

# Architecture

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Curriculum

## **Master programme**

Duration: 6 Semesters

Programme Number: 443

*This is the English translation of the original German version. Only the latter is legally binding.*

Approved by the Senate of the University of Applied Arts Vienna  
on 31 March 2011.

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**§ 1. Preamble**

The Institute of Architecture at the University of Applied Arts Vienna is a laboratory for the future. In their personal dealings with high-profile teaching staff, students have the opportunity to gather experience that turns information into knowledge. The ongoing discussion of the relation between theory and practice gives students an insight into the reality of design, allowing them to understand what it means to make architecture.

The design studios are marked by knowledge transfer in small groups, which unites all students through common topics in order to test the paradigms of contemporary architecture by way of example. Students work in teams with the intensive supervision and assistance of highly qualified figures. The main emphasis from the outset is on design, the elaboration of concepts, and a complex examination of architecture. The programme encourages the creative association of related topics. Integrated into the design work in the studios, the teaching in the technical and theoretical subjects is organised around the elaboration of a strategic understanding of the realisation, theoretical background, and management, practice and communication of design projects.

Realisation comprises the integration of technical disciplines throughout the entire design process; management and practice deal with the dynamics of the economic, ecological, and political structures of the profession. Theory imparts an understanding of the cultural and societal contexts of the discipline, while the topic of communication enables students and practising graduates to defend and carry out their designs and associated concepts in a convincing manner.

In this way, in addition to honing the students' artistic design potential, the aim is to convey the ability to efficiently collaborate, which is crucial in subsequent professional practice, as well as the critical responsibility of architects toward their tasks. Strategic thinking and visual culture enable communication within the discipline as well as engagement with various interests in society.

**§ 2. Qualification profile**

The field of activity that the students will be prepared for and for which the master thesis project qualifies them is in a perpetual state of flux, one that has been rapidly accelerating, above all, since the advent of digital data processing and the virtualisation of architecture – and it will only continue to increase in speed. Graduates possess a high level of flexibility with which to adapt to new situations and have firm command over the latest technologies and tools. This prepares them for all architectural tasks, from spatial planning to interior design, and gives them the requisite organisational skills needed to tackle an increasingly complex production process. In view of globalisation and the predominance of economic calculation, prospective planning becomes particularly important. Graduates have been trained to think strategically, allowing them to anticipate future scenarios so as to react to their complexity with commensurate solutions.

Architecture is the three-dimensional expression of a society. Accordingly, as mentioned in the preamble, the programme is geared toward the acquisition of technical and theoretical knowledge in connection with the development of design ideas. However, it also gives students an awareness of the fact that architecture is part of culture and that they bear a responsibility with regard to the given tasks. By critically reflecting on “practical necessities” and standardised procedures, their specific expertise regarding space and organisation enables them to devise solutions to current and, above all, future problems and to meet the demands of society.

This is possible thanks to an educational training that encourages collaboration and imparts to the students the necessary tools and platforms for communication. Work in the design studios trains an openness between various disciplines, and the master programme intensifies this close interaction all the more as it is now possible to increase the intensity of studies on the structure and the solving of tasks to an advanced level.

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### **§ 3. Admission**

- (1) Prerequisites for admission to the master programme are:
  - a) proof of artistic aptitude by way of an entrance examination, and
  - b) completion of a bachelor degree programme in architecture that conforms to international standards or another equivalent programme at a recognised national or foreign post-secondary educational institution<sup>1</sup>.
- (2) In the application process, applicants must submit a portfolio of their previous work and a biography with previous studies and professional activity, including all relevant diplomas, if necessary in certified translation.
- (3) The entrance examination is carried out by an examination commission and is divided into three parts:
  - a) portfolio
  - b) fulfilment of artistic tasks relevant to the discipline
  - c) personal interview with the examination commission
- (4) The entrance examination is considered to have been successfully completed when the examination commission grants a positive assessment in all three phases.
- (5) The entrance examination commission must also judge whether the stipulation set out in para. 1 lit. b has been fulfilled. If only specific supplements are required to achieve full equivalency, the entrance examination commission shall state which examinations, in their opinion, must be additionally passed during the master programme in order to prove the missing knowledge and skills. The bachelor programmes in architecture offered at Austrian universities provide the standard of comparison for imposing supplementary examinations.

### **§ 4. Scope and academic degree**

- (1) The master degree programme in architecture is an engineering sciences programme in accordance with § 54, para. 1 of the University Act 2002. It comprises 180 ECTS credits over a period of six semesters.
- (2) Upon successful completion of the programme, the student is awarded the academic degree “Master of Architecture” (MArch).

### **§ 5. Architectural Design, Expertise, Integration, Free Topics**

- (1) The courses in the master programme are divided into four areas: Architectural Design, Expertise, Integration, and Free Topics.
- (2) 75 ECTS must be completed in Architectural Design.
- (3) 65 ECTS must be completed in Expertise. This area is divided into the three subject groups: “Realisation”, “Theory”, and “Management, Practice and Communication”. Each subject group contains core and supplementary subjects.
- (4) 24 ECTS must be completed in the subject group “Realisation” from a range of courses totalling a minimum of 30 ECTS. The core subjects are:
  1. Building Construction
  2. Structural Design
  3. Energy Design
  4. Digital Design and Digital Production

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. § 64, para. 5 of the University Act 2002

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(5) 16 ECTS must be completed in the subject group “Theory” from a range of courses totalling a minimum of 20 ECTS. The core subjects are:

1. History and Theory of Architecture
2. Applied Geometry and Mathematics
3. Theory of Science and Theory of Society
4. Theory of Living Spaces

(6) 16 ECTS must be completed in the subject group “Management, Practice and Communication” from a range of courses totalling a minimum of 24 ECTS. The core subjects are:

1. Management, Practice and Communication
  - a. Planning Management and Construction Management
  - b. Legal and Political Conditions of Architecture
2. Communication
  - a. Communication Strategies
  - b. Presentation and Visualisation Strategies
3. Experimental Strategies
  - a. Special Topics

(7) In addition, 9 ECTS from the subject groups “Realisation”, “Theory”, and “Management, Practice and Communication” must be completed as integrated courses in connection with Architectural Design (Architectural Design 5). Students will work on the contents of the various subjects based on their own designs. Integration beyond this extent into the subject of Architectural Design is not only possible, it is explicitly recommended to both teachers and students.

(8) In “Free Topics”, 10 ECTS must be completed from the range of courses offered at the University of Applied Arts Vienna or at other universities. The courses may be chosen for the purpose of individual deepening or expansion of knowledge in specialist fields within or beyond the narrower field of architecture. Moreover, a successfully completed internship in the form of qualified practical work experience at an architectural firm may be credited for a total of 4 ECTS. Whether it is a suitable internship pursuant to § 78, para. 4 of the University Act 2002 can be confirmed beforehand in writing by a responsible teacher of Architectural Design; otherwise, this will be verified in the course of recognition by the administrative body for study law.

## **§ 6. Master thesis**

(1) The master thesis, totalling 30 ECTS credits, concludes the programme and serves to prove the student’s ability to treat a particular topic independently with regard to its content and method. It consists of a project to be developed on a topic from the subject of Architectural Design and presented in appropriate professional form. Integration of the subject groups “Realisation”, “Theory” and “Management, Practice and Communication” must be documented appropriately.

(2) Before defining the subject of the master thesis, all examinations prescribed in the curriculum must be successfully completed.

## **§ 7. Courses**

(1) The subject Architectural Design is the central artistic subject in accordance with § 68, para. 2 of the University Act 2002. It is offered as individual artistic tutoring<sup>2</sup> in the form of five courses (Architectural Design 1 to 5), each consisting of 15 ECTS.

(2) The courses in the area of Expertise are offered primarily in the form of seminars. Only courses comprising 3 ECTS may be completed in the subject group “Realisation”, and only courses comprising 4 ECTS in the subject group “Management, Practice and Communication”. In the subject group “Theory”, courses of any number of credits may be completed. Integrated courses must consist of 3 ECTS each.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to the study law section of the university statutes for the definition of the course types.

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(3) The range of available Expertise courses is updated each semester. It must be ensured that students have an adequate offering of courses from the core subjects every semester and that this selection is supplemented by additional courses in such a manner that students have the opportunity for in-depth study to the extent stipulated in § 5, para. 4 to 6. The disciplinary categorisation of courses in supplementary subjects must be determined in consultation with the Curricular Commission.

(4) In the subject group “Realisation”, at least one course from each of the subjects “Building Construction”, “Structural Design”, and “Energy Design” must be completed.

(5) In order to register for Architectural Design 5 and the related integrated courses in accordance with § 5, para. 7, Architectural Design 1 to 4 and the Expertise courses under § 5, para. 4 to 6 must have been completed successfully.

(6) It is recommended to evenly distribute the “Free Topics”, which are personally chosen as per § 5, para. 8, over the first five semesters of study.

## **§ 8. Examination regulations**

### (1) Course examinations

Course examinations are held by the heads of the course. The examination contents, methods, and assessment criteria must be announced in a suitable form before the beginning of each semester. In the case of integrated courses, students must specifically prove that they are capable of integrating the expertise acquired in the various subjects into their design work. The basis for assessment is the depth and quality of integration of the respective subject.

### (2) Master examination

The master examination concludes the architectural degree programme. It consists of

1. The master thesis including the assessment by the examination commission of the integration of the Expertise subjects into the architectural design,
2. The examinations in the subject Architectural Design, and
3. The examinations in the area of Expertise (Realisation, Theory, and Management, Practice and Communication)

(3) In the assessment of the master thesis, students must publicly present their thesis and discuss it with the members of the examination commission. The composition of the examination commission is the responsibility of the administrative body for study law, whereby examiners from the subject Architectural Design and from the three Expertise subjects groups are to be called upon given the contents of the examination. Special consideration must be given to the participation of qualified members from outside the university.

## **§ 9. Entry into force**

This curriculum enters into force on 1 October 2011.

## **§ 10. Interim provisions**

(1) Degree students of the diploma degree programme in architecture are entitled to switch to the master degree programme if they already hold a bachelor degree in accordance with § 3, para. 1.

(2) Students who graduate from the diploma degree programme in architecture at the University of Applied Arts Vienna are eligible for admission to the master programme within one and a half years without any additional conditions. These students must complete 9 ECTS of integrated courses, Architectural Design 5, as well as the master thesis and the examination by the commission in order to graduate.

**APPENDIX: Course of Study**

ECTS per sem.	ECTS total
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**1st – 4th semester**

Architectural Design 1 – 4		15	60
Expertise	from the subject group Realisation: 2 courses, each consisting of 3 ECTS	6	24
	from the subject group Theory: courses to be chosen	4	16
	from the subject group Management, Practice and Communication: 1 course consisting of 4 ECTS	4	16

 Free Topics  
 10 ECTS

**5th semester**

Architectural Design 5		15	15
Integration of Expertise	from the subject groups Realisation, Theory, Management, Practice and Communication: 3 integrated courses, each consisting of 3 ECTS	9	9

**6th semester**

Master Thesis		30	30
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**Total ECTS: 180**