

Master of Architecture Application Portfolio Tips

The portfolio of work submitted with your application is the best way of demonstrating your capabilities as a designer. The admissions committee looks very carefully at the portfolio because it contains a tremendous amount of subtle information. Keep in mind that yours will be one of hundreds of portfolios the admission committee examines, so it must be both concise and informative.

Applicants to the 2-year M Arch program should include architectural studio design work as well as other evidence of pursuing architectural studies at an advanced level.

Applicants to the 3-year M Arch program should demonstrate their interest and skill in the visual arts or design and illustrate three-dimensional understanding. As this degree program accepts students from non-design and design-related fields, the admissions committee will adjust expectations for technical skill according to applicant's background.

While not required for admission, it is highly recommended that 3-year M Arch applicants with non-design backgrounds take a studio art or design course for the purpose of exploring the design process and the art of making. This would benefit the applicant by both confirming interest in design or architectural studies and to build a body of creative work to include in the admissions portfolio.

Suggested types of creative work:

- Drawing and sketching (pencil, pen, charcoal)
- Graphics/illustration
- Painting/watercolor
- Sculpture
- Fine woodworking
- Model building
- Building construction
- Photography (no travel snap shots, photos must demonstrate intention, lighting & composition, and critical point of view)
- Set design
- Textile/apparel design and construction

LAYOUT

The portfolio helps reviewers determine your potential to perform successfully in a studio-based design curriculum. Your portfolio is a design project - all of its parts should work together to make a complete and satisfying whole. It is a good idea to plan the layout of each page so that it contributes to a graphic sensibility that is consistent from beginning to end.

- Required file format: PDF - hardcopy portfolios will not be accepted. Portfolios should be designed and formatted for on-screen viewing.
- Cover page is required and must include your name as it appears on your UW application.
- Maximum number of pages: 20 pages of project content (covers and table of contents are excluded from the page count).
- Maximum file size: 30MB

IMAGES

Your images should show breadth of skill and ability. The best work in a given medium or subject area is preferable to a whole range or sequence of works. If you include more than one image of a single project or artwork make sure it contributes something to the presentation that cannot be perceived in other images. Usually a one or two-page spread is enough to describe a project fully, if the images are chosen carefully.

TEXT

Limit the amount of text in the portfolio. The images should do most of the work, but some explanatory text can be helpful. The text should be integrated into the graphic design of the portfolio. Text can be a powerful graphic device in its own right, so make sure it also contributes to the graphic sensibility of the portfolio.

For each project list the project date, indication of whether the project was academic, office related, or personal. Additional explanatory text can be included but should be brief. If work was performed under collaborative or professional setting, the applicant's contribution to the project must be clearly described.

WHERE TO FIND ARCHITECTURE PORTFOLIO EXAMPLES?

Here are a few places to search for precedents that could help you decide how to approach creating your own portfolio. Look at these sources for inspiration but develop a portfolio that best tells *your* story and showcases *your* creative skills.

Issuu is an online self-publication service. Enter a search for 'architecture portfolios' to pull up examples. An account is not required currently to view content.

Architecture Books: Architectural publications offer great examples of graphic design and layout. [Phaidon Press](#) & [Princeton Architectural Press](#) are two publishers of books on architecture, design, art, and photography. It's possible you might be able to find magazines and books of interest at a local library or the library of an architecture school if there is one in your city.

The American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) website links to the [Portfolio Guide](#) published by Archisoup: