Bridging The Gap Between Academia and Industry: Arcon's Accreditation Process

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Abstract- ***This study critically examines the accreditation process of the Architects Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON) and its effectiveness in bridging the persistent gap between academic instruction and professional practice in Nigerian architectural education. Through qualitative research involving non-participant observation and document analysis at two ARCON-accredited institutions, Caleb University and the University of Lagos, the study investigates how the current accreditation framework influences curriculum development, skill acquisition, and industry alignment. Findings reveal that while both institutions demonstrate strong administrative compliance with ARCON requirements, significant challenges remain in areas of industry integration, technology adoption, and practice-based learning. The University of Lagos showed superior performance in curriculum flexibility and digital tool integration compared to Caleb University, though both institutions struggled with meaningful industry partnerships. The study concludes that ARCON's accreditation process, while maintaining regulatory oversight, operates primarily as a compliance mechanism rather than a transformative tool for educational innovation. The research recommends transitioning toward outcome-based evaluation models, institutionalizing practice-based learning components, strengthening formal industry-academia partnerships, improving digital infrastructure, and enhancing transparency in accreditation processes to better align architectural education with contemporary professional demands.***

Indexed Terms- ***Architectural Education, Accreditation Process, Academia-Industry Gap, Professional Practice, Curriculum Development***

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Architectural education in Nigeria has long wrestled with a persistent disconnection between academic training and the realities of professional practice. While architecture as a discipline is inherently interdisciplinary and practical, the educational structures within many Nigerian universities remain largely theoretical and rigid. This disconnection manifests in various forms, from outdated curricula and insufficient exposure to real-world projects, to inadequate technological integration and limited collaboration with practicing professionals (Oyadokun, Adebisi, & Amao, 2024; Saeed, Mahran, & Abbas, 2022).

The Architects Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON), as the statutory body regulating architectural practice, plays a key role in ensuring the quality of architectural education through its accreditation of academic programs. ARCON's mandate includes ensuring that graduates are equipped with the competencies required for professional licensure and practice. However, questions have emerged about whether the current accreditation process truly fosters the level of innovation, skill relevance, and industry alignment needed to thrive in contemporary architectural practice, particularly amid the demands of digital transformation, sustainability, and global competitiveness (Aigbavboa & Stephen, 2025; Salihu, Olanrewaju, & Babarinde, 2020).

Globally, architecture education is undergoing a shift towards more collaborative, practice-integrated models. Hackathons, interdisciplinary studios, and co-designed curricula between universities and firms are gaining traction (Ryś, 2025). Yet in Nigeria, such models are still emerging or face structural challenges. Scholars such as Ayinla and Okonta (2024) have highlighted the need to strengthen academia-industry alliances to achieve a more sustainable architectural ecosystem. Within this context, ARCON's role as an intermediary is increasingly critical and increasingly scrutinized.

B. Problem Statement

Despite ARCON's regulatory oversight and efforts at curriculum standardization, a persistent skills gap remains between architecture graduates and the professional demands of practice in Nigeria. Employers frequently report that graduates are ill-prepared to engage with contemporary design technologies, construction processes, and entrepreneurial opportunities (Sharma, 2024; Ayo-Odifiri, 2023). This shortfall calls into question the effectiveness of the current accreditation process in aligning academic outcomes with industry needs.

Moreover, overlapping mandates, institutional politics, and limited channels for collaboration between professional bodies such as ARCON and the Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA) have further complicated reform efforts (Odo & Olanusi, 2023; Oluigbo et al., 2024). The lack of synergy between educational institutions and professional stakeholders hinders the evolution of architectural education and undermines the production of competent, innovative, and globally relevant practitioners.

C. Aim and Objectives

This study aims to critically examine the accreditation process of the Architects Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON), with a particular focus on its effectiveness in bridging the persistent gap between academic instruction and professional practice in architecture. By exploring how the accreditation framework shapes curriculum development, skill acquisition, and industry alignment, the study seeks to assess whether it supports or hinders the production of practice-ready graduates within the Nigerian architectural landscape. The following are the objectives of this study:

i. To analyze the structure and content of ARCON's accreditation process in relation to current professional demands.
ii. To investigate how well the accreditation system addresses the skill gap between academic training and industry expectations.
iii. To evaluate the perceptions of key stakeholders, such as academic institutions, students, and practitioners, regarding the relevance and impact of ARCON's accreditation process.

D. Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the growing discourse on reforming architectural education in Nigeria, particularly in light of rapid technological changes and evolving industry demands. By focusing on ARCON's accreditation framework, the research highlights a pivotal mechanism through which educational quality and professional preparedness can be aligned. The findings are expected to be of value to policymakers, academic institutions, professional bodies, and students by identifying gaps, proposing actionable reforms, and encouraging collaborative models of architectural training.

Furthermore, the study offers insights into how accreditation systems can move beyond compliance to become tools for innovation, responsiveness, and development. In doing so, it supports the broader agenda of sustainable architecture education in Sub-Saharan Africa, where resource constraints and developmental needs make the alignment between academia and industry not just desirable, but essential (Aigbavboa & Stephen, 2025; Ayinla & Okonta, 2024).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Academia-Industry Gap in Architecture

The disconnect between architectural education and the demands of professional practice has been widely acknowledged in global architectural discourse. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, the gap is not merely academic, it affects the professional readiness, employability, and adaptability of architecture graduates. Sharma (2024) asserts that one of the central causes of the skill mismatch between graduates and employers lies in outdated educational systems that fail to evolve alongside technological and economic advancements. In architecture, this is particularly problematic, given the field's dependence on both technical proficiency and creative innovation. The conventional studio-based learning model, while foundational to architectural pedagogy, is often implemented in a way that remains abstracted from real-world applications, leaving students with strong conceptual knowledge but limited practical experience.

In Nigeria, this gap is intensified by systemic issues such as underfunding, rigid curricula, bureaucratic constraints, and insufficient collaboration with industry stakeholders. Oyadokun, Adebisi, and Amao (2024) highlight that performance in core technical areas like building structures remains suboptimal among architecture students in public universities. This shortfall is often attributed to a lack of integration between architectural design and structural analysis in the curriculum, a problem compounded by resource constraints and insufficient training for academic staff in emerging tools and technologies. While theoretical instruction remains strong, the skills required in modern architectural firms; such as proficiency in Building Information Modelling (BIM), parametric design, project documentation, and environmental simulation, are often left underexplored or completely absent (Saeed, Mahran, & Abbas, 2022; Salihu, Olanrewaju, & Babarinde, 2020).

Another important dimension of the gap is the failure to address professional realities such as client communication, cost management, urban policy, and multidisciplinary teamwork. These competencies are crucial in contemporary practice, especially in rapidly urbanizing regions like Nigeria where architects are increasingly required to manage complex sociotechnical challenges (Aigbavboa & Adepoju, 2020). However, architecture students are rarely exposed to such dynamics until after graduation, resulting in a steep and often discouraging learning curve during their mandatory internship or post-academic training. Moreover, the culture of academic assessment emphasizing idealized solutions and aesthetic experimentation over feasibility and buildability, further distances students from real-world expectations.

The mismatch also affects research and innovation outputs. As noted by Aigbavboa and Stephen (2025), research in architecture schools across Sub-Saharan Africa tends to be internally focused, often disconnected from pressing industry problems or community needs. Without industry collaboration or feedback mechanisms, academic research becomes isolated, limiting its potential to drive innovation in design methods, construction processes, and sustainable urban development. This isolated method not only reduces the practical value of academic work but also limits universities' ability to make significant contributions to national development through architecture.

In sum, the academia-industry gap in Nigerian architectural education is structural, pedagogical, and institutional. Bridging it requires not just curriculum review but a broader rethinking of the relationship between academic institutions and the professional world. Without purposeful collaboration, shared responsibility, and regulatory support, efforts to close this gap will remain fragmented and largely ineffective.

B. ARCON's Role and the Accreditation Dilemma

The Architects Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON) occupies a central position in the architecture profession, with the statutory responsibility to regulate and accredit institutions offering architecture programs. Through this role, ARCON is positioned as a potential bridge between academia and industry, ensuring that architectural training aligns with professional standards and national development goals. However, growing concerns have been raised about the effectiveness, transparency, and adaptability of ARCON's accreditation framework in addressing the evolving needs of the profession.

Odo and Olanusi (2023) document a longstanding friction between ARCON and the Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA), stemming from unclear boundaries in professional jurisdiction and a lack of coordinated educational oversight. This feud, while seemingly bureaucratic, has deep implications for curriculum development, academic autonomy, and industry collaboration. When regulatory bodies operate in silos or competition, rather than synergy, it fragments the development of a coherent educational vision and undermines reform. The resulting effect is a policy vacuum where accreditation becomes more of a checklist exercise than a transformative process for improving academic quality or fostering innovation.

An in-depth look at ARCON's accreditation methodology reveals a dominant reliance on static metrics such as faculty-to-student ratios, studio sizes,

library holdings, and academic qualifications, rather than dynamic indicators like graduate competence, digital literacy, or industry partnerships. While such criteria ensure a baseline of institutional capacity, they fail to address whether students are being trained to function effectively in an increasingly complex, digital, and globalized profession. Oluigbo et al. (2024) argue that ARCON's approach does not sufficiently reward institutions that engage in practice-based learning, incorporate emerging technologies, or develop entrepreneurial programs that reflect the real-world challenges architects face today.

Furthermore, there is limited evidence that ARCON's accreditation system fosters continuous improvement. Unlike more progressive models such as outcome-based accreditation frameworks used by international bodies like NAAB (National Architectural Accrediting Board) in USA or RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) in UK, ARCON does not require architecture schools to track the professional progress of their graduates or demonstrate how their educational strategies evolve in response to feedback from employers, alumni, or market demands. This limits accountability and stifles innovation in curriculum design. In a rapidly changing field, a static accreditation framework becomes a liability rather than an asset.

The lack of inclusive stakeholder engagement in the accreditation process further weakens its potential. While some practitioners are involved as assessors, the voices of students, young graduates, private-sector architects, and construction industry stakeholders are largely absent from accreditation dialogues. Ayo-Odifiri (2023) emphasizes that the future of architecture in Nigeria depends on a broader recognition of entrepreneurial and non-traditional pathways in practice which are often overlooked in both education and accreditation. Without reforming its accreditation criteria to reflect such realities, ARCON risks entrenching outdated modes of practice and stifling the adaptive capacity of both schools and students.

Therefore, while ARCON's mandate is indispensable, the effectiveness of its accreditation process in bridging the academia-industry gap is currently limited by bureaucratic rigidity, insufficient engagement, and outdated metrics. For accreditation to truly serve as a catalyst for transformation, it must become more participatory, outcome-driven, and forward-looking. Regulatory reform must be anchored not only in maintaining standards but also in fostering innovation, responsiveness, and collaboration across the architectural ecosystem.

C. Best Practices and Emerging Integration Models

The literature points to several promising strategies for bridging the academia-industry divide, both within Nigeria and internationally. One such model is the use of hackathons and co-creation studios that bring students, faculty, and industry experts together to solve real-world design problems (Ryś, 2025). These formats not only enhance student exposure to current practice but also promote collaboration, innovation, and experiential learning.

Another promising approach is the incorporation of real estate and business development education into architectural curricula, encouraging students to engage with market realities and position themselves as value creators in the built environment (Oyedokun, Abidoye, & Akinbogun, 2021). Ayo-Odifiri (2023) further argues that fostering archi-preneurship is crucial in contexts like Nigeria, where traditional employment pathways are limited. Initiatives such as interdisciplinary design-build studios, semester-long internships, and collaborative research hubs within universities can also serve as platforms for meaningful engagement between students and professionals. These practices not only improve graduate readiness but also inform academic research with practical insights, ensuring that both spheres evolve together rather than in isolation. To truly embed such models, however, ARCON must take an active leadership role by endorsing flexible accreditation criteria that recognize and reward innovation, field engagement, and experimentation in teaching methodologies.

In addition to curriculum reforms and experiential learning models, the integration of digital competencies and global standards into architectural education has emerged as a vital strategy for bridging the academic-practice divide. Studies have shown that institutions that embed digital tools like BIM

(Building Information Modelling), GIS (Geographic Information Systems), and performance simulation software into studio learning not only improve students' technical proficiency but also align their skillsets with international best practices (Saeed, Mahran, & Abbas, 2022; Salihu, Olanrewaju, & Babarinde, 2020). For instance, the incorporation of BIM within core design modules can teach students how to coordinate with engineers, plan sustainable systems, and manage project lifecycles; all which are skills increasingly demanded in both local and global markets. In Nigeria, the current implementation of these tools remains sporadic and uneven across institutions due to limited infrastructure, training, and regulatory pressure. However, emerging alliances between universities and private-sector software providers suggest that such gaps can be bridged through strategic partnerships. Moreover, curriculum benchmarking against international frameworks like NAAB or RIBA has been proposed as a pathway toward harmonizing local education with global practice standards (Ayinla & Okonta, 2024). These external models not only provide flexible accreditation criteria that encourage innovation but also promote outward-looking education that prepares graduates for regional and international practice, a vital consideration in Nigeria's increasingly globalized architectural economy.

D. Summary of Key Gaps in Literature

Although significant attention has been paid to the structural and pedagogical shortcomings of architectural education in Nigeria, there is still a dearth of focused analysis on ARCON's accreditation process as a lever for change. Few studies have interrogated the accreditation mechanism itself; its structure, evaluation metrics, stakeholder participation, and impact on curriculum innovation. As such, this study contributes a critical perspective by situating ARCON's accreditation process at the center of discussions about academic reform and professional integration in Nigerian architecture.

More specifically, while the literature recognizes ARCON's regulatory function, there is limited empirical work exploring how accreditation policies are interpreted, implemented, or resisted at the institutional level. There is also insufficient data on the perceptions of students and practitioners; who are most affected by the outcomes of accreditation decisions. Furthermore, many studies stop short of proposing concrete reform models or benchmarking strategies, leaving a gap in action-oriented scholarship. By addressing these voids, the present study aims to provide both theoretical insights and practical recommendations that can inform policy, curriculum development, and stakeholder collaboration in architectural education.

While the literature strongly advocates for reform, there is a noticeable lack of empirical case studies or longitudinal data that track the direct impact of accreditation practices on graduate performance, industry outcomes, or educational innovation within the Nigerian architectural context. Most studies approach the issues from a conceptual or policy standpoint, leaving a gap in grounded, evidence-based research that could provide actionable insights for regulators and educators alike. For example, little is known about how different universities interpret and respond to ARCON's accreditation standards, or whether institutions that attempt more practice-based, interdisciplinary, or digitally focused curricula are rewarded or penalized in the accreditation process. Furthermore, there is a need to understand how architecture students themselves perceive the value of their education in relation to their preparedness for practice. Understanding their lived experience, challenges during internship placements, and transitions into the workplace would offer critical feedback that could inform more responsive policy and curriculum design. As Oyedokun, Abidoye, and Akinbogun (2021) suggest, stakeholder-centered reform is more sustainable when the perspectives of learners, educators, and employers are simultaneously considered. Therefore, future research must move beyond theoretical critique to include participatory methods and impact evaluation, which will help shape more adaptive, inclusive, and effective regulatory frameworks in Nigerian architectural education.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design, which is appropriate for exploring the complexities of

