

Policy on Studio Culture

The Department of Architecture affirms that the design studio is the center of architectural education in the Bachelor of Arts in Architectural Design and the Master of Architecture programs at the University of Washington. In these programs, the design studio is central as a spatial configuration, a pedagogical model, and a cultural practice. This is reflected in the space dedicated to studios, and the large number of credits and faculty contact hours the department commits to design studio courses in these programs. The department assumes that the skills and the knowledge necessary for the professional practice of architecture are developed and synthesized in the studio. While there are many non-studio courses in the department's BA and M Arch curricula, their content integrates with the work done by students in the design studio, either in direct support of specific studio projects, or indirectly by fostering an ethos of professionalism, ethical practice, and craft that is espoused in the department's design studios.

SPACE

Each student enrolled in our department's BA in Architectural Design and M Arch programs will be given exclusive use of a work space in a design studio as long as he or she is registered for a regular studio course, or for no less than one quarter in the master's thesis. Other students in the department will be offered studio space on request, depending on availability.

The studio space shall function as an effective place for students to work. Students shall have 24-hour access to studios during the quarter. The studios shall be adequately furnished with desks, shared workspaces, pin-up surfaces, and digital networking to facilitate work that can be expected of students. Students in the studio will also have access to wood and metal working labs, digital fabrication resources, computers, and a range of input and output devices housed elsewhere in the College of Built Environments.

The studio environment shall be conducive to faculty and student health, safety, and productivity. Studios shall be adequately lit and ventilated. Recognizing that studio spaces are subject to extraordinary usage pressures, the Department will enforce quarterly studio clean-up policies for students and work with university custodians to assure that studio spaces are adequately maintained and cleaned. Studio spaces shall allow barrier-free access in accordance with ADA statutes. During hours when university buildings are closed, studios will be accessible by key or key code only to authorized students, faculty, and staff.

Students are expected to treat studio spaces with respect at all times. Students also must comply with rules regarding studio clean-up and the use of noxious substances in studio spaces and university buildings.

INSTRUCTION

Although studio faculty are responsible for the organization and progress of the studio during the quarter, much of the work students do in a design studio is self-motivated and self-directed. Because architectural design is a complex and time-consuming process, in order to excel students must often dedicate significant time and energy to architectural design studio courses. This will often be somewhat out of proportion with the effort necessary to excel in other courses. The demands of design studio should not, however, adversely affect students' performance in other classes, nor should it upset the appropriate balance of academic and non-academic pursuits. Faculty therefore must set fair and reasonable expectations for adequate performance in the studios, and also provide regular, productive feedback to each student on the progress of his or her work in the studio.

To accomplish this, the Department of Architecture has adopted the following guidelines for design studios:

1. At the beginning of each quarter, the studio faculty shall provide written expectations for the participation and performance of students in the studio.

2. Faculty shall meet regularly with students, during scheduled studio hours—on an individual basis, as required, and in group meetings—to discuss their work in a productive manner.
3. Criticism in studio meetings and in design reviews will be constructive and educational in nature; it will concern the work produced and not its author.
4. Faculty shall maintain reasonable expectations as to work requirements for the studio, with the understanding that students may choose to put in more effort, as they see fit, to meet their own goals and expectations.
5. Faculty shall provide a detailed written evaluation of each student's performance at the end of the quarter. In all cases the work produced in the studio shall be evaluated on its merits. Because the studio is concerned with professional development, the faculty shall also evaluate the student on working methods.

CULTURE

Instruction in the studio shall foster a collaborative environment conducive to the mutual interests of the students and faculty. The Department strongly encourages students to do as much of their studio course work in the studio as possible, in order to take advantage of the collaborative opportunities the studio space allows and to develop a strong sense of class cohesiveness.

Students in architecture design studios often spend many hours together during the course of a quarter. The studio must be a comfortable place for students to work and interact with other students and faculty. Students are expected to behave respectfully and professionally at all times in the studio. The majority does not rule in University of Washington architecture studios. Noise, music, unruly behavior and the like, if offensive to even one student in the studio, are not acceptable and must cease. Students are encouraged to make reasonable efforts to resolve personal disputes; however, any behavior inconsistent with this policy, or the University of Washington Student Conduct Code: apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=478-120 should be referred to the studio faculty or the departmental administration.

ENFORCEMENT

Any member of the community, student or faculty, has the right to seek remediation for conflicts or problems in studio by contacting the studio instructor, the administration of the Department of Architecture, or the University of Washington Ombud: www.washington.edu/ombud. Where informal resolution of disputes or problems is not workable they will be resolved according to procedures set out in the University of Washington Policy Handbook: www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies.