recruitment process.  Adjunct teachers are evaluated according to the quality of their teaching and their professional achievements. There are dozens of adjunct teachers located in various tracks within the faculty. |
|  | The interface between faculty members’ research activity and work in the laboratories with the education and training of the students in the department. | The link between research and teaching in the architecture faculty offers a special opportunity and a notable comparative advantage for the Technion. The research laboratories  are a potential bridge between research, the studios, and theoretical courses.  The laboratories were developed to provide a research infrastructure for faculty members. They are also used to support teaching, as faculty members integrate their research outputs into the compulsory and advanced elective courses that they teach.  Research is integrated into the studio courses at various levels (usually experimental studios), particularly the thematic studios in the various tracks mentioned above, in which students participate during the 3rd year of their bachelor’s degree program.  Examples:  Materials Studio, Arch. Shany Barath  Environmental Studio, Dr. Jonathan Natanian,  Residential Studio, Assoc. Prof. Yael Allweil  Computerized Planning Studio, Assoc. Prof. Jacob (Yasha) Grobman  Digital Production Studio, Assoc. Prof. Aharon Sprecher  Reuse Studio, Prof. Dafna Fisher-Gewirtzman (with others)  Studio for master’s degree final projects, as part of a research architecture course supervised by a researcher at the faculty.  Students earning a master’s degree or certification may be integrated as research assistants in laboratories for various projects.  Studios for courses that involve social action in the various tracks also benefit from integrating faculty research activity, such as the 1:1 studio led by Dr. Dan Price. |
| Infrastructure | The infrastructure available to the School of Architecture is not sufficient for the educational program to function at a reasonable and adequate academic level. The infrastructure must be upgraded as soon as possible, including: upgrading studio rooms and workshops, and creating a work environment that is appropriate for faculty members and doctoral students from overseas.  Compliance with this recommendation is considered a precondition for continued implementation of the educational program. | The faculty’s infrastructure is dispersed, and its activities are conducted in multiple places: the Amado, Segoe, and Mauerberger Buildings on the Neve Sha’anan campus, and Hadarion on the Hadar campus downtown, which is used by the second-year students in the architecture and landscape architecture tracks.  The new Goldenberg Pavilion, adjacent to the Amado building, was recently inaugurated. It is intended for advanced degrees in the architecture field.  The faculty has several classrooms on the Technion campus where theoretical courses are taught.  There is one auditorium for 270 students (shared with the Technion at large), which was recently renovated.  There are three halls for between 90-180 students (shared with the Technion at large). These halls are in poor condition and need significant renovations, as part of the infrastructure development plan for the architecture faculty.  There is one classroom for 65 students and five classrooms for 15-30 students.  These classrooms do not meet all the department’s teaching needs, making it necessary to hold classes in various buildings around the campus.  There is also a new auditorium in the Hadarion building for 100 students.  Studio courses take place in four buildings:  Year 1: Segoe Building  Year 2: Hadarion, Thematic Studios  Year 3: Amado Building, master’s degree Studios  Year 4: Mauerberger Building, Final Project Studio, Goldenberg Pavilion (new)  Despite this new pavilion, there is a need to upgrade and renovate the infrastructure of the studio rooms and to create storage space, especially for students in the first two years of the program.  The Goldenberg Pavilion, inaugurated this year, is a new and high-quality space for about 100 students in the advanced years of the program to do their studio work, submissions, and end-of-the-year exhibitions.  On the fifth floor of the Segoe Building, there are spaces for students to do research.  This year, these spaces were successfully divided to enable groups to conduct research separately, according to topic.  The Faculty included the issue of upgrading the research and teaching infrastructure in the multi-year development program that they submitted to the administration of the Technion this year. It is anticipated that a request will be submitted for another building for the Faculty of Architecture.  Improvement is expected to be seen in the issues discussed above. |
| Faculty | The Technion Institute must ensure that the head of the Faculty of Architecture will be an active partner in institutional committees and decision-making processes. | The Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning will serve as Chair of the preparatory committee for appointments, promotions, and granting tenure for faculty members in the department, awarding status for Professor Emeritus, all Chair positions, the appointment of visiting professors, and any other subject set in the regulations.  The Dean is a member of the Technion Senate, the authority that determines all academic issues for the Technion.  The Dean is always invited to participate in all meetings of the Standing Committee for Academic Studies, which operates on behalf of the Senate.  The Dean is a member of the forum of the Heads of Academic Units at the Technion. |
|  | The Faculty of Architecture does not have an adequate reserve of senior faculty members. A program for recruiting junior faculty members and promoting senior faculty members will be developed to prepare the faculty for high-quality teaching and research. | There are only two faculty members in the architecture track with the rank of full professor (one of them is the faculty dean), and six associate professors (five of them are in the research track).  In recent years, several prominent faculty members have been brought into the department, with the rank of senior lecturer and lecturer. They represent a promising reserve for the mid-and long-term (Arch. Barath, Dr. Schaumann, Dr.  Aleksandrowicz, Dr. Austern, Dr. Natanian, Dr. Keller).  A multi-year plan for recruiting new members and developing the staff in the Faculty of Architecture, and Town Planning in general, and its architecture track in particular, which considers events planned for the coming years.  Also, in recent years a number of practitioner faculty members have been integrated into the Faculty, from among Israel’s leaders in the field. Part of their role is to strengthen the Institute’s relationship with the profession in the field (Visiting Prof. Arch. Chyutin, Visiting Prof. Kimmel, Visiting Prof.  Arch. Halevy, Visiting Prof. Arch. Chen, Visitor Senior Lecturer Arch. Ben-Ari).  Recently, open calls were published for applications for positions for faculty researchers in the architecture track: Urbanism and Urban Design,  Building Technology, Built Heritage, Conservation, and Re-Use. |
|  | The Technion Institute must ensure that faculty members are aware of the terms and conditions for the promotion and recruitment processes. | Faculty members are informed regarding the conditions for promotions.  Several meetings are scheduled between the applicant and the Dean during the promotion or recruitment process. |
|  | The Institute must strive towards an appropriate representation of diverse populations in the department. | The Institute strives to represent a diversity of populations in the department. |
| Diversity and gender | The Institute must strive to increase diversity in the program to appropriately represent the diversity of society. | The Institute strives to broaden and adjust the curriculum to the diversity of society. This includes annual projects that contribute to the community and practical cooperative projects with industry and major architectural offices. |
|  | The institution must provide supportive services that meet the needs of the entire population of students in the faculty. | The Technion’s Dean of Students Office works to provide a supportive academic, economic, emotional, and social environment for all students.  As part of this support, financial assistance is given according to socioeconomic criteria.  Architecture students receive additional points due to the higher expenses involved in their studies.  Fifth-and sixth-year students in master’s degree programs  are still entitled to live in dormitories and receive financial aid scholarships.  The Faculty of Architecture has its own dedicated counselor at the Student Center for Counseling and Support who offers individual assistance to students seeking emotional help. |