

TEACHING & LEARNING CULTURE POLICY



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I. TEACHING & LEARNING AT SARD

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The Teaching and Learning Culture Policy is the natural outcome of more than 30 years of continuing efforts at improving the educational experience across all programs of the School of Architecture and Design [SARD]. It is a set of guidelines for students, staff, and faculty to follow, to better work collectively towards a healthier and more productive environment. To that end, the following document aims to clearly communicate our shared values, commitments, and expectations.

II. CORE VALUES OF THE SCHOOL

INVOLVEMENT

Our school values involvement by fostering a dynamic culture in which students, faculty, and staff are all active participants. We cultivate a teaching and learning environment that transcends the classroom boundaries through engagements with the community, local industries, international organizations, and by addressing societal challenges. We aim to nurture meaningful interactions by way of real-world projects, hands-on experiences, community service, cross-disciplinary initiatives, and collaborative endeavors.

INNOVATION

We are dedicated to innovation by challenging conventions, exploring various media, integrating new technologies, and seeking novel solutions. In our school we celebrate creativity and embrace experimentation alongside the use of cutting-edge tools. By investing in factors such as faculty, facilities, and resources we raise the quality and innovativeness of our programs. We likewise seek to promote excellence in teaching, learning, and assessment through technologies and high-impact pedagogies.

SUSTAINABILITY

SArD is dedicated to sustainability by promoting a partnership-based approach among our students, faculty, and staff. We aim to reduce the environmental impact of our operations, minimize our use of natural resources, and encourage environmentally responsible behavior within the school community. We aim to graduate conscientious artists, architects, and designers, by instilling a respect for the environment, emphasizing sustainable practices in every facet of education.

DIVERSITY

Our school values diversity, through a culture of understanding, acceptance, and respect for others, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, and political affiliation. By promoting programs and giving lectures that address social issues and explore varied perspectives, we seek to cultivate a safe, creative, and enriching environment. As a community we advocate social responsibility by respecting the space of others, supporting one another, learning from each other, being open-minded, and applying equity and fairness.

WELLBEING

We greatly value the health and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff. Through initiatives promoting physical health, mental resilience, and work-life balance, we foster a supportive community in which the holistic health of each member is prioritized. We believe the school should be an environment that nurtures personal and professional growth, cultivating optimism and a sense of possibility. By fostering a thriving and well-supported faculty, staff, and student body we can sustain a positive, creative, and successful working environment.

INTEGRITY

The success of our community depends upon a set of principles that include honesty, responsibility, fairness, intellectual rigor, and trust. Through transparent teaching, fair assessment practices, and a zero-tolerance approach to plagiarism, we empower our community to uphold the highest standards of integrity in art, architecture, and design education. We believe that a foundation built on trust and ethical conduct is essential for the pursuit of knowledge and innovation.

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III. STUDIO CULTURE

A major factor in the success of our school is the natural growth and implementation of Studio Culture. Above all, developing Studio Culture is about building and nurturing a sense of community and belonging among all members of SArD. Studio Culture in the school aims at achieving the following objectives:

Developing a sense of community, belonging, pride, responsibility, and ownership

Enhancing a spirit of openness to sharing and exploring new ideas, theories, and methods

Promoting an experimental approach toward the creation of art, architecture, and design projects

Using studio time effectively as a working laboratory

Supporting peer engagement and dialogue among students, instructors, and invited guests

Upholding a standard of excellence in academic inquiry and creative practice

Studio Culture within the School has been evolving in relation to physical and non-physical factors, mainly centered on a relationship of respect between faculty and students, a pedagogical framework based on liberal education and liberal values, and a curriculum that places the studio at the center of our education.

Moreover, studio culture is first and foremost formulated around the creative process, therefore relying on research, analysis, presentation, discussion, interpretation, and critique among both students and instructors. In addition to promoting engagement and debate, students have the chance to interact with a community of educators and professionals during formal and informal studio reviews and critiques. This provides yet another layer of education to the studio, where invited guests contribute new perspectives and unforeseen ways to further develop student projects.





The Studio

The studio is a space for students to collaborate, exchange ideas, question norms, and learn from mentors, all with the objective of building a richer shared experience. The studio is a place for engaged thinking and making, where the knowledge acquired from lecture courses and the skills acquired from practical courses are synthesized. Studios are set up in a manner that encourages teaching and learning between faculty and students, whether at the scale of one-on-one critiques or group discussions. This environment is intended to promote creativity, individuality, enthusiasm, and productivity. The role that Studio Culture plays in our community of students and faculty is an indispensable component of art, architecture, and design education and of the studio experience. In addition to respect, sharing, engagement, and innovation, it is expected within our community that all students and faculty members alike understand and share common values.

Core Values of the Studio

<p>AUTONOMY over dependence</p> <p>In our studios, students are encouraged to develop independent thought, creative initiatives, and self-directed learning. By championing self-reliance, we cultivate a culture of empowered and resilient artists, architects, and designers who confidently navigate challenges, contribute distinct perspectives, and take ownership of their creative journeys. This enhances individual growth and enriches our collective studio community, fostering a dynamic culture where each member thrives through the strength of their independent creative expressions.</p>	<p>COLLABORATION over competition</p> <p>We promote studio environments where student artists, architects, and designers work synergistically. By embracing a collective spirit, we amplify creativity, celebrate varied perspectives, and elevate the studio experience. We nurture the exchange of ideas, skills, and insights. Communication in the studio fosters confidence instead of defensiveness, empathy instead of self-centeredness, and teamwork instead of a star mentality.</p>	<p>PROCESS over product</p> <p>The studio process is just as important as its outcome; it is at the heart of our culture. The exploration of new techniques, processes, materials, and approaches all enrich the studio experience. The processes in art, architecture and design are not linear ones; they are iterative, sometimes lateral, and often nonsequential. Each trial brings new ideas and each experiment begets understanding. As we nurture an environment where experimentation, iteration, and thoughtful exploration take precedence, we prioritize the journey, cultivating a culture of learning, resilience, and innovation.</p>
<p>FEEDBACK over judgement</p> <p>Constructive feedback is fuel for advancement, development, and evolution within the studio. It is understood as a basic element of studio culture, serving to facilitate artistic and design growth. In our studios we value the insights that can emerge from meaningful dialogues and the transformative impact of collaborative evaluation. Reviews, informal pin-ups, and one-on-one critiques are all learning opportunities in which feedback, recommendations, and new ideas are exchanged in respectful, open, and positive constructive ways.</p>	<p>ENGAGEMENT over apathy</p> <p>Our studios are meant to be environments in which students, faculty, and collaborators passionately engage in the creative process. It is essential that faculty and students consider studio courses as a group effort in which active participation by all is expected, including the free exchange of ideas in a constructive, positive environment. Every member of the studio contributes to its vibrancy, fostering a community where enthusiasm and optimism drive artistic and design excellence.</p>	<p>RIGOR over complaisance</p> <p>Our school aspires to high standards, critical inquiry, and the pursuit of excellence. We aim to cultivate a culture of intellectual thought, diligence, attention to detail, and continuous refinement. Our studio courses require time commitment, self-discipline, and consistent work habits. As such, we prepare students to navigate challenges with resilience, elevating the level of art, architecture, and design education at LAU.</p>

IV. COMMITMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Aligned with our core values, the following section addresses the commitments expected of our school, faculty, staff, and students.

The School

Our school is dedicated to maintaining state-of-the-art equipment and ensuring up-to-date hardware/software, aligning with contemporary standards in art, design, and architecture education. We are committed to innovation in teaching methods, and regularly revise our curricula to ensure they remain dynamic and relevant in the ever-evolving landscape of art, design, and architecture.

In upholding educational standards, we are an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) and our architecture program is accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB).

We create active and engaging learning experiences for our students. Industry contacts are established, and guests are invited to connect our classrooms with the outside world. We provide students with opportunities beyond the classroom, including traveling studios, internships, and community service engagements. We foster connections with local, regional, and global art, design, and architecture communities. Interactions among students across different years, programs, and schools are actively cultivated. Elective courses and minors are available to cater to varied interests. Student work is showcased through displays, exhibitions, and various digital platforms.

We foster a supportive and organized environment for effective student learning and engagement. We aspire to the success of our students by offering comprehensive academic and career planning, advising, and guidance. In addition, we ensure that our students are acquainted with essential university services.

For instance, LAU's Office of Community Standards is dedicated to upholding our community's integrity by addressing issues related to discrimination and harassment. Furthermore, the Counseling Services at LAU offer diverse forms of support and guidance including ones pertaining to mental health matters.

Our school is dedicated to aligning with the university's sustainability plan. Our commitment involves ensuring a clean and healthy working environment for all. We actively integrate sustainable thinking into our curriculum, introducing new courses, and revising existing practices to better address the evolving needs of our planet.

We are committed to involving students in shaping their learning experiences in the school through course design, development, and assessment. The two school departments (Art and Design / Architecture and Design) are responsible for such involvement.

innovative
engaging
inclusive
collaborative
supportive
sustainable

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The Faculty

Faculty within the school aim for academic excellence and innovation in their teaching methods to engage and inspire students. Our faculty members are selected based on their depth of knowledge and expertise. They are well-versed in university and school policies. They serve as mentors, guiding students toward successful degree completion. Our faculty develop structured syllabi that reflect set learning objectives. They facilitate effective communication channels with their students and maintain coordination across programs. They cultivate inclusive classrooms and studio environments that celebrate diversity and embrace various perspectives and backgrounds.

The Staff

Staff members within the school provide critical support for students and colleagues. Our staff are knowledgeable about all university and school policies relevant to their positions. They oversee various school facilities including labs, studios, and classrooms helping to ensure an optimal learning environment.



The Students The following section speaks directly to our student and is in line with our values. As a student within the school, you are expected to:

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN YOUR EDUCATION. Be curious, engaged, receptive, and proactive. Be ready to dedicate ample time and diligence to your education, akin to a full-time job. Consistently attend all your courses. Take responsibility for any missed sessions or assignments. Submit assignments promptly according to specified due dates. Embrace the challenges that come with theoretical research, material studies, and formal experimentation. Be attentive to feedback. Avoid distractions. Cultivate self-discipline and autonomy.

STRIVE FOR A BALANCED WORK AND LIFE DYNAMIC. Efficiently navigate your time and find a sustainable pace. Open lines of communication with both peers and faculty to alleviate daily university pressures. Engage in events focusing on time-management skills, and don't hesitate to seek assistance from the school and university resources if needed. LAU's Mental Health Support Network is here if you need it.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TIME ON CAMPUS. Utilizing the workshops, 3D fabrication lab, and computer centers. Explore the specialized studio spaces available to you. Embrace the flexibility to rearrange desks, tape your drawings to the windows—tailoring your personal workspace to your liking, all while respecting fellow students and the studio's operations. This freedom is designed to foster a sense of ownership over the workspaces, encouraging a collaborative and productive studio environment.

BE RESPONSIBLE. Take charge of the studio spaces by cleaning up after yourself and avoiding any damage to school property, facilities, or furniture. Foster open communication with peers, faculty, and invited guests. Receive criticism graciously. A collaborative and respectful approach to critique ensures a conducive studio environment. It is essential to adhere to the various school and university policies, in particular: LAU Student Code of Conduct and SAR D Plagiarism Guidelines.

EMBRACE NOVEL LIFE EXPERIENCES. Engage with the broader world beyond classroom by participating in local cultural events and contributing to community service. Exchange experiences with peers from diverse disciplines and backgrounds. Approach conversations with an open mind, attentively listening and being receptive to fresh ideas. Alumni and industry professionals, actively involved in review sessions, offer valuable alternate perspectives and may evolve into crucial connections post-graduation. This enriches your educational journey and sets the stage for lasting relationships and professional networks.

BE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE. Treat those around you fairly and without prejudice. Respect others' spaces, and embrace diverse opinions as opportunities for learning. Dedicate yourself to crafting work that is environmentally sound, aligning with sustainable practices. By doing so, you actively contribute to a community that values inclusivity and environmentally conscious design.



V. GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING SARD TEACHING AND LEARNING CULTURE

Our approach to Teaching and Learning is expected to evolve with time, in line with technological advancements, social changes, and curriculum updates. The school's Teaching and Learning committee oversees the revision and distribution of this document; the committee reflects the composition of the school, integrating faculty members, student representatives, and staff members. The school actively encourages the behaviors and ideals laid out in this document and encourages the school community to participate in its further developments.

The following points should be implemented to ensure that we maintain a Teaching and Learning Culture that preserves the core values of our practices:

The Teaching and Learning committee aims to communicate information on Teaching and Learning Culture to everyone in the school. This document is expected to be noted on course syllabi, accessible through the SArD website, circulated via email, and introduced to new students during the Orientation Day.

The Teaching and Learning committee assesses this document and Teaching and Learning Culture in general through regular surveys and discussions with the school administration.

The school works to ensure communication across all units related to the appended policies, procedures, and, their implementation, and applied sanctions.

VI. USEFUL LINKS

Here we provide a list of the available resources, policies, procedures, and guidelines that regulate many important aspects of the academic life of LAU's School of Architecture and Design. Some of these are particular to SArD while others are implemented at the university level.

Resources

[LAU's Online Library](#)

[LAU's Center for Innovative Learning](#)

[Career Guidance and Academic Advising at LAU](#)

[LAU's Mental Health Support Network](#)

[Student Computer Centers Handbook](#)

[Fabrication & Digital Lab User Handbook](#)

Policies and Guidelines

[LAU's Student Code of Conduct](#)

[SArD's Plagiarism Guidelines](#)

[SArD's Grade Appeals Procedure](#)

[LAU's Policies and Practices for Sustainability](#)

[LAU's Policy on Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct](#)