

The School of Architecture

University of Illinois Urban-Champaign

Graduate Admissions

M.ARCH | M.ARCH 2+ | MS

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND ADMISSION HOLISTIC EVALUATION PROCESS

PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines is to promote appropriate review of all graduate applications (i.e., M.Arch, M.Arch 2+, MS) for the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and to provide the records both UIUC and outside agencies (e.g., NAAB, NCARB, HLC, etc.) often need. Also, these guidelines are required to be in compliance with UIUC Graduate College Policies set forth on the Graduate Handbook that each department shall have written descriptions of its standards and procedures for admissions to each of its graduate degree programs.

GRADUATE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

The ISoA follow the Minimum Requirements for Admission policy set forth by the Graduate College. Initial review of these minimum requirements has already been performed by the Graduate College and by the ISoA Academic Affairs office. This review includes GPA, undergraduate degree validation and compliance, transcripts, language proficiency, and international requirements (e.g., TOFEL, IELTS, etc.).

The ISoA also set forth additional requirements for admission to the each of their degrees as stipulated below:

M.Arch: Students who have earned an undergraduate degree in Architecture or its equivalent, and meet all requirements to advance to the two year M.Arch program.

M.Arch 2+: Students who have completed a bachelor degree but have no undergraduate degree in Architecture, and meet all the requirements for the three year M.Arch Program.

MS: Students holding a degree in architecture, as well as students with experience and degrees in allied fields, who seek new ways to engage environmental design through advanced research skills

It is encouraged by the Graduate College to admit students who meet all Graduate College and ISoA minimum requirements as "Full Status". Students who do not meet one or more of the admission requirements may be approved for limited status by the ISoA. Students with Limited Status will require a Letter of Justification. The three types of Limited status are: 1) lack of demonstrated English language proficiency; 2) limited status due to low GPA or no comparable bachelor's degree, 3) Limited status due to departmental deficiencies.

ADMISSION COMMITTEE:

It is the responsibility of the Illinois School of Architecture (ISoA) Admissions Committee to assure that the ISoA selects those students with qualities, academic, professional, and others, that will allow for success in their Architectural studies. The Admissions Committee will also select students that demonstrate skills, experiences, and other attributes that will result in skilled and empathetic Architects with high degrees of professionalism and

strong communication skills. It is the goal of ISoA and the faculty, through the work of this committee, to admit students who will make a positive contribution to the educational and personal environment of the ISoA and who will be the next generation of Architects and designers.

The Admissions Committee has the following specific objectives for the Admission and Yielding Process:

1. The Admissions Committee has direct responsibility for determining who is admitted to the ISoA.
2. The Admissions Committee is responsible for assuring compliance with the admissions policies and practices set by the University, the Graduate College, and the ISoA. (Practices and Procedures listed below).
3. The Admissions Committee, in concert with the Associate Director of Academic Affairs, will assume responsibility for assurance that best-practices are adhered to.
4. The Admission Committee will put forward applicants who should receive a funding offer (i.e. Fellowship, Scholarship, Teaching Assistantship) with their admission.
5. The Admissions Committee, in conversation with the Associate Director of Academic Affairs, will determine final funding offers for all selected applicants.
6. The Admission Committee will advise the Associate Director of Academic Affairs of those borderline applicants for purposes of admission and/or funding.

Calendar of Admission: (See School of Architecture Calendar for updated dates of Admission Cycle)

Late February	Admission Committee Receives Application Materials. Review Process Begins
Mid-March	Review Process Culminates
Mid-March	Admission Committee meets to identify funding allocations (Fellowship, Scholarships, TA and GA positions)
Mid-March	Graduate Acceptance letters sent to all admitted students with funding offers (Email)
Mid-March	Send Admission Boxes to admitted students
Mid to Late March	Faculty to contact admitted students
Mid-April	Graduate students' final decision national deadline.
Mid-May	Send Welcome Package for accepted offers.

Holistic Admission Process:

Holistic admissions is a strategy that considers the whole student and touches all aspects of the admissions process. Typically, holistic admissions augments the consideration of traditional measures of academic achievement (e.g., portfolio, GPA, GRE) with rigorous consideration of an applicant's unique experiences and non-cognitive factors associated with success in graduate school. This process considers the academic success and potential of the student, their commitment, motivation, and leadership, and their life experiences and background.

The Holistic Admissions Process is designed using best practices in place at UIUC, UI System, UIUC Graduate College, and other admission practices from Architecture programs in the US. The rubrics contains eight (8) criteria with a 1-5 scoring system. The rubric-driven application review process list criteria in order of highest to lowest predictor of graduate academic success for the ISoA graduate programs (i.e., M.Arch, M.Arch 2+, MS.). This process does not evaluate each individual application piece (i.e., portfolio, letters of recommendation, Statement, etc.) on its own. Rather, the review process integrates all these elements to answer a series of criteria. GPA is omitted from the review process, but it will be part of the consideration for admission to the ISoA graduate programs. GRE scores are no longer required.

