

Designing the 2040 Architect: Competencies for a Changing World



An A.I. Generated image of architects' workplace in 2040

I. Rationale

As the architectural profession continues to evolve in response to complex global challenges, the role of the architect is being redefined. Technological disruption, climate volatility, demographic shifts, urban inequality, and rapidly changing construction practices are reshaping not only how we design, but also *what*, *why*, and *for whom* we design. By the year 2040, today's students will be in the prime of their careers—facing a professional landscape that demands new competencies beyond traditional architectural skills.

The choice of 2040 as a benchmark year is intentional and strategic. It is:

- Close enough to create urgency for curriculum reform, faculty development, and institutional recalibration, and
- Far enough to allow meaningful innovation and policy shifts to take root.

By 2040, the architectural profession will be shaped by forces we already see accelerating today: artificial intelligence and automation in design and construction, net-zero and climate-resilient design imperatives, smarter and more inclusive cities, and transdisciplinary

collaboration across fields like data science, ecology, public health, and social policy. Educational institutions must respond with foresight—training architects not only for employment, but for leadership in an unpredictable world.

This roundtable discussion invites ARCASIA member institutes to reflect on how architecture education must evolve to ensure that graduates are equipped for the demands of 2040. The discussion will focus on identifying emerging skillsets—such as systems thinking, digital ethics, sustainability, social empathy, and entrepreneurial practice—and how these are being cultivated (or overlooked) in current educational models.

By gathering insights from across 24 ARCASIA member countries, this session aims to map regional strengths, shared challenges, and creative responses that can guide the future of architectural education in Asia. The outcomes of this roundtable will form the basis of a Committee Position Paper, to be submitted to the ARCASIA Council for formal endorsement.

In imagining the architect of 2040, we attempt to ascertain that the architects of tomorrow are ready not just to survive, but to thrive and lead in a changing world.

II. Goal and Objectives:

Goal: To engage architecture educators across ARCASIA member countries in a collective reflection on the evolving demands of the profession and to identify the future competencies needed to prepare architecture graduates for the realities of 2040.

Objectives:

1. To identify the emerging competencies and skillsets architecture graduates will need by the year 2040.
2. To examine how ARCASIA member institutions are responding to these future needs through curriculum, pedagogy, and academic strategies.
3. To formulate a collective position and set of recommendations to guide the future direction of architectural education across the ARCASIA region.

III. Guide Questions for the Institute Representatives:

The following are the guide questions in preparing for this Roundtable Discussion:

1. *What emerging global, regional, or national trends are reshaping the role of architects in your country? It may include, but not limited to climate change, digitalization, housing crises, demographic shifts, cultural identity, etc.*
2. *What competencies, beyond traditional design and technical skills, will your architecture graduates need by 2040? It may include, but not limited to digital fluency, ethical leadership, sustainability literacy, social engagement, collaboration across disciplines.*
3. *How is your institution or country currently addressing these future competencies in architectural education? It may include, but not limited to curricular changes, new subjects, pedagogical models, cross-disciplinary initiatives, etc.*
4. *What barriers or challenges are you encountering in aligning education with the profession's future needs? It may include, but not limited to regulatory limitations, outdated curriculum, lack of resources or faculty training, resistance to change.*
5. *What recommendations or commitments can you offer to help ARCASIA member institutes collectively prepare for 2040? It may include, but not limited to proposals*

for collaboration, shared frameworks, twinning programs, research agendas, or joint policy work.

IV. Details in Preparing for the Country Report:

A. Each country is requested to prepare a **Country Report** guided by the following format:

1. Slide 1: Cover Page
 - Title of presentation
 - Name of presenting representative(s)
 - Country and Member Institute
 - Optional: Institute and country logo
2. Slide 2: Context and Trends
 - What global, regional, or national developments do you foresee that will reshape architectural practice in your country by 2040?
 - What is the projected future role of architects in your context?
3. Slide 3: Future Competencies
 - What competencies (skills, values, mindsets) will architecture graduates need by 2040?
 - Which of these are currently being integrated into your academic programs (if any)?
4. Slide 4: Challenges and Innovations
 - What barriers or gaps does your country face in adapting architecture education?
 - Highlight any innovative initiatives, reforms, or policies addressing these challenges.
5. Slide 5: References and Acknowledgements
 - Cite any documents, policies, or data sources referenced in your report
 - Acknowledge contributors or institutions involved, if applicable

B. Presentation Duration

1. Strictly **5 minutes per country report**
2. A visible timer will be displayed during the session
3. The moderator will signal at the 4-minute mark and will stop presentations that exceed 5 minutes

C. House Rules During Presentations

1. Please use PowerPoint or PDF format (16:9 layout recommended).
2. File Name Format should be: Institute_ACAE2040_Report.pdf (e.g., UAP_ACAE2040_Report.pdf)
3. All presentations must be submitted on or before 25 August, 2025, or two (2) weeks before the meeting in Incheon.
4. Only one (1) official presenter per country will be allowed during the delivery to manage time.
5. Please adhere strictly to the 5-minute limit to give all countries equal opportunity.
6. After all presentations, a facilitated open forum will be held. Please take note of key insights to contribute during the discussion.

Prepared by:

Ar. JONATHAN V. MANALAD

ACAIE Chair, 2024-2025