

# How to Become a Qualified Architect in Sri Lanka

Board of Architectural Education

Sri Lanka  
Institute of  
Architects



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Publication No: BAE-121

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Published by;  
Board of Architectural Education, Sri Lanka Institute of Architects

Published in June-2013

Publication No. BAE-121

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## **1.0 Introduction**

To become a qualified Architect one should possess a unique talent in "creative thinking" and has to widely learn Arts & Science subjects related to Architecture. To become a qualified Architect is very different than becoming a qualified Doctor or a qualified Engineer because of the required "unique talent."

As such, before following a suitable course in Architecture to become a qualified Architect, the parents and students are advised to read this Article and if necessary meet a Counsellor appointed by the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects by appointment to obtain more information about the Architectural Courses and the gravity of Architectural studies.

## **2.0 What is Architecture?**

Architecture is a social art that touches all human beings at all levels of their existence everywhere and everyday. It calls for originality, creativity, conceptualization, perception, aesthetic values and a holistic judgement of people, places, objects and events.

Architecture is primarily the art and science of designing spaces for serving the multifarious activities of human beings and for meeting the specific needs in a meaningful built environment. Creativity is the essence of architecture and harmony an essential aim of Architects. Architecture that has been recognized as great, in the historic past as well as in our own time, has been harmonious with nature and its immediate environment. These are the essential tenets of design which Architects aspire to follow.

This is the only discipline, which encompasses the four major fields of human endeavour: Humanities, Science, Art and Technology, actually putting into practice the professional inputs drawn from them. In sum, Architecture is the matrix of human civilization; an authentic measure of the social status and an evocative expression of the ethos of an era. When

conserved, it is heritage and when in ruins it becomes archaeology, reconstructing tell-tale pictures of the past civilizations.

The demands on the profession over the years have become much more complex in nature and much wider in scope. Architecture, in its broadened scope has generated specializations such as Urban Design, City Planning, Landscape Architecture and Interior Architecture, Retro-fitting of Buildings, Architectural Conservation and Construction Management have also lately emerged as specializations. Each of these compliments and supports each other.

The primary objective of Architectural Design is to evolve a strong, durable and an efficient skeleton, so that the space which architecture encloses and the form in which it expresses itself as interior content and an exterior container, becomes an organic extension of one another. Structure is so fundamental to architecture that it actually determines its two-pronged functions; the utilitarian appropriateness and the expressive power of aesthetics.

Urban Design is architecture of the cities, highly complex and gargantuan in scale. The primary aim of urban design is to imbibe and maintain a sense of identity and harmony among buildings, open spaces and other structures by means of a pleasant and memorable visual imagery throughout the length and breadth of an urban setting. Accessibility at city-level and the movement at all levels must be designed to operate smoothly.

Landscape Architecture deals with the analysis, planning, design, management, preservation and rehabilitation of land and also determines the environmental impact. It is a science capable of objective analysis and synthesis leading to an ecologically-sensitive design, which is self-sustainable.

In Interior Architecture, the primary objective is to generate a purposeful ambience such as would stimulate the user's creative potential through multifarious activities. It must facilitate the individual's sense of orientation, identification and

eventual appropriation of architectural spaces that blend the interiors and exteriors into symbiotic relationships through varied experiences of scale, volume, light and shade.

Interiors are not only to protect the users from the extremes of weather but also to nurture them emotionally. Since the interior spaces are truly the life-force of any building, they must be designed (and not decorated) as detailed artistic articulation of the basic architectural concept with deep insight and sensitivity to fulfil the fundamental functional and aesthetic needs that are efficient and pleasant to live and work in.

The architectural profession feels deeply concerned towards national priorities in the fields of energy conservation, ecology, environmental pollution, protection and preservation of architectural heritage and their precincts, low-cost housing, urban renewals, rural upliftment, economic development at local and district levels, etc. in the interest of quality of life both in rural and urban settlements.

### **3.0 Architectural Profession in Sri Lanka**

The practice of the architectural profession is regulated by the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects (SLIA) Law No.01 of 1976 and SLIA (Amendment) Act No. 14 of 1996 and the regulations framed thereunder.

The documents stipulate the parameters within which the Architect is required to function. These define the responsibilities, the scope of work and services and prescribe the mandatory minimum scale of professional charges with a view to making the Client fully aware of the duties and services which he may expect from the Architect.

These documents are applicable to all the Architects registered with the Architects Registration Board (ARB). The Architectural Education and the entry to profession is controlled by the Board of Architectural Education (BAE) of SLIA.



Any person wishes to qualify as an Architect must understand the role of SLIA BAE & ARB and type of courses of Architectural studies they should follow. Please read the rest of this Article to obtain some knowledge about Architects in Sri Lanka.

#### **4.0 Sri Lanka Institute Of Architects (SLIA)**

Sri Lanka Institute of Architects was established as a small professional body on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 1957 and was known as the "Ceylon Institute of Architects" (CIA) with the assistance of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

The major activity of the SLIA at that time was to increase the number of qualified Architects in Sri Lanka, as there was a dearth of Architects for the development works in our country after independence. As the Architectural Education abroad was expensive, CIA decided to establish a School of Architecture in Ceylon. A full time three year course was started at the Institute of Practical Technology (IPT)-Katubedda (today know as University of Moratuwa) leading to the RIBA Intermediate Examination in July-1961.

In 1960s those who followed full time course at IPT-Katubedda had to go to a Foreign University to follow the balance two year course in Architecture to become a fully qualified Architect.

Subsequently, in the Year-1968, a full time 03 Year Course was started and absorbed into the University of Sri Lanka-Colombo Campus and later transferred to the University of Moratuwa, where they started a 03 year Degree Course leading to B.Sc. (Built Environment). In the Year-1972, two year Post Graduate course leading to M.Sc. (Architecture) was also started.

In 1976, Sri Lanka Institute of Architects was incorporated by an Act of Parliament known as "Sri Lanka Institute of Architects Law, No. 1 of 1976".

As per the SLIA Law No. 1 of 1976, there are six General Objects of the SLIA, out of which the first object is "To

*promote and advance the study, practice and application of and research in Architecture and its kindred subjects and the Arts and Sciences connected with it".*

Similarly, SLIA was empowered with eight powers out of which the sixth power is as follows:

*"To prescribe, the terms and conditions of and to supervise, control and regulate the engagement, training transfer and dismissal of persons desiring to qualify as Architects."*

Subsequently, in 1996 the Act was amended as - "Sri Lanka Institute of Architects (Amendment) Act No. 14 of 1996." This Act provided additional powers to SLIA to establish an Architects Registration Board (ARB) and register Architects under three categories as follows:

- i. Chartered Architect
- ii. Architects
- iii. Architectural Licentiates

As per the above Objects and powers vested by the Parliament by the two Acts, SLIA regulates the Architectural Education and Architectural Practice by Two Boards established under Sri Lanka Institute of Architects (SLIA). Those are Board of Architectural Education and Architects Registration Board.

#### **4.1 Board of Architectural Education (BAE)**

This Board was established far back as 1975. The BAE controls the entire Architectural Education in Sri Lanka by providing curriculum, accreditation (approving) of courses of Architectural Education in Sri Lanka.

##### **Chartered Architect**

To become chartered architect one has to obtain their education under a school which has been validated by the BAE (refer section 6) or obtain exemptions for their qualification from the BAE in the case of non validated schools such as overseas schools.

All those who follow any course of Architectural Studies in any School in Sri Lanka or abroad after completion of recognized Degree or Diploma equivalent to Part-II of SLIA, has to follow one year part-time course conducted by SLIA-BAE leading to SLIA-Part-III Professional Practice Examination. They also need to fulfil 2 years of compulsory full time work experience under a Chartered Architect before sitting for this examination.

Having passed the SLIA Part-III Examination, the candidates will be eligible to apply for SLIA Associate Membership and will become Chartered Architect.

### **Architectural Licentiate**

The BAE also conduct a course leading to Architectural Licentiate This course is open to those who are working as Architectural Assistant and who have adequate Architectural experience under a Chartered Architect. Details of this course could be obtained from the BAE.

### **Information**

All Sri Lankan students are advised to obtain more details from the BAE, SLIA before applying for the relevant courses conducted overseas. You can also visit SLIA website '[www.slia.lk](http://www.slia.lk)'.

Prospective students are strongly advised to obtain relevant course details such as syllabus for each year of the course of studies. They should verify with BAE whether the syllabi are acceptable to the SLIA and could be exempted from SLIA Part-I & Part-II.

Please note that there are number of courses available around the world which are not acceptable for exemption from SLIA Part-I and Part-II. You will not be able further your education and become an Architect qualified to practice in Sri Lanka if you follow such a program.

## **4.2 Architects Registration Board (ARB)**

Architects Registration Board (ARB) was established in 1997. One of the Past Presidents will be appointed as the Chairman of ARB.

An Architect who wishes to practice Architecture in Sri Lanka should register with the ARB under one of the categories stated above. This Registration is valid for one year which has to be renewed every year if one wishes to practice in Sri Lanka.

The practice of Architects will be controlled by the Code of Professional Conduct like in most of other professions. A Code of Conduct is important to keep the profession under control, protect the public from mal-practices and to make sure that our Members will provide proper Architectural services.

Every Architect registered with ARB will be issued with a seal annually, under his/her name. The use of this Seal is mandatory when Building Applications are submitted to the Local Authority for approval and certifying payments to the Contractors.

## **5.0 Required General Standards of Architectural Course of Studies**

Most of the Universities and Technical Institutions in the world, offer five year full-time courses in Architecture. Sometimes there are 3+2 program where 3 year bachelor and 2 year masters is offered or part-time course also- extending the duration from 07 to 08 years.

After successfully completing such a recognised Degree or Diploma courses in Architecture, they have to go through a practical training under a qualified Architect in that country.

Thereafter, the candidate has to sit for a Professional Practice Examination conducted by a Licensed Authority of the relevant country who controls the Architectural Profession in that country. If the candidate wishes to practice in that country

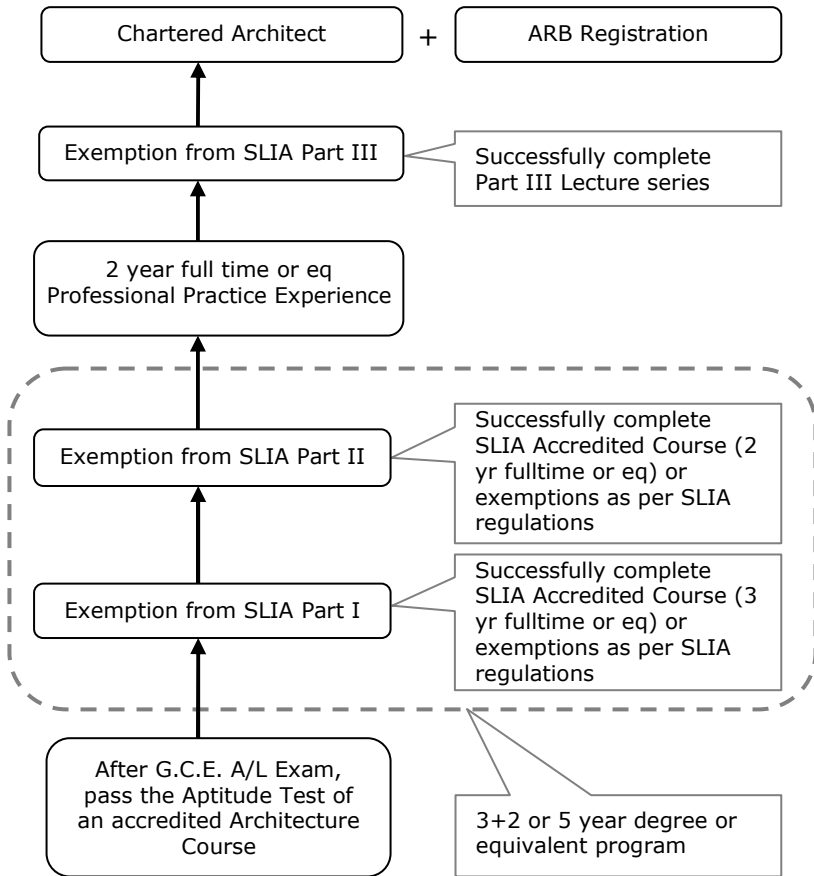
he/she should register as an Architect in that Country. Such registration in one country may be recognised in another country if they have a reciprocal arrangement.

However, any student who has followed SLIA recognised Architectural course in a Foreign Institute will get exemption from SLIA Part-I and Part-II and has to obtain prescribed number of weeks of Professional Practice training under a Chartered Architect in Sri Lanka, supervised by SLIA-BAE Counsellor.

If the candidate's training is satisfactory he/she will be eligible to follow a course of studies in Professional Practice leading to SLIA Part-III conducted by BAE. The Part-III course will generally start in June, every year. Those candidates who have successfully followed the said course will be eligible to sit for SLIA -Part-III Examination generally conducted in November every year.

After the SLIA- Part-III Examination, the candidate has to face a viva conducted by BAE. The results of those who pass the SLIA Part-III written examination and viva will be eligible to apply for the Associate Membership of SLIA.

After becoming an Associate Member of the SLIA the qualified Architect could use the title AIA (SL) at the end of his/her name and work as a Chartered Architect in the Government Sector or in the Private Sector in Sri Lanka. If the Architect wishes to start his/her Private Practice he/she has to register with the Architects Registration Board (ARB).



Educational path become a qualified Architect

## **6.0 Accredited Architectural Courses in Sri Lanka**

There are 2 accredited/validated architectural programs in Sri Lanka as of publishing date of this document (Nov 2013).

1. B. Arch. Program at the University of Moratuwa  
Katubetta

Contact - Head of Department

Telephone Nos. 2640210 (direct) or 2650216

2. Higher Diploma Program at the City School of  
Architecture,

104, Kitulwatta Road, Colombo 08

Contact: Administrative Manager

Tel. Nos. 011 2678216 (Direct) or 011 5 737120 or 011 5 737121

### **6.1 B. Arch. Program at the University of Moratuwa**

- Entry Requirements  
As per the University Grant Commission (UGC) entry requirements. Please check UGC website and/or UGD university entry criteria handbook (annual publication)
- Course Duration  
05 years full time studies equivalent to SLIA part II.
- Syllabus for the Course  
Refer university web site or contact the Department of architecture, University of Moratuwa
- Final Examination  
Comprehensive design project, Dissertation and written papers

## **6.2 Higher Diploma Program at the City School of Architecture, Colombo**

- Entry Requirements  
As stipulated by CSA regulations. Refer CSA web site or contact CSA for further information.

- Duration of Course

### Diploma in Architectural Studies

03 year Full Time Course equivalent to SLIA- Part-I

Those who pass Diploma in Architectural Studies or an equivalent to SLIA-Part-I will be eligible to follow Higher Diploma Courses in Architecture.

### Higher Diploma Courses in Architecture

03 year Part-time course equivalent to SLIA-Part-II

Please check with the City School of Architecture for the additional *graduate* and *post graduate* level qualifications that is being offered by the school

- Syllabi for the courses  
Contact CSA for the Syllabus.
- Final Examination  
Comprehensive design project, Dissertation and written papers.

If you need further clarification you may contact Administrative Manager  
Tel : 011 2678216 (Direct), or 011 5 737120 or 011 5 737121

## **7.0 Advice to those who wish to study architecture abroad**

- Check whether your Secondary Educational qualifications are adequate to enter the relevant Architectural Course.
- It is a requirement that your knowledge of English Language should be to an internationally acceptable Level, wherever you wish to follow a course of Architectural Studies. If you do not have the required



knowledge at the beginning, you should follow a course in English Language while you are following an Architectural Course in the First Year itself.

- Computer literacy is important including Auto Cad knowledge
- Check the Course Fee for five years full time studies, the cost of Materials and Books that you need to purchase for your studies.

Also inquire about the accommodation cost for one year and compare the cost in relation to the expenses that will be incurred if you follow Architectural Course in Sri Lanka before proceeding abroad for studies. Both courses offered in Sri Lanka are recognized by SLIA, RIBA and in many other countries.

- You must check if the programs are acceptable to the SLIA - BAE for exemption of Part -I & II whether you proceed to follow an Architecture Course abroad or in Sri Lanka

If you wish to return to Sri Lanka and start a practice or work under a Chartered Architect, you should follow the instructions below:

- You must prepare a set of documents required for assessment of your program for exemption from SLIA Part I and Part II. Generally the list of documents could be obtained by referring to SLIA Part I and Part II exemption applications.
- You may also contact the SLIA–BAE and clarify the documents that have to be submitted. You should contact the BAE as early as possible if you study abroad.
- It is important that you arrange for a confidential transcript to be forwarded to the BAE/SLIA from your educational Institution or the University.

- It may be useful to have such information as name of the Registrar of the University, his telephone numbers and E-mail address and the name of Head of the Faculty of Architecture or the Department, his telephone numbers and E-mail address etc. handy.
- You should bring along with you original Degree Certificate; Academic Transcripts certified by the Registrar of the University and bring certified copies of the syllabus of the full course that you followed.

We hope that the materials given in the Booklet will be useful to select Architecture as your future career.

Publication No: BAE-121 / 2012

Published by the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects (SLIA)

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