
23RD ARCASIA FORUM 2026 · COUNTRY REPORT

The Relationship Between Professional Practice & Architectural Education

From studio to site and back.

COUNTRY

PAKISTAN

FORUM THEME

Bringing Back... Vernacular Wisdom

WHEN & WHERE

8–12 September 2026 Delhi · Agra · Jaipur,
India

President's Message

"Architecture is learned in the studio and proven on site. Education and practice are not two worlds but one continuum."

This report examines how that continuum works in Pakistan today - how our schools form architects, how the profession receives and shapes them, and where the passage between the two must be strengthened. In the spirit of this Forum's call to bring back vernacular wisdom, we hold that the surest bridge between the academy and the profession is a shared commitment to knowledge rooted in place.

Ar. Fawad Suhail Abbasi

President, Institute of Architects Pakistan

INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS PAKISTAN

1957

Founded

3,000+

Fellow & Associate
Members

3,500+

Student
Members

7

Regional chapters

UIA · ARCASIA · CAA · AASA · EAROPH

THE QUESTION WE ARE REALLY ASKING

It Is Not a Transition. It Is a Continuum.

University prepares the student; practice prepares the professional. That model is incomplete. The deeper question is what kind of architect education produces, what kind practice requires, and how the two continuously inform one another.

EDUCATION

Explore
Question
Experiment
Speculate
Research

PRACTICE

Deliver
Coordinate
Comply
Negotiate
Manage risk

THE TENSION

Preserve intellectual ambition while developing professional responsibility - forming **practice-ready thinkers** , not making the university an office nor the office a university.

Two Pillars: The Institute & the Regulator

Architectural education and practice in Pakistan are governed by two complementary bodies - one professional, one statutory.

Institute of Architects Pakistan

PROFESSIONAL BODY · ESTABLISHED 1957

- Voluntary professional membership
- Advocacy, ethics & professional development
- Promotes architecture and schools nationwide
- Represents Pakistan at ARCASIA, UIA, CAA, EAROPH & AASA

Pakistan Council of Architects & Town Planners

STATUTORY REGULATOR · ORDINANCE IX OF 1983

- Federal regulatory authority for the profession
- Accredits degree programs jointly with the HEC
- Administers the Architects Competency Examination
- Licensing, registration & continuing development

THE SETTING

Pakistan: A Diverse Context

Education and practice operate across markedly different climatic, cultural, economic and urban conditions.

CLIMATE Hot-arid · hot-humid · temperate · highland	PLACE Historic settlements · transforming cities · rural contexts	KNOWLEDGE Vernacular construction · craft · material intelligence
PRESSURES Urbanisation · affordability · climate risk · resilience	PROFESSION Established practices · emerging studios · digital workflows	OPPORTUNITY Connect local knowledge with contemporary practice

IMPLICATION Transmit not only global professional knowledge, but knowledge rooted in Pakistan's places, materials, communities and climate.

TWO PATHWAYS, NOT ONE

The Regulatory System Is Linear. Learning Is Not.

REGULATORY PATHWAY · ONE DIRECTION

- 01 Accredited B.Arch
- 02 Professional experience
- 03 Competency examination
- 04 Registration & licence
- 05 Continuing development

KNOWLEDGE PATHWAY · BOTH DIRECTIONS

- ↕ Education
- ↕ Practice
- ↕ Research
- ↕ Reflection
- ↕ Teaching & mentoring
- ↕ New practice

THE POINT A mature profession needs mechanisms for knowledge to move both ways - academia into practice, and practice back into academia.

From Knowledge to Judgement

A graduate may possess architectural knowledge yet lack the judgement to make decisions under real constraints.

01 KNOWLEDGE What architecture is	02 COMPETENCE How to deliver it	03 JUDGEMENT When, why & what to prioritise	04 RESPONSIBILITY Consequences for people, money, safety, environment & culture
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Professional competence = knowledge + experience + judgement

Practice is not where education ends. It is where judgement matures - and where the profession generates knowledge for the next generation.

The Five Bridges

Each link between education and practice becomes far more powerful when built as a deliberate knowledge bridge.

01

People

Practitioners teaching,
mentoring & examining

02

Place

Sites, communities & real
projects entering education

03

Practice

Internships, year-out &
professional exposure

04

Knowledge

Research ↔ practice;
practice-based learning

05

Continuity

CPD, reflection &
architects returning to
teach

THE OBJECTIVE Make these connections structured rather than incidental.

PRACTICE AND EDUCATION TEACH EACH OTHER

Each Is the Other's Classroom

PRACTICE TEACHES

Construction realities

Contracts & procurement

Cost & value

Codes & regulation

Coordination

Client & community

Judgements made on site

EDUCATION TEACHES

Research

Experimentation

New materials & technologies

Critical thinking

Social innovation

Climate-responsive approaches

MAKE THE
EXCHANGE
DELIBERATE

Turn work experience into structured, supervised, assessed learning - and capture practice's tacit knowledge, returning it to education in transferable form.

THE CHALLENGE

Three Systemic Gaps

Studies of Pakistan's built-environment sector consistently note a distance between the classroom and the working office.

GAP 01

Skills

Digital workflows, contracts, documentation, coordination and construction realities are not always integrated with design education.

CONSEQUENCE

Retraining after graduation

GAP 02

Exposure

Studio-heavy education can leave professional experience dependent on the quality of individual internships or offices.

CONSEQUENCE

Uneven professional readiness

GAP 03

Knowledge

Academic research does not consistently feed everyday practice, while practice-based knowledge is rarely captured for education.

CONSEQUENCE

Slow circulation of knowledge

Reported as skills–practice mismatch, limited practical exposure, uneven digital adoption, non-accredited provision and a research–practice divide.

Vernacular Wisdom as Living Knowledge

Not historic form or visual language. Its deeper value is accumulated knowledge of place.

Climate	Material	Construction	Water	Settlement	Culture	Community
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THE CRITICAL QUESTION

How can this tacit knowledge be translated into contemporary education and practice - without turning vernacular architecture into a stylistic exercise?

REFRAMED A living body of knowledge - informing climate responsiveness, material choices, resilience, affordability and cultural continuity.

Bridging the Academy & the Profession

01

BAE-IAP

Instituted in 2010, BAE-IAP connects architecture education with professional practice - nurturing talent, empowering educators, and recognising excellence. From learning to practice. From foundation to the future.

02

ASAP

A student-led extension of BAE-IAP - empowering students, amplifying their voices, and creating a meaningful platform for engagement, leadership, and exchange.

03

Curriculum & standards

Working with **PCATP** and **HEC** to strengthen accreditation, curriculum, and educational standards - aligning architectural education with evolving professional needs.

04

CPD framework

Structured lifelong learning for members - currently in development.

05

Hosting ACA 22, Lahore 2027

The 22nd Asian Congress of Architects, hosted by IAP.

06

Attending global events

Participating in international forums, congresses, and committee meetings - connecting with global perspectives, practices, and the evolving architectural landscape.

A Pakistan Academy - Practice Compact

Shared responsibility across the system: PCATP · HEC · IAP · Schools · Practices · Students.

01

Shared competencies

Define what graduates should demonstrate before entering practice.

02

Structured experience

Make professional exposure meaningful, supervised and assessed.

03

Practice in the classroom

Bring practitioners, projects and real constraints into education.

04

Knowledge into practice

Create routes for research to reach practitioners.

05

Practice into education

Capture professional, local and vernacular knowledge and return it.

Outcome: a profession that learns continuously - not only at transition points.

Supported by stronger accreditation and exchange.

The Practice-Ready Architect

Think

Critical thinking · design reasoning

Make

Technology · construction · material

Deliver

Documentation · coordination · contracts

Engage

Client · community · stakeholders

Adapt

Climate · technology · changing practice

Lead

Ethics · responsibility · collaboration

NOT SIMPLY A technically employable graduate - a professional who can think, make, deliver, engage, adapt and lead.

IN CLOSING

From Studio to Site. From Site Back to Studio.

The student learns from the school.

The graduate learns from practice.

The practitioner learns from experience.

The profession learns from collective knowledge.

The academy learns from practice.

And the next generation inherits a richer body of knowledge.

Education and practice are one continuum -
and the wisdom we bring back must travel
across both.

Ar. Fawad Suhail Abbasi President, Institute of Architects Pakistan