2016 Global Landscape Architecture Task Analysis

Sponsored by the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards in partnership with the International Federation of Landscape Architects
In late 2015 and early 2016, CLARB conducted a new task analysis to better understand what landscape architects are doing in their everyday work. It’s a best practice to conduct such a study periodically to ensure that our licensure exam measures the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are essential to protecting the public’s health, safety, and welfare.

In the process of validating the content of the exam, we also wanted to learn more about landscape architects around the world. What are their backgrounds? What education do they have? And what tasks are common among them? The answers to those questions begin to shed some light on what unifies landscape architecture professionals around the world. This executive summary is a snapshot of what we learned from our latest task analysis. To view the full report, visit www.clarb.org/taskanalysis.
ABOUT THE SURVEY

The most recent task analysis was conducted with the goals of validating the content of the Landscape Architect Registration Examination (L.A.R.E.) and increasing the understanding of how landscape architecture is practiced around the world.

In late 2015, CLARB revisited its 2010 task analysis, soliciting the input of subject-matter experts to update its task lists and identify demographic questions. In the Spring of 2016, an updated survey was sent to landscape architects worldwide, with the help and support of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA), the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA), International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) and, of course the CLARB member boards.

In addition to demographic questions, all participants were asked to rank the frequency with which they performed 155 tasks. Ultimately, we heard from professionals in 56 countries. For the purposes of the survey, respondents were separated into two groups: Those from the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico (who share a common licensure framework), and those from other IFLA member countries.

The survey was sent to more than 20,000 landscape architects; 7,407 of them responded to at least one of the questions and 4,650 completed the entire survey. Though not a complete portrait of global practice, it does reveal some common threads in terms of education, experience, and task frequency and provides fresh insights for the conversation on global landscape profession, led by IFLA’s Global Standards Working Group.

WHERE ARE THEY BASED?

Approximately three-fourths of respondents said they primarily practice in the United States, Canada, or Puerto Rico. The single largest response outside this region came from Sweden and the following countries:

International Activity
Top five countries where respondents based outside the U.S., Canada, and Puerto Rico work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHERE ARE THEY WORKING?

Of the landscape architects in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico who say they practice internationally, half (50.3 percent) work in the Americas. But they cast a wide net: More than 40 percent work in the Asia-Pacific region, nearly 30 percent in the Middle East, approximately 20 percent in Europe, and just under 10 percent in Africa.

Global reach is similar for respondents based outside of the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. A majority (62.8 percent) practice in Europe, but also have substantial experience in the Asia-Pacific region (more than 30 percent), the Americas (approximately 20 percent), and the Middle East and Africa (approximately 15 percent each).

WHAT KIND OF EXPERIENCE DO THEY HAVE?

Quite a bit. More than 82 percent of respondents from the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico say they are licensed and registered landscape architects. Outside the region 83 percent of respondents say they are practicing landscape architecture professionally, with 78 percent saying they are licensed or registered. (An additional 10 percent report that they are pursuing a credential.)

In addition to being credentialed, they’re also experienced: Most survey respondents in the United States, Canada, or Puerto Rico say they’ve been working in landscape architecture for 16 or more years--58.8 percent. The largest proportion of survey respondents outside the region say they’ve also been working in landscape architecture for 16 or more years (44.7 percent).
Global experience
Many Respondents have 16+ Years of Experience

WHERE DO THEY WORK?

Private practices, most often: Nearly three-fourths (74.9 percent) of those in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico work in that environment, with a smaller but still substantial proportion (62 percent) doing the same in the rest of the world. Among all respondents who work in private practice, a slight majority (50.6 percent) say they work in a dedicated landscape-architecture firm.

Of those who work in the public sector, a third (33.7 percent) say they work in parks and recreation, with smaller groups working in planning, transportation, and public works.

Regardless of sector, though, the size of the organizations in which they work tend to be similar: a plurality in both regions (26.2 percent) work in organizations that have between two and 10 employees. Indeed, a majority of the respondents (50.3 percent) say they have a leadership role in their organizations.

In Charge
What’s your role at your organization?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level/Management</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry Level</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than half of this group are owners, sole proprietors, and other top managers.
HOW ARE THEY DEDICATING THEIR TIME?

In terms of general areas of practice---design, planning, project management, and so forth---the emphasis of landscape architects differs little between the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico and the rest of the world. Overall, design, documentation, and project management take up about two-thirds of the time spent in a traditional practice.

Areas of Practice

Because of rounding and averaging, the total percentage is higher than 100 percent.

WHICH TASKS ARE MOST FREQUENT?

Practitioners differ, however, when it comes to which tasks they perform most frequently. For instance, the top-ranked task outside the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico “Create the basis for the design” ---was only the 15th-ranked task within the region. And the fifth-ranked task within the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico---“Document design decisions and project communication” ---ranked 18th in the rest of the world.

Future research might reveal which distinctions within countries or practices are responsible for these differences. But two points are important to note for the time being. First, respondents outside the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico generally attribute a lower frequency to tasks overall: Only five tasks from this group received a frequency score of 3.0 (“perform fairly often”) or above, compared to 19 tasks among respondents in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. Second, the two regions still have plenty in common, sharing seven tasks between their top-ten lists.
### Most Frequent Tasks

#### UNITED STATES/CANADA/PUERTO RICO

1. Develop schematic design (e.g. layout, grading, planting, materials, detailing, lighting)
2. Develop planting plan
3. Create conceptual design alternatives and scenarios
4. Evaluate design alternatives
5. Document design decisions and project communication
6. Prepare presentation drawings and communication tools
7. Develop layout plan
8. Develop details (e.g., retaining walls, pavements, structures, planting, specialty features)
9. Coordinate work of/with other disciplines (e.g., deliverables, reports, drawings, reviews)
10. Synthesize and apply the site analysis

#### OTHER IFLA MEMBER COUNTRIES

1. Create the basis for the design (e.g. inspiration, precedent)
2. Create conceptual design alternatives and scenarios
3. Evaluate design alternatives
4. Develop schematic design (e.g. layout, grading, planting, materials, detailing, lighting)
5. Prepare presentation drawings and communication tools
6. Synthesize and apply the site analysis
7. Identify design inspiration
8. Develop planting plan
9. Communicate concepts/schematics to stakeholders
10. Develop layout plan
WHAT ELSE IS DIFFERENT?

The two regions diverge in terms of its practitioners’ education level. In the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, bachelor’s degrees are more common: 59.9 percent of respondents say it is their highest level of education, with 31 percent claiming a master’s degree. In the rest of the world, the proportions switch: 69.2 percent claim a master’s degree as their highest level of education, with 33 percent holding a bachelor’s degree.

There’s also a sharp distinction in gender parity. In the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, nearly two-thirds of respondents (65 percent) are male. Outside the region, however, the split is effectively 50-50.

The age of practitioners differs by region. Approximately 45 percent of those in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico are 45 and under, while 59 percent of those outside the region are 45 and under.

Bachelor’s or Master’s?

*Highest education level, by region.*

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

The survey data informed a review of the exam content and adjustments have been broadly shared with the profession. The results will also inform the work of the IFLA Global Standards Working Group, chaired by Ilya Mochalov.