Each criterion includes information on where in the application materials a reviewer can find information to determine a score. This does not mean the committee members cannot consider other application materials to make a holistic evaluation of each criterion.

M.ARCH M.ARCH 2+							
CRITERION	Potential Resources of Information	Scores					
		5	4	3	2	1	0
Design: Clearly demonstrates a high level of mastery of design, representation, and making skills with great potential to succeed in a thoughtful and critical environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portfolio ▪ Letters of Recommendation ▪ Resume/CV ▪ Personal Statement 	Indicated with detail potential and vision; outstanding.		Indicated with some detail, potential and vision; sufficient.		Little indication with vague details of potential and vision; insufficient.	
Technical: Clearly demonstrates a high level or mastery in technical concepts and understanding of current and future trends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portfolio ▪ Letters of Recommendation ▪ Resume/CV ▪ Personal Statement 	Indicated with detail potential and vision; outstanding.		Indicated with some detail potential and vision; sufficient.		Little indication with vague details of potential and vision; insufficient.	
Skills: Clear demonstration of academic preparation and high level of competency in digital and analog tools, techniques, and processes, along with good writing and communication skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portfolio ▪ Resume/CV ▪ Letter of Recommendation 	Well-prepared or high potential for preparation.		Some preparation or potential for preparation.		Little or no preparation or potential for preparation.	
Problem Solving: Clear goals and interest in solving complex problems as part of the design, technical, and historical/theoretical processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portfolio ▪ Letters of Recommendation ▪ Personal Statement 	Expression of goals and interests clearly articulated and align with the expectations of the ISoA.		Expression of goals and interests evident, but not well-articulated or do not align with faculty expertise.		Little evidence of goals or interests indicated.	
Motivation: Clear evidence of applicant's motivation, persistence, ability to overcome obstacles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letters of evaluation ▪ Resume/CV, ▪ Personal Statement 	Indicated with detail and clearly articulated.		Indicated with some detail and are not well-articulated.		Little indication or vague details; indicated potential insufficient.	
Engagement: Evidence of enthusiasm or commitment to fully engage in the academic/learning process of the ISoA Graduate Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letters of Evaluation ▪ Resume/CV ▪ Personal Statement 	Work shows enthusiasm or commitment clearly articulated through demonstration academic engagement, extracurricular activities, and experience beyond academic projects.		Work shows some enthusiasm or commitment articulated through demonstration of interest in their academic journey with little extracurricular or research beyond the studio/ academic setting.		Little or no expression of enthusiasm or commitment.	
Leadership: Clear potential for leadership & engagement in academic and beyond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letters of Recommendation ▪ Resume/CV, ▪ Personal Statement 	Indicated with detail and potential is outstanding.		Indicated with some detail and potential is good.		Little indication or vague details; indicated potential insufficient.	
Contributions: Potential to contribute new ideas to ISoA as part of the graduate program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portfolio ▪ Letters of Recommendation ▪ Resume/CV ▪ Personal Statement 	Indicated with detail, potential and vision are outstanding.		Indicated with detail, potential and vision are outstanding.		Not indicated or vague details; indicated potential and vision insufficient.	

MSAS

CRITERION	Potential Resources of Information	Scores					
		5	4	3	2	1	0
Research/Technical Potential: Clear demonstration of research potential & vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letters of Recommendation ▪ Resume/CV ▪ Personal Statement 	Indicated with detail potential and vision; outstanding.		Indicated with some detail potential and vision; sufficient.		Little indication or vague details; indicated potential and vision insufficient.	
Goals: Clear research goals & interest in solving problems, alignment of goals with faculty expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letters of Recommendation ▪ Resume/CV ▪ Personal Statement 	Indicated with detail potential and vision; outstanding.		Indicated with some detail potential and vision; sufficient.		Little indication or vague details; indicated potential and vision insufficient.	
Skills: Clear demonstration of academic preparation and high level of competency with good writing and communication skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resume/CV ▪ Letter of Recommendation 	Well-prepared or high potential for preparation.		Some preparation or potential for preparation.		Little or no preparation or potential for preparation.	
Problem Solving: Clear goals and interest in answering complex questions as part of the research process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letters of Recommendation ▪ Personal Statement 	Expression of goals and interests clearly articulated and align with the expectations of the ISOA.		Expression of goals and interests evident, but not well-articulated or do not align with faculty expertise.		Little evidence of goals or interests indicated.	
Motivation: Clear evidence of applicant's motivation, persistence, ability to overcome obstacles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letters of evaluation ▪ Resume/CV, ▪ Personal Statement 	Indicated with detail and clearly articulated.		Indicated with some detail and are not well-articulated.		Little indication or vague details; indicated potential insufficient.	
Engagement: Evidence of enthusiasm or commitment to research, potential for future research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letters of Evaluation ▪ Resume/CV ▪ Personal Statement 	Work shows enthusiasm or commitment clearly articulated through demonstration academic engagement, extracurricular activities, and experience beyond academic projects.		Work shows some enthusiasm or commitment articulated through demonstration of interest in their academic journey with little extracurricular or research beyond the studio/ academic setting.		Little or no expression of enthusiasm or commitment.	
Leadership: Clear potential for leadership & engagement in academic and beyond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letters of Recommendation ▪ Resume/CV, ▪ Personal Statement 	Indicated with detail and potential is outstanding.		Indicated with some detail and potential is good.		Little indication or vague details; indicated potential insufficient.	
Contributions: Potential to contribute new ideas to ISOA as part of the graduate program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letters of Recommendation ▪ Resume/CV ▪ Personal Statement 	Indicated with detail, potential and vision are outstanding.		Indicated with detail, potential and vision are outstanding.		Not indicated or vague details; indicated potential and vision insufficient.	

