

SO YOU WANT TO BE AN ARCHITECT?

What is an Architect?

An architect is someone who loves to design and is specifically trained and licensed to work on the planning and design of buildings in which people live, work, play and learn.

The role of an architect is varied. It involves bringing together the creative ideas and visions of the client and keeping in mind the needs of those who will be using the new space. **These are professionals who lead the process of creating functional spaces, from concept and design to overseeing the construction of those designs.** An architect is not just involved in the design of a building. As licensed professionals, they are also responsible for public safety and overseeing of projects.

Their responsibilities require specific skills – **designing, engineering, managing, supervising and communicating with clients and builders.** Architects spend a great deal of time explaining their ideas to clients, construction contractors and others. Successful architects must have a thorough knowledge of the construct of a building, and be able to design and communicate their unique vision effectively.

Three steps to becoming an architect:

Education


Architects must hold a professional degree in architecture from schools of architecture that have degree programs accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB). Most programs are now a Master's Degree and take 5-6 years.

Internship

All states require individuals to be licensed (registered) before they may call themselves an architect provide architectural services. **To earn a license and become an architect, you'll need to document real-world experience through the Architectural Experience Program (AXP).** The AXP provides a framework to guide you through earning and reporting your professional experience. With broad experience areas that reflect the current phases of practice, the program prepares you for everything from site design to project management. You can start reporting any experience gained after you have graduated from high school (or the equivalent). **While recording these hours, perspective architects complete 6 exams used to assess your knowledge and skills regarding the practice of architecture.**

Examination

After receiving a license, all architects must complete a required amount of continuing education training throughout their career in order to maintain their license. The number of hours a year depends on the state in which they are licensed.



How do I prepare in high school to be an architect?

While still in high school, you should take classes in English, history, and other humanities subjects such as social studies, psychology, theater and communications/public speaking, which will sharpen your communication skills and your ability to put things into context. Courses in science, mathematics, including geometry, trigonometry, algebra, pre-calculus and physics, will help develop problem-solving techniques.

Art courses — drawing, painting, sculpture, or photography — will be helpful in developing your ability to visualize, conceptualize and think creatively, which are important skills to an architect. Drafting is less important than being able to communicate ideas through visuals.

Courses in 3D modeling and business will be extremely helpful in preparing for a career in architecture.

A well-rounded education is essential for success as an architect, and it is just another emphasis that every course is important.

Check out these websites for more information:

AIA Kansas City:
www.aiakc.org

American Institute of Architects:
www.aia.org/becomeanarchitect

American Institute of Architects Students:
www.aias.org

Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture:
www.acsa-arch.org

National Council of Architectural Registration Boards:
www.ncarb.org



Begin your career exploration by considering these ideas:

Discover Architecture: It is diverse and has many opportunities for specialization—become familiar with the options

Be Interested: In the design of the built environment, including public space, and how people use it.

Ask Questions: Most big cities have a local AIA Chapter (American Institute of Architects). They are a great resource and are happy to help you learn more about architecture and give you information about careers. Talk with architects; observe buildings and construction sites; visit architecture firms, schools and speak with architecture students.

Prepare for Professional Education: Develop a broad interest in the arts and humanities and a solid background in the physical sciences and math.

Learn Communication Skills: Writing effectively, speaking clearly, and developing freehand drawing skills are essential to pursuing a career in architecture.

Read: Books and magazines on architecture and design, and browse the web for architecture design websites and blogs.