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***The Relevance of the Academic Accreditation Boards Requirements for
Environmental Design Schools and Architectural Education:
Comparison, Development and Creativity***

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ABSTRACT: Accreditation boards throughout the world have been established to ensure the quality and progress of academic programs. While in the most part these boards achieve a substantial systemization to programs and their procedures, nonetheless they fail to cover all aspects of a curriculum and/or program. It is the purpose of this paper to highlight one of these misgivings of accreditation boards in architectural studies' education. The paper will examine the requirements of accreditation for three accreditation boards, one local and two international, ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology; NAAB (National Architecture Accreditation Board (U.S.A.)) and NCAAA (National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (Saudi Arabia)). Thereafter, the paper will examine whether the requirements of the boards truly examine one of the foundations of architectural studies' education, that of creativity. In doing so the paper will highlight creativity as a major component of architectural and related fields' programs. Furthermore, the paper will highlight the differences that exist between the accreditation boards' requirements and areas of concentrations within these requirements. Finally, the paper will highlight areas that should be included in examining architectural studies programs to truly reflect the nature and standard of the programs. In addition, the paper will end with recommendations that will hopefully prove valuable to the accreditation processes and requirements for architectural studies programs in general and in the Middle East and The Gulf Region in particular.