

Subject

International benchmarking of the School of Architecture at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts

Date

29.04.2005

Introduction

The School of Architecture has signed a development contract with The Danish Ministry of Culture. The development contract covers objectives and requirements for the period 2004 – 2006. According to the development contract the School of Architecture must accomplish a benchmarking with leading, international schools of architecture.

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Therefore the School of Architecture has asked the Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA) to carry out an international benchmarking. The terms of reference accounts for the objectives, method and time frame of the benchmarking.

Objectives

The benchmarking has a dual purpose. The benchmarking will provide a comparative analysis of the quality of the educational programme at the School of Architecture. Furthermore the benchmarking will offer a reporting on the strengths and weaknesses of the educational programme with the purpose of stimulating the continuous quality improvement.

Following this, the specific objectives of the international benchmarking are to:

- Evaluate the quality of the educational programme at the School of Architecture compared with three leading, international schools of architecture
- Examine the framework and structure of the educational programme (input)
- Examine selected student projects (output)
- Account for strengths and weaknesses of the educational programme and draw up recommendations for improvements of the quality of the educational programme.

Scope

The benchmarking will be based on a set of predefined criteria. In accordance with the purpose of the benchmarking the criteria will incorporate both aims and objectives of the School of Architecture (fitness for purpose-approach) and international standards of quality as formulated by the international expert panel.

The criteria will cover the following issues:

1. mission, strategy and management
2. programme content and learning
3. examination and outcome
4. teachers and research
5. admission and critical mass

Terms of Reference

6. quality assurance
7. internationalisation
8. facilities and economy.

Organisation and international expert panel

The School of Architecture will be compared with three leading, international schools of architecture. The element of comparison is to be found in the reviewing process. Therefore an international expert panel with representatives from the three schools will be set up. Furthermore an international firm of architects will be represented in the expert panel.

The role of the international expert panel is to evaluate the quality of the educational programme offered at the School of Architecture compared with leading, international schools of architecture. The specific tasks of the expert panel include:

- Formulation of the quality criteria for the each issue of the benchmarking
- Responsibility for drawing up conclusions and recommendations based upon documentation from the self-assessment report and the visit
- Responsible for the professional quality of the benchmarking, while EVA is responsible for the methodological quality of the benchmarking.

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The appointment of expert panel members will draw on recommendations from the School of Architecture, but EVA is responsible for appointing the expert panel.

A team of evaluation officers from EVA will be responsible for the practical and methodological planning and the carrying through of the benchmarking.

Method

The benchmarking will be based on the following elements that are generally used by EVA and internationally:

Preliminary Study: In the preliminary study existing material relating to the School of Architecture is collected and reviewed. The aim is to qualify the process of formulating the criteria for the benchmarking and the appointment of the international expert panel.

Self-assessment: The School of Architecture conducts a self-assessment analysing strengths and weaknesses within the educational programme. The self-assessment process is designed to serve two distinct aims; that is to:

- provide necessary documentation for the work process of the international expert panel in connection with the site visit and reporting
- stimulate internal discussions on strengths and weaknesses related to the issues of the benchmarking and thereby stimulating the process of further improvement of the quality of the educational programme.

Site visit: The international expert panel will visit the School of Architecture. The purpose of the site visit is primarily to validate and elaborate the findings of the self-assessment report. The site visit will be planned in cooperation with the academy and will together with the self-assessment report essentially constitute the basis for the conclusions and recommendations by the international expert panel. During the visit the international expert panel will interview students, members of staff and management. All interviews will be conducted in English.

Terms of Reference

Written documentation: During the benchmarking the School of Architecture may be required to submit further written documentation in order to provide the necessary understanding of the education offered. Such information may be formal statements of aims and objectives, internal quality manuals, course review documentation etc. As far as possible all written documentation must be in English.

Reporting: The analysis, conclusions and recommendations of the benchmarking will be documented in a report. The School of Architecture receives a draft report for factual comments before the completion of the final report. The final report will be in English, will amount to approximately 50 pages and will be publicly available.

Time frame

The time frame for the benchmarking is:

- The criteria will be completed by the end of June 2005
- The self-assessment takes places from June to early September 2005
- The visit will be conducted in two sequences. The first taking place end-June with the aim of evaluating the student exhibitions, and the second sequence taking place mid-October
- The School of Architecture receives a draft report for factual comments by early January 2006
- Publication of the final report in early February 2006.

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Annex

Specified time frame