architectural education, accreditation systems, and professional practice in a contextual and interpretive manner. Given the socio-institutional nature of the research problem, qualitative inquiry allows for the capture of nuanced insights, institutional behaviors, and stakeholder perceptions that are often difficult to quantify. Rather than relying on numerical data, this study emphasizes thematic analysis based on document review and non-intrusive observation, focusing on how ARCON's accreditation process interacts with academic practices and industry expectations.

B. Data Collection Methods

The data collection for this study was grounded in two qualitative methods: non-participant observation and document analysis. Non-participant observation was conducted at two ARCON accredited universities: Caleb University, Imota, Lagos, and the University of Lagos (UNILAG), Akoka. These observations took place during studio reviews, curriculum presentations, and publicly accessible accreditation-related events held between 2023 and 2024. At both institutions, consent was secured to attend sessions such as faculty briefings, internal accreditation rehearsals, and student exhibitions aligned with ARCON's visitation schedule. During these sessions, the researcher maintained a passive, non-intrusive role, focusing primarily on the interaction between academic staff and accreditation officials, the modes of curriculum presentation, and the implicit or explicit responses to ARCON's evaluation expectations.

In addition to observation, document analysis was carried out to provide supporting evidence and triangulate the field data. Key documents included ARCON's 2023–2024 accreditation guidelines, the architecture curricula and studio syllabi of both institutions, post-accreditation feedback reports, internal planning memos, and publicly available communications from ARCON concerning its educational standards. These texts were examined to understand the official frameworks guiding accreditation, the pedagogical structure of the institutions, and the thematic priorities embedded within ARCON's regulatory language. The combined use of observation and document analysis enabled the study to interrogate both the procedural and interpretive dimensions of the accreditation process.

C. Sampling Strategy

This study used a purposive sampling strategy to select two ARCON-accredited architecture programs that represent contrasting institutional contexts. The first is Caleb University, Imota, Lagos, a private institution whose Department of Architecture received accreditation in January 2022 following a visitation in April 2021. As a relatively new program, it offers insight into how emerging private universities interpret and respond to accreditation requirements.

The second case is the University of Lagos (UNILAG), Akoka, a long-established federal university with a well-developed architecture faculty. The most recent ARCON visitation to UNILAG occurred in March 2024. Its inclusion provides a comparative lens on how mature public institutions engage with the same regulatory framework.

By selecting both a private and a federal institution, the study captures diverse responses to accreditation, offering a broader understanding of ARCON's influence across Nigeria's architectural education landscape.

D. Data Analysis

Following data collection, all observation notes and institutional documents were subjected to thematic analysis, a method well-suited for qualitative research focused on pattern recognition and interpretive synthesis. The analysis involved an iterative process of reading, coding, and categorizing the data based on emergent and theory-driven themes. Key thematic codes included curriculum compliance versus innovation, faculty–assessor dynamics, student preparedness for professional practice, technological integration (such as Building Information Modelling), and institutional responsiveness to feedback.

These themes were then critically analyzed and mapped against the conceptual foundations laid out in the literature review. This allowed the study to evaluate the extent to which ARCON's accreditation

process influences or inhibits innovation, responsiveness, and alignment with professional standards within academic institutions. The results of this analysis form the basis of the findings and discussion presented in the subsequent section.

E. Limitations

The findings of this study are context-specific and reflect the particular institutional environments and experiences of Caleb University and the University of Lagos (UNILAG). While both institutions offer valuable perspectives on ARCON's accreditation process, the results may not fully represent the diversity of practices across all accredited architecture programs in Nigeria. Additionally, access to certain internal planning sessions and full accreditation reports was limited due to confidentiality restrictions, which may have constrained the depth of institutional insight. Despite these constraints, the use of non-participant observation and complementary document analysis allowed for data triangulation, strengthening the reliability and contextual richness of the findings.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the key findings from observations and document analysis conducted at Caleb University and the University of Lagos (UNILAG). The data is thematically organized around five critical areas of alignment between academia and industry: curriculum flexibility, industry integration, technology adoption, accreditation preparedness, and student competency development. Comparative insights from both institutions are discussed, supported by visual data representations.

A. Curriculum Flexibility

The study observed a noticeable difference in curriculum structure and adaptability between the two institutions. At Caleb University, the curriculum has recently undergone restructuring to incorporate entrepreneurial and sustainability-focused electives. However, despite these updates, the core course offerings remain heavily traditional, with limited cross-disciplinary modules or industry-driven content. In contrast, UNILAG's architecture program has embedded broader elective options into upper-level studios. These options, combined with periodic stakeholder consultations, reflect a more dynamic curriculum model.

This aligns with Ayinla and Okonta's (2024) assertion that flexibility is essential to equip graduates for rapidly evolving professional challenges. However, both schools demonstrated a need for greater integration of industry partners in curriculum design, a gap noted in prior literature (Aigbavboa & Stephen, 2025).

B. Industry Integration

Industry linkage remains one of the weakest areas in both institutions, though UNILAG displayed stronger efforts at institutionalized engagement. At Caleb University, partnerships with local practices exist but are informal and infrequent, mainly limited to internship placement and occasional guest lectures. UNILAG, on the other hand, runs a professional lecture series and has hosted collaborative design projects with Lagos-based firms. However, neither institution has fully embedded structured mentorship, project co-creation with firms, or practice-based learning studios.

This observation affirms Sharma's (2024) concern that industry-academic ties in architecture remain surface-level in many Nigerian institutions.

Table 1: Comparative Engagement Strategies

Institution	Formal Industry Linkage	Internship Structure	Collaborative Projects	Guest Practitioner Input
Caleb University	Weak	Periodic	Rare	Limited
University of Lagos	Moderate	Structured	Occasional	Regular (within lectures)

C. Technology Adoption

The integration of digital tools such as BIM, CAD suites, and parametric modeling software showed mixed results. Caleb University has introduced Autodesk software in its 300–500 level studios, but practical fluency among students remains low. Infrastructure limitations and irregular access to licensed software are key barriers. UNILAG, by contrast, maintains a dedicated digital design lab, with core studio projects encouraging use of Revit, Rhino, and GIS tools. Additionally, digital fabrication has begun to feature in thesis research.

This variance supports Salihu et al. (2020), who noted unequal technological access across Nigerian institutions as a constraint to practice-readiness. Yet, the presence of technology alone does not ensure mastery; structured training and integration into course assessments are equally essential.

D. Accreditation Preparedness

Both institutions exhibited high levels of administrative preparedness during ARCON visitation cycles. Caleb University's 2022 accreditation was marked by meticulous documentation, updated facilities, and strong administrative coordination, though challenges in staffing ratios and research output were highlighted. UNILAG's 2024 visitation reflected a more confident, routine engagement with accreditation processes, including the demonstration of multi-year strategic plans and faculty development initiatives.

This reflects Oluigbo et al.'s (2024) point that accreditation success often depends more on institutional readiness and interpretation of standards than on curriculum innovation alone.

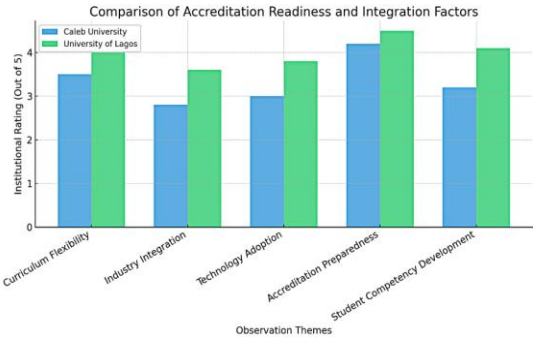

Figure 1: Comparison of Accreditation Readiness and Integration Factors

E. Student Competency Development

Student performance and readiness for practice were indirectly observed through project reviews and final-year thesis presentations. Caleb students demonstrated strong conceptual thinking but weaker technical detailing and professional communication skills. UNILAG students showed more maturity in integrating design with structural, environmental, and regulatory considerations, likely due to sustained exposure to cross-disciplinary instruction and faculty mentoring.

This finding supports Oyedokun, Adebisi, and Amao's (2024) conclusion that curriculum delivery impacts student competencies. Notably, students in both institutions expressed a desire for more real-life project engagement, client interactions, and collaborative design simulations, which remain underutilized despite their proven value in preparing students for industry realities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the extent to which ARCON's accreditation process bridges the gap between architectural academia and industry in Nigeria. Through qualitative observation and document analysis at Caleb University and the University of Lagos, it became evident that while accreditation plays a vital regulatory role, its transformative potential remains only partially realized.

Both institutions demonstrated a commitment to meeting ARCON's formal requirements, particularly in terms of documentation, facilities, and curriculum structure. However, the deeper goal of aligning architectural education with professional realities such as interdisciplinary collaboration, digital competence, real-world project engagement, and industry partnerships, remains inconsistently pursued. While UNILAG showed stronger integration across these dimensions, Caleb University, like many private institutions, continues to face challenges tied to resource limitations and evolving program maturity.

The study reinforces the idea that accreditation must move beyond compliance-driven evaluation toward a more responsive, participatory, and future-focused framework. It must evolve from a policing mechanism into a collaborative tool for continuous improvement, fostering adaptive curricula that reflect industry demands, technological change, and the evolving role of the architect in a complex, urbanizing society.

B. Recommendations

i. Reform ARCON's Accreditation Framework Toward Outcome-Based Evaluation: ARCON should consider adopting elements of outcome-based accreditation, similar to international models (e.g., NAAB, RIBA). These models assess not only institutional capacity but also graduate outcomes, stakeholder feedback, and innovation in pedagogy. By focusing on how well students transition into professional roles, the framework would encourage more meaningful alignment between academic training and industry expectations.
ii. Institutionalize Practice-Based Learning in Architecture Schools: Architecture schools should embed practical components—such as design-build studios, co-taught industry modules, and mandatory collaborative projects with practicing architects—into their core curricula. This would bridge theoretical knowledge and real-world application, reducing the skill gap frequently reported among fresh graduates.
iii. Strengthen Industry-Academia Partnerships through Formal Platforms: Both ARCON and academic institutions should create formal platforms for regular dialogue with industry stakeholders. This could include curriculum advisory boards, externships, cross-sectoral workshops, and annual joint reviews of academic programs. Such platforms would not only inform curricular reforms but also promote joint research, internship pipelines, and entrepreneurial exploration within architecture programs.
iv. Improve Digital Infrastructure and Training: To remain globally competitive, Nigerian architecture programs must invest in digital infrastructure and ensure students are proficient in tools like BIM, GIS, and environmental simulation software. Regulatory bodies could incentivize such developments through accreditation bonuses or grants tied to technology adoption and training effectiveness.
v. Promote Transparency and Feedback in Accreditation: Finally, ARCON should enhance transparency by publishing abridged accreditation outcomes and recommendations. This would not only guide future applicants but also promote a culture of accountability and learning across institutions. Encouraging feedback from students and young professionals who have experienced both academic training and the workplace would further improve the relevance of the accreditation process.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can begin to reshape architectural education in Nigeria into a more agile, inclusive, and practice-responsive system. Accreditation should not only enforce standards but also inspire evolution, thus, bridging the long-standing divide between classroom theory and the realities of architectural practice.

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