Groups and Interviews:

Group 1: Admission with Funding

Applicants in this group rank highest by the holistic evaluation (competency & ability), their GPA, and not requiring a Letter of Justification (LOJ). These applicants will receive full-status admission to the program they applied for and will receive funding in the forms of Full Fellowship, Scholarships, or TA/RA/GA positions. The Admission Committee will recommend who the recipients of these funding awards should be.

Group 2: Admissions with No Funding

Applicants in this group show competency and ability, but through the holistic evaluation, they lack some mastery or excellence in their work or experiences. They will receive admission (full or limited) to the program they applied for but will have no funding offered with admissions. Students in this group can receive LOJs regarding a lack of demonstrated English language proficiency, low GPA or no comparable bachelor's degree, and/or departmental deficiencies; they will receive a Limited Admission Status as listed by the Graduate Handbook.

Group 3: Not Admitted

Applicants in this group will not be admitted to the ISOA as they ranked lowest in the applicant pool and lack various skills and abilities, as evident in the holistic review process.

Interviews:

The Admission Committee will recommend applications for interviews if they are borderline to receive funding (going from Group 2 to Group1) or those borderline students to receive a full or limited admission (going from Group 3 to Group 2). The Associate Director of Academic Affairs with the Coordinator of Student Services & Graduate Advisor will interview the applicant to see if a shift to a higher group is possible.

Group 1	Admission with Funding	Full Fellowships
		Scholarships
		TA/RA/GA
Requires INTERVIEW		
Group 2	Admission with NO Funding	Requires INTERVIEW (Application is borderline base on Holistic Rubric, Low GPA or TOFEL, Requires LOJ)
Group 3	Not Admitted	

Funding Allocations:

The Admission Committee will make determinations of those students who should receive funding in the form of Fellowships, Scholarships, Teaching Assistant (TA), Research Assistant (RA), and Graduate Assistant (GA) positions.

A current list of Fellowships and Scholarships will be provided to the Admission Committee to consider and make recipient recommendations. TA/GA/RA will be awarded to students who show a high level of academic and personal maturity and dexterity.

1. A fellowship is defined as an award providing a stipend for living expenses at the established minimum or higher and demanding no services in return. In addition, these fellowships receive coverage of full tuition during the tenure of the award.

2. Scholarships are defined as financial aid awards designed to provide some financial relief for students. Scholarships are not tuition waivers, but they pay for the student's tuition and fees associated with their degree. They demand no services in return.
3. TA, RA, or GA is defined as a salary position for a service provided to the unit that hired the students. The unit establishes its salary at the minimum or higher rate and at a 25% FTE. These assistantships will also generate tuition waivers. TA, RA, GA positions must fit the appropriate needs of the appointment by looking at the student's ability to perform the required duties and the student's graduate education. To be eligible for a Teaching Assistantship appointment, individuals must be orally proficient in English and all other Graduate College minimum requirements. TA and RA are tax-exempt, but GA positions are taxed.

PORTFOLIO	1 Demonstrates an Exceptional level of:	9	8 Demonstrates an Advance level of:	7	6	5 Demonstrates an Acceptable level of:	4	3	2 Demonstrates a Poor level of:	1
	Demonstrates successful ability to engage in complex design and creative processes, with an ability to use advance analytical and crafting skills. The representation and visual language of the work presents new ideas and techniques (technical or otherwise). Portfolio has a high level of curation and organization. It present a high level of thought and engagement.		Demonstrates an ability to engage in a through design process. They have a strong understanding of design techniques, technical and craft skills. Their representation is strong and present well using good ideas and techniques (technical or otherwise). Portfolio thoughtful and well presented.			Demonstrates basic understanding of design elements, creative and analytical processes, and uses fundamental architectural and design principles. Has a baseline understanding of representation and visualization skills. Portfolio is rudimentary presented			Little to no demonstration of basic design elements and principles, with basic analytical or problem-solving skills, and a rudimentary use of techniques. Overall portfolio is presented poorly.	
REFERENCE	10 Demonstrates an Excellent potential:	9	8 Demonstrates an Good potential:	7	6	5 Demonstrates an Acceptable potential:	4	3	2 Demonstrates a Low potential:	1
	Writer knows applicant very well and describes skills that align with success in graduate school. Talks about their previous experiences and indicates with detail, the potential and vision the applicant has for graduate school success. Writer overall evaluation is excellent.		Writer knows the applicant well with detail, potential and vision for the applicant's success. The writer overall evaluation is good.			Writer knows applicant and indicates applicant's ability to complete grad school but points out limits that will not allow the applicant to be successful or push the limits of graduate school.			Writer does not know applicant well Vague details; indicated potential. Indicates different limits and incapability.	
STATEMENT	10 Demonstrates an Excellent level of:	9	8 Demonstrates a Good level of:	7	6	5 Demonstrates an Acceptable level of:	4	3	2 Demonstrates a Low level of:	1
	Indicate with detail evidence of applicant's motivation, persistence, character, skills and/or ability to overcome		Indicated with some detail and evidence applicant's motivation, character, and ability to engage and overcome obstacles in			Vague details applicant's motivation and ability to start grad school and engage in a rigorous curriculum. Statement lacks			Poorly written and generic statement with vague details or goals.	

	obstacles and engage fully in the graduate program. (also found on letters of recommendation) Statement is well written.		graduate school. Statement is well written.			some organization and/or is poorly written.			
RESUME/CV	5 Demonstrates an Exceptional level of:	4 Demonstrates an Advance level of:	3 Demonstrates an Acceptable level of:	2		1 Demonstrates a Poor level of:			
	Large amount of experience in academic and nonacademic activities. Applicant demonstrates well-prepared or high awareness of architecture that successfully		Some experience in academic and nonacademic activities. Some preparation or potential for preparation	Little experience in academic and nonacademic activities. Little preparation or potential for preparation			No experience in academic and nonacademic activities. No preparation or potential for preparation		

CRITERION	Potential Resources of Information	Scores					
		5	4	3	2	1	0
Clear demonstration of research potential & vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letters of Recommendation ▪ CV ▪ Personal Statement 	Not indicated or vague details; indicated potential and vision insufficient		Indicated with detail, potential and vision are good		Indicated with detail, potential and vision are outstanding	
Clear research goals & interest in solving real-world problems, alignment of goals with faculty expertise	Letters of evaluation, CV, personal statement	No goals or interests indicated		Expression of goals and interests evident, but not well-articulated or do not align with faculty expertise		Expression of goals and interests clearly articulated and align with faculty expertise	
Clear evidence of applicant's motivation, persistence, ability to overcome obstacles	Letters of evaluation, CV, personal statement, trends in GPA over time, transcripts	Not indicated or vague details; indicated potential insufficient		Indicated with detail but are not well-articulated		Indicated with detail and clearly articulated	
Evidence of enthusiasm or commitment to research, potential for future research	Letters of evaluation, CV, personal statement	Little or no expression of research enthusiasm or commitment		Research enthusiasm or commitment articulated through demonstration of interest		Research enthusiasm or commitment clearly articulated through demonstration of research	

						experience beyond senior project or capstone (research experiences can include academic and beyond)	
Demonstrated prior research experience in academia or beyond	CV, personal statement	No experience indicated		Co-op, internship, or research experience indicated but outcomes are not clearly articulated		Co-op, internship, or research experience with clearly articulated outcomes (e.g. senior thesis, capstone or co-op report/presentation, conference presentation, publication)	
Clear potential for leadership & engagement in academic and beyond	Letters of evaluation, CV, personal statement	Not indicated or vague details; indicated potential insufficient		Indicated with detail and potential is good		Indicated with detail and potential is outstanding	
Academic preparation for discipline, or the potential to take preparatory courses	Transcripts, letters of evaluation	Little or no preparation or potential for preparation		Some preparation or potential for preparation		Well-prepared or high potential for preparation	
GPA in major and progression Tip: Consider undergraduate institutional environment and academic progression over time as seen on transcripts	Transcripts	2.9 or below without upward trend in GPA over most recent three semesters		3.0 -3.4 without upward trend in GPA over most recent three semesters; or 2.9 or below with upward trend in GPA over most recent three semesters		3.5 or above; or 3.0 – 3.4 with upward trend in GPA over most recent three semesters	