ARCHITECTURE



To be an architect in the United States you must complete a professional degree program in architecture, complete a three-year internship (working under the supervision of a licensed architect) and pass the Architect Registration Exam. Successful applicants to graduate school in architecture will be able to demonstrate their ability to think three dimensionally, communicate effectively, both verbally and visually, and have some understanding of the profession of architecture.

Graduates of UCSD will pursue a three year Master of Architecture (M.Arch.) degree. There are some sixty such programs in the United States. The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, on the Web at http://www.acsa-arch.org, has links to member as well as non-member schools. The American Institute of Architecture also lists programs accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) at www.naab.org. NAAB website allows searching capabilities by state, region, or degree type.

Professional Education in Architecture

The two accredited program types are the Bachelor of Architecture (B.ARCH) and the Master of Architecture (M.ARCH). The education component can be fulfilled in one of three ways, but should be completed in an accredited professional degree program. These avenues to licensure are:

- 1. 5 year Bachelor of Architecture (a professional degree) + at least a 3 year internship, or
- 2. 4 year "pre-professional" Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in a related field like architecture or environmental design + 2 year Master of Architecture (professional degree) + 3 year internship, or
- 3. 4 year undergraduate degree in any major + a 3 year (or 3 ½) Master of Architecture (professional degree) + 3 year internship.

Most UCSD students, with undergraduate degrees in majors other than architecture, (schools welcome students from all majors), will follow the third alternative listed above. Schools in California that offer M.ARCH programs for those with undergraduate degrees in fields other than architecture are UCLA, UC Berkeley, Cal Poly Pomona, SCI-ARC (Southern California Institute of Architecture) in Santa Monica, and the Newschool of Architecture in San Diego.

The curriculum in architecture graduate programs typically includes architectural design and theory, substantial studio work, visual studies, architectural history, graphic skills and professional practice.

POST-DEGREE INTERNSHIP

The internship period (at least 3 years of full-time, salaried work under a registered architect) following professional education is actually an entry-level job. These jobs are difficult to obtain, so gaining some substantive experience in the field during undergraduate and graduate years, through internships and summer employment, will significantly increase the opportunity to obtain entry-level employment on completion of the architecture degree. In particular, working for a building construction company or an architect can be helpful.

The licensing exam, taken after the internship is completed, is the last step to becoming an architect. This is a rigorous, comprehensive exam taken over several days.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Admissions requirements vary from school to school. In addition to a completed application and college transcripts, admissions requirements may include:

Completion of specified undergraduate course work
Statement of purpose
Letters of recommendation
Scores from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test
Creative portfolio
Minimum grade point average

Pre-requisite course requirements vary from school to school. Some require a minimum of one course in college calculus and one course in physics, preferably mechanics. Some also require that applicants complete survey courses in art history or the history of architecture. Preparation in the visual arts is desirable and may include drawing, sculpture, and/or graphics. Courses in the humanities, philosophy, literature, and economics are also recommended. Admissions committees often consider applications from those who, at the time of application, do not have these prerequisites. If applicants do not have the prerequisites, they will either be required to complete them before entry into the program or allowed to make up their deficiencies at the same time they enroll in the architecture school.

A **statement of purpose** is an essay (usually one to two pages) which includes relevant experience and motivation for architectural education, and its purpose in the applicant's goals. Applicants needing assistance with this essay may pick up a handout "Professional School Application Personal Statement" in Career Services. Students may drop off their essays for critique.

Letters of reference are among the criteria used by some admissions committees to understand an applicant's academic and personal achievements. Most committees recommend or require that two to three letters of reference be forwarded to them. These are not character references, but should be from a professor or some other person(s) with whom the applicant has interacted on an academic basis or who has supervised the applicant's work outside the classroom. Two references from instructors are strongly recommended. Applicants are advised to solicit letters of reference well in advance of application deadlines. Career Services also offers a handout titled "Suggestions on Obtaining Letters of Reference".

Applications for admission and financial aid may be obtained directly from each program or school in writing, by phone, email or via a program's Web site.

A **minimum undergraduate grade point average** of 3.0 may be required. Transcripts from all colleges and universities an applicant has attended are a required component of the application. Trends in the applicant's record may be taken into consideration.

The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test is designed to measure certain developed verbal, quantitative and analytical writing abilities important for academic achievement. GRE registration and information booklets are available in Career Services as well as online at http://www.gre.org. The GRE General Test is a computer based test (CBT) available throughout the year. To schedule the GRE CBT phone (800) GRE-CALL or register at www.gre.org. GRE preparation and practice is available through www.gre.org and http://www1.ucgateways.org/gre.

A **portfolio** is often required as a demonstration of the **creative** ability of the candidate. The *Guide to Architecture Schools* advises applicants as follows: "Whether your talents lie in graphics, design, photography, painting, writing, or any other discipline, approach your portfolio as a design problem, creating a presentation that best showcases your creativity in a clear and professional manner." Many top schools of architecture place heavy emphasis on the quality of the portfolio in their admissions decisions.

Application **deadlines** vary, but are generally in January or early February. Some are earlier so it is important to contact each program early in fall of the year before desired matriculation.

RELATED PROGRAMS

Most architecture schools also offer degree programs other than the professional degree in architecture. Opportunities are there for those who wish to study in fields like landscape architecture, historic preservation, design technology, urban design, land development, industrial design, construction science/management and architectural history. It is also possible to pursue a doctorate in architecture. Ph.D. programs in architecture are obtained by those interested in academic research and teaching in the field and do not offer the professional preparation needed to become a practicing architect.