Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology

Fakulteit Ingenieurswese, Bou-omgewing en Inligtingtegnologie / Lefapha la Boetšenere, Tikologo ya Kago le Theknolotši ya Tshedimošo

Make today matter

BSc Architecture

Contents

1. Introduction

The Department of Architecture presents an undergraduate programme in architecture that explores the design of meaningful environments across varying scales, from intimate interior spaces to more significant interventions in landscapes. This programme prepares graduates for advanced and specialised professional employment. The programme serves as a gateway to professional honours and master's programmes required for registration as a professional architect, landscape architect or interior architect, as well as further post-professional design or research specialisations, both locally and internationally. Our programme is accredited by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) as a professional degree, validated by the South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP) and is acknowledged by the Canberra Accord on Architectural Education, through which graduates have access to international postgraduate studies and professional registration bodies.
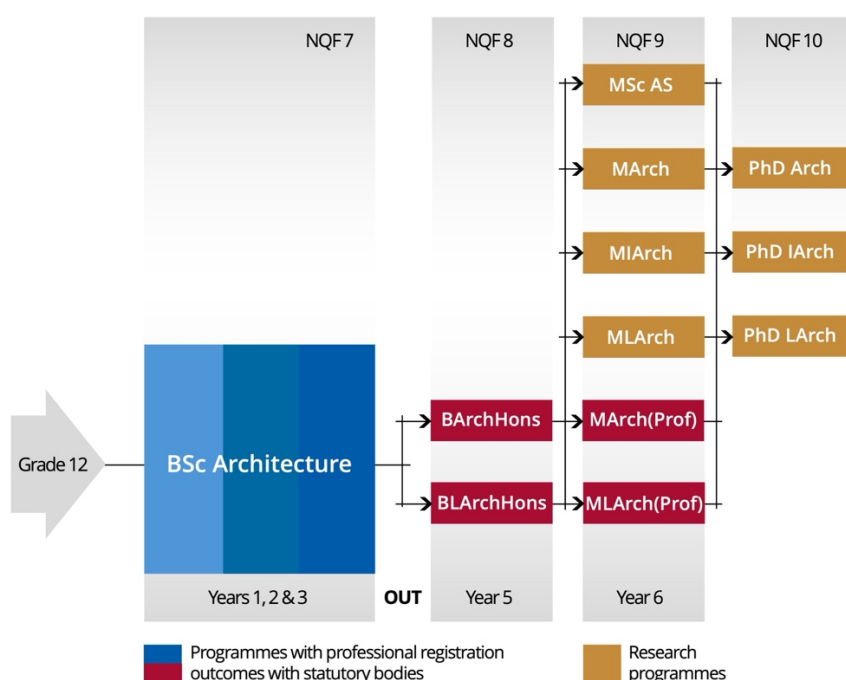

FIG. 1: The BSc Architecture programme is the foundation for the other professional programmes presented by the Department of Architecture at the University of Pretoria.

A limited number of candidates can be admitted to the programme – please refer to the section on selection for more details.

2. Description of the BSc Architecture programme

The BSc Architecture degree is the culmination of a three year, full-time, studio-based study programme presented through a hybrid blended learning model that provides for facilitated, independent, peer and online learning. The programme cultivates creative and critical design thinking and students are exposed to complex social, cultural and environmental problems at multiple scales. Half of the study's credits are earned through studio-based projects that explore resourceful and appropriate approaches to a variety of problems and the interrelationship between context, end-users, appropriate technologies and meaningful spatial interventions. Design and Theory projects are complemented by a variety of subject modules that range from Community and Practice, History of the Environment, Design Communication, Construction, Earth Studies to Theory of Structures. The programme benefits from the Department's interdisciplinary focus and our national and international collaborations. The curriculum aims to instil a culture of life-long learning in our graduates, who are highly regarded in academia and practice, both locally and abroad.

To help us create a smart, sustainable and healthy built environment, we harness the power of technology, and students are exposed to the latest digital tools to map, plan, design, manage and visualise the built environment. Aside from a digital laboratory with discipline-specific software, the Department also offers some specialised facilities for 3D printing, laser-cutting and large format printing, as well as a dedicated Resource Centre stocked with books, journals, student dissertations and product information libraries. All of these create an environment in which students are not only prepared for their careers but can explore new ideas and also grow as people to become responsible and compassionate citizens. The *Unit for Urban Citizenship* plays a central role in instilling this sense of responsibility in our education by introducing respectful and collaborative community engagement practices into the curriculum, and we are very proud of the active role that our students play within the broader community.

Bachelor of Science: Architecture (Programme code 12132018)

Minimum duration of study: 3 years	Total credits: 380	NQF level 7

The BScArch degree meets the requirements for registration as a candidate architectural technologist with the South African Council for the Architectural Profession in terms of Act 44 of 2000. Additional professional postgraduate qualifications are required to be able to register as a candidate professional architect (refer to figure 1 on page 1).

Entry requirements:

(i)   A National Senior Certificate (NSC) or Independent Examination Board (IEB) Admission Point Score (APS) of 30 out of a possible 42 (for end of Grade 11 results for provisional selection, or final Grade 12 results for applicants who have already matriculated) calculated according to the UP formula, and

(ii)   Matriculation exception for admission to bachelor's degree studies, and

(iii)   at least 60% (achievement level 5) in English (as Home or First Additional Language), and

(iv)   at least 50% (achievement level 4) for Mathematics, and

(iv)   at least 50% (achievement level 4) for Physical Science (with Physics and Chemistry).

- The requirements for those who follow qualifications other than the NSC or IEB are available from bit.ly/OtherSchools2024.
- A matriculant or applicant working towards meeting the minimum requirements for admission is provisionally selected. To retain selection, applicants must still meet the minimum requirements for admission in their final examination results.
- No bridging or extended programmes are available for applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements for admission.

General notes:

- This is a selection programme. **BSc Architecture will only be considered as an applicant's first study choice,** except if the candidate also applied for admission to a programme in the Faculty of Health Sciences as first choice.
- Prospective students wishing to transfer to the BSc Architecture programme from other academic programmes or tertiary institutions follow the same procedure as all other applicants. The same closing date applies to all applicants.
- Transfer applications from students registered at other schools of architecture are usually not considered.
- Citizens from countries other than South Africa and South African citizens with foreign qualifications must comply with all the other admission requirements and the prerequisites for subjects/modules.
- It may be expected of candidates to write the TOEFL, IELTS or SAT.
- Candidates must have completed the National Senior Certificate with admission to degree studies or a certificate of conditional exemption on the basis of a candidate's foreign qualifications, the so-called 'Immigrant' or 'Foreign Conditional Exemption'. The only condition for the 'Foreign Conditional Exemption' that is accepted is: 'completion of the degree course'. The exemption certificate is obtainable from Universities South Africa (USAf) – find more information in the section on International students.
- For further information also refer to General Regulations G.1 to G.15.

3. What makes us different?

The following aspects sets the BSc Architecture programme at the University of Pretoria apart from other programmes offered in the country:

- The emphasis on community engagement, well-being and environmental responsibility in the curriculum instils an ecosystemic ethos based on principles of regenerative design which prepares our students for the responsibilities they have as professionals responding to the challenges of the 21st century.
- The vertical integration of the different curriculum streams provides a coherent narrative of engaging with the knowledge that builds from first year to third year and beyond into the post-graduate programmes.
- The horizontal integration of the theory explored in the various modules in each year with design outcomes in that year ensures that students understand how the theory is applied in practice.
- Students are exposed to a multidisciplinary learning environment where the disciplines of interior architecture, architecture, urban design and landscape architecture are treated as one integrated spatial design continuum.
- According to the QS World University Rankings by Subject for 2023 for Architecture & Built Environment the University of Pretoria was ranked in the top 240 institutions globally.
- The University of Pretoria was ranked 69th globally in the 2023 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings measuring work towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

4. The curriculum

The curriculum for the BSc Architecture programme integrates knowledge from the humanities and the natural sciences, and students attend classes in the subject streams discussed below.

FIG. 2: Curriculum diagram for the BSc Architecture programme

Design and Theory (ONT)

Architecture students attain half of the credits for every year of study in the significant module of design, which is presented in tandem with architectural theory to equip students with a pertinent vocabulary and theoretical underpinning. Design is a studio-based module in which projects over a range of scales and complexities are undertaken to encourage students to develop critical and independent design thinking, the ability to evaluate design within a social, cultural and ecological framework, and to explore imaginative and appropriate solutions. In the studio, design discernment is fostered through ongoing discussion, peer learning, and formal and informal assessment. The Department promotes design that is evidence-based and contextually responsive rather than approaches that are stylistically or iconically driven, and students are encouraged to appreciate the universal (global) while engaging with the particular (local).

Construction (KON)

The study of construction theory, materials and methods is presented as an extension of design to enable the designer to give tangible expression to built form and realisation to an architectural concept. Presenting increasingly complex applications of construction knowledge in each study year, the stream culminates in the preparation of construction drawings as part of a design realisation integrated with ONT 300 and OKU 300.

Design Communication (OKU)

Design communication offers students the opportunity to develop skills in harnessing especially the digital tools that are essential to designers in the twenty-first century. It deals with visual communication, digital visualisation and representation, and the management of document and building information.

Earth Studies (AAL)

Earth studies introduce students to ecosystemic accountability and systems thinking to guide them towards designing for well-being in the built environment from social, cultural and environmental points of view. It includes social-ecological themes that extend to approaches that underpin and inform inclusive, ecological, passive and responsive design.

Community and Practice (JCP/PJS/KKR)

Students participate in collaborative community projects that are directed by our research and initiatives in urban citizenship, as well as the Faculty's community engagement module. In the third year of study, the focus turns to the management of a professional practice and the legal context of construction contract law.

History of the Environment (OML/OMG)

History of the environment prepares students to define their role in society and find meaning in history through the study of the self and the cultures of others. It investigates the context and meaning of cultural artefacts, including space and place, to relate form and order to the environmental, political and philosophical conditions that influenced their making. It culminates in a reading of southern Africa in the third year of study.

Theory of Structures (STU)

The theory of structures equips students with the theoretical knowledge and practical understanding required to analyse, plan and design critical structural components such as beams, columns and trusses from a structural engineering perspective, using timber, steel, concrete and other materials.

5. Application

Applications are only done online at https://www.up.ac.za/online-application between 1 April and 30 June of the year preceding intended study. Prospective students whose academic results do not meet the minimum requirements for admission (see page 2) will, unfortunately, not be able to complete the application process. Incomplete and late applications are not considered.

After the closing date the Department communicates with applicants with an initial alert in the format of a Short Message Service (SMS) if the applicant has a valid cell number with one of the South African networks, and thereafter through email. It is therefore critical that applicants provide dependable contact details in their applications.

6. Selection for admission

The Department usually receives between 900 and 1200 applications per annum from prospective students who meet the minimum requirements for admission, while our resources only allow for 100 first year students to be accommodated. We are therefore compelled to select students for admission and applicants who meet the minimum requirements are not guaranteed admission. The Department employs a comprehensive, four-step selection process to identify the strongest prospective students for admission. Apart from academic merit, an applicant's general knowledge and interests, motivation, independence, ingenuity and aptitude are also considered. This selection process has contributed to the Department achieving high pass and graduation rates.

ROUND 1 is based on academic merit. Applications are assessed to determine if they meet the minimum requirements for admission. Those who meet the requirements for admission are invited to participate in the next rounds.

ROUND 2 consists of home assignments, including a job-shadowing task that requires prospective students to explore the nature and daily operation of a practicing architect through observation and first-hand experience. We do not stipulate the duration or number of practices applicants should visit. Instead, prospective students are strongly advised to look into a variety of practices as the scope of work that architecture practices undertake varies more than in other professions. The applicant should approach job-shadowing with the purpose to answer this question:

Do I know enough about what architects do, and how they do it, to passionately want to pursue studies and a career in architecture?

Applicants are not required to submit any documents as proof of their job-shadowing but they should note that follow-up questions will be posed during the subsequent rounds of selection.

Note that the requirements for the Round 2 home assignments and Round 3 are only communicated to applicants once applications have closed. All applicants are advised to undertake job-shadowing until then.

ROUND 3 consists of a Departmental selection test taken on campus. Applicants who cannot attend can, with certain preconditions, apply for Additional Home Assignments (AHA) where extensive selection assignments are submitted as an alternative.

ROUND 4 of selection is based on an interview. The outcomes of rounds 2 and 3 are considered and a final shortlist for Round 4 is compiled. Only shortlisted applicants are invited to attend a selection interview conducted via video-conferencing. Some applicants may be offered places after Round 3.

7. Open Day

The Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology hosts an Open Day for all programmes in the Faculty on Saturday 8 March 2025. Register at https://bit.ly/SE_OpenDay2025 to attend this event. This is the only opportunity prospective students have to visit the Hatfield campus and the Department of Architecture in person. The website of the Department (www.up.ac.za/architecture) will feature information on other career information opportunities as they arise.

8. Key dates

Applications for admission to the BSc Architecture programme for the next academic year open on 1 April of the year preceding the intended study and close on 30 June for all applicants.

Selection commences early in July, and final results are annually available before the end of October of the year preceding the intended study.

The provisional test dates for Round 2 for the 2026 selection cohort are: Saturday 2 August 2025, Friday 8 August 2025, and Saturday 9 August 2025. These dates are subject to change; please consult the Guide for applicants when it is available in July.

9. Financial support

Bursary applications close at different times of the year and usually require that applicants be registered students. Please contact the Student Service Centre or look for funding opportunities at www.up.ac.za/fees-and-funding. The Department is not able to provide any financial assistance to students.

10. International students

Non-South African residents should note that a study permit is required, and applicants who matriculated outside of South Africa must apply for an exemption certificate from the Matriculation Board at Universities South Africa (USAf). It is the applicant's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for these documents. International students are advised to apply timeously and to submit their exemption certificates and certified copies of final-year school results. Documents issued in a foreign language must be translated to English.

> The Matriculation Board at Universities South Africa (USAf):
> **Email:** applications@usaf.ac.za
> **Online:** https://mb.usaf.ac.za

Applicants can contact the University of Pretoria's International Cooperation Division for more information on study permits and other requirements, such as medical insurance, at www.up.ac.za/international-cooperation-division.

11. Contact details

The Department of Architecture does not deal with the administrative aspects of student affairs, such as applications, tuition fees or bursaries. Such queries should be addressed to the Client Service Centre or the Faculty Admissions Office.

General Enquiries	Admission Enquiries	Academic Enquiries
Student Service Centre	EBIT Undergraduate Admission Office	Dr Nico Botes
Lynnwood Road Entrance, Hatfield Campus, University of Pretoria	Room 6-10, Engineering Building 1 Hatfield Campus, University of Pretoria	Programme Coordinator: BSc Architecture Department of Architecture
Tel: +27 (0) 12 420 3111	Tel: +27 (0)12 420 5166	Tel: +27 (0)12 420 4600
Email: ssc@up.ac.za	Email: jvr2@up.ac.za	Email: arch@up.ac.za