



UNIVERSAL DESIGN EDUCATION CHARTER

This Charter was prepared and accepted at a meeting in Singapore of design educators from across the world who took collective responsibility as designers to face the rapid changing world. We represent existing, evolving and emerging design disciplines and a range of nationalities, genders, and generations. We recognize that design education is the process by which a person is inducted as a designer and becomes a member of the global design community.

PREAMBLE

Design impacts all aspects of life.

Society provides the context wherein the discipline of design, the business of design, and the education of design act reciprocally.

Design is a global creative endeavor for the betterment of human experience, quality of life, well-being, and happiness.

Design delivers the artefacts, products, and services to affect this.

The education of designers becomes a critical aspect of our collective responsibility.

Design education encompasses a range of existing, evolving and emerging disciplines, levels, skills, outputs, and industries in this context.

Now, therefore, the participants proclaim this Universal Design Education Charter as a common aspiration of achievement for all designers:

Article 1 – Culture Change

1. The world is experiencing a period of cultural change which is foreseen to be accelerating and ongoing.
2. Rapid development is impacting on the interrelationship between humans and their environment in such a manner that resilience to change is imperative.
3. Design represents the ability to influence the quality of human life. This opportunity should be incorporated into design education to the fullest extent possible.

Article 2 – Knowledge & Skills (Education)

1. Design education shall address and provide knowledge and skills to enable designers to collaborate and participate contextually in the global design community.
2. Design education needs to include core values and competencies relevant to particular disciplines and contexts and to exceed mere trade requirements. These competencies include creativity, technology, leadership, communication, and economic skills relevant to and commensurate with the level of design education.
3. Design decisions should be reasoned, therefore relevant research and reflective skills should be incorporated as the basis of informed and responsible decision making. Research and reflection are integral and critical parts of the design process.
4. Education must instill principles of ethics, social and cultural relevance, empathy, resilience, inclusivity, and equity.

Article 3 – Sustainability

1. Sustainability refers to all aspects of human occupation and participation in the world and its relevant ecosystems, these include environmental, cultural, social, and economic features.
2. Design education shall emphasize sustainability as an integral aspect of the creative process and its solutions.
3. Design education shall prepare the student or participant for the appropriate stewardship of natural, human, and capital resources.

Article 4 – Technology

1. Designed artefacts include tangible and intangible creations such as spaces, objects, images, systems, and processes.
2. Technology includes all the techniques, methods, tools, materials, know-how, and the manufacturing, maintenance and disposal processes involved in the conception and life-cycle of designed artefacts. This includes traditional and emerging methods.
3. Design is an innovative endeavor that is at all times supported by the most appropriate technology.
4. Education should introduce students and other participants to the identification and application of technology as well as its moral and beneficial implications.
5. Technology shall at no time be a substitute for the human creative process and its imaginations.

Article 5 – Responsibility

1. Design has agency that should be applied with the human being as its central concern.
2. This should be mitigated in such a manner that it considers humans as living on Earth in an ecosystemic relationship.

Article 6 – Acknowledgement (Certification)

1. Design education should prepare graduates for a full and meaningful participation in their fields of endeavor irrespective of discipline, level, industry, output, or geographic location.
2. When students and other participants have successfully completed their educational requirements, they should participate in their professions through engagement, obtaining certificates, registration, licensure, continuous practice development, or other credentials available to their respective disciplines.
3. As members of the design community professional investment and development should be ongoing.
4. Professional registration should not limit creativity and does not absolve individual ethical accountability.
5. Designers should advocate the benefits of design.

Article 7 – Disclaimer

1. Nothing in this charter may be interpreted as binding on any of the signatories, neither is this an attempt to prescribe a generic design curriculum.
2. The ideas and principles contained in this charter are a shared resource that should be applied to the universal good and may not be owned. This charter must be kept in the public domain in order to disseminate it as widely as possible.

26 October 2018 in Singapore, hosted by LASALLE College of the Arts

ADDENDA

The 2019 Johannesburg Declaration
University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa