



Mt. San Antonio College
Architecture
Education & Career Resource Guide

Architecture

An overview of a career in Architecture

Transfer Preparation

Review of transfer preparation to universities

Resources

Architecture accreditation information and post bachelor's degree options

The Basics

What is architecture?

Architecture is the study and practice of designing buildings, communities, structures, and other elements that shape the built environment. It brings together and balances artistic sensibility and scientific methodology. The term "architecture" may also refer to the constructed elements of an environment. Architecture is all around us, and architects greatly impact our lives!

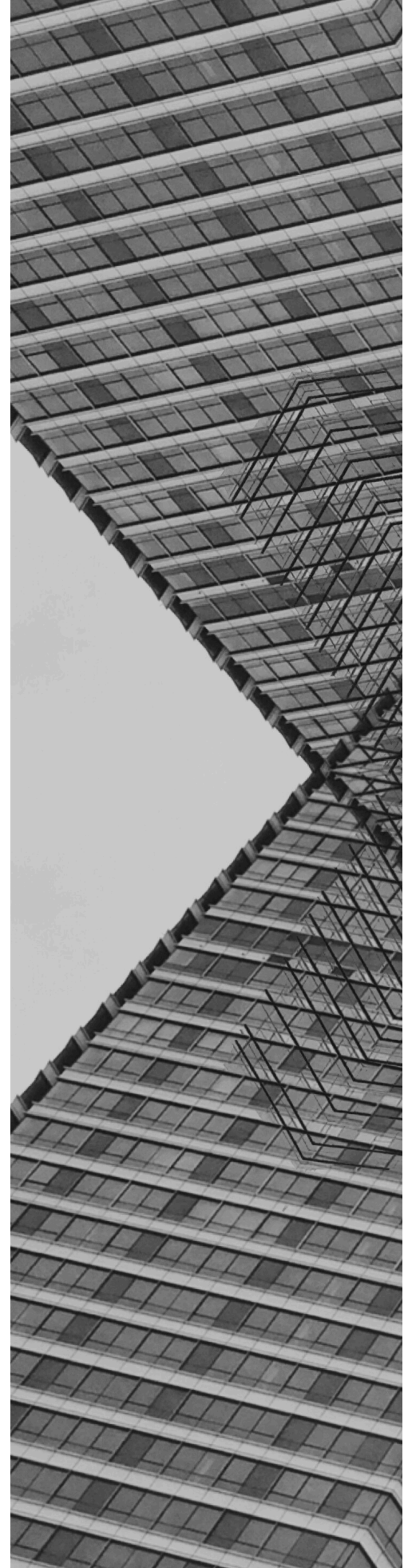
What does an Architect do?

An architect is a person who designs buildings and other structures and prepares drawings and instructions about how to build them.

Architects usually work for clients and also make sure to design safe buildings for everyone who uses that building.

How to become an Architect?

To become an architect, a degree in architecture must be earned, gain experience with a licensed architect, and pass a national exam known as Architect Registration Examination (ARE).



The Right Fit

Who can be an architect?

Do you think a career in architecture might be right for you? You don't need to be a math genius or an exceptional artist to become an architect. While both skills are helpful, what is more important is your curiosity and persistence. Architecture education and practice will require you to be an adaptable problem-solver and hard worker as you learn the technical and creative skills needed to design safe, functional, and beautiful buildings.

Licensure Path

- Earn a degree: In most jurisdictions, you'll need a degree from a program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB). See **“Choosing the Right Degree”** section of this guide for details.
- Pass the exam: The Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) 5.0 is a multi-part test required by all licensing boards. You can take the tests in any order, any time throughout the year.
- Get licensed: Once requirements are established by the licensing board where you would like to practice, apply for a license and officially become an architect. To learn more about the path to earning an architecture license, visit **Destination Architect**, a video-based resource from the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB).



The Right Fit

Do any of these characteristics describe you?

Problem Solver

I like to solve problems and figure things out. I love to learn and experiment.

Persistence

I don't give up easily. I keep trying.

Self-Motivated

If I'm interested in learning or doing something, I'll make my own plans to make it happen.

Adaptability

When life gives me lemons, I make lemonade! It's just a new challenge, not a problem.

Precision

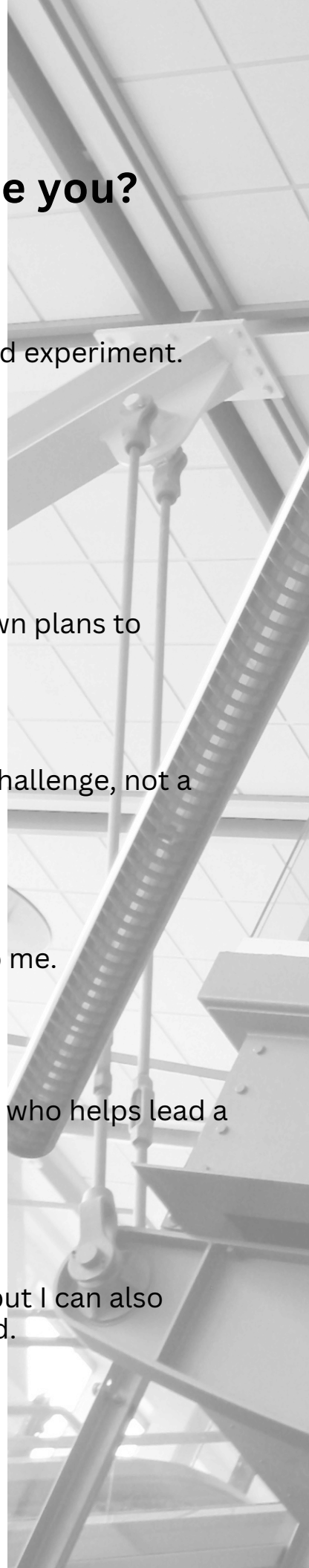
I like to do my best, not just "good enough." Details matter to me.

Team Player & Contributor

Are you good with contributing with others? Are you the one who helps lead a group or team to success?

Creative & Diligence

I like to daydream, build models, create art, or make music, but I can also make an action plan and stick to it to finish a project I started.



Choosing the Right Degree

Understanding the Importance of Accreditation

To become an architect, you must meet specific education requirements set by the licensing board in the state you plan to practice.

There are **55 architectural licensing boards in the U.S.**, and most require a professional degree in architecture by an accredited program under the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB).



Choosing the Right Degree

Accredited Architecture Programs

The NAAB reviews and accredits architecture programs to ensure a quality education for a person to practice independently.

- **Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch)**

This undergraduate degree typically takes five years to complete. It is designed to develop a comprehensive knowledge of the discipline of architecture, as well as foundational professional knowledge and a basic understanding of related fields.

Cal State Schools that offer a B.Arch degree:

Cal Poly Pomona

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

Private Schools in California that offer a B.Arch degree:

Academy of Art University (Candidate) - San Francisco

California College of the Arts - San Francisco

New School of Architecture & Design - San Diego

Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-ARC) - Los Angeles

USC - Los Angeles

Woodbury University School of Architecture and Design - Burbank & San Diego

- **Master of Architecture (M.Arch)**

This two or three-year graduate degree is designed to help develop similar learning outcomes of a B.Arch. The length of an M.Arch depends on the undergraduate degree. For instance, a BA or BS in Architecture typically follows the 4+2 model, while those with a bachelor's degree in a non-related major follow the 4+3 model.

- **Doctor of Architecture (D.Arch)**

Much like the M.Arch., this professional doctorate degree is typically three or four years. Those with a BA or BS in architecture follow the 4+4 model.

Alternative Options

When researching college options, it is important to understand whether or not a program is NAAB-accredited. In many areas in the U.S., a degree from a non-accredited architecture program will require additional schooling, such as M.Arch degree, to fulfill the education requirement.

- **Integrated path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL)**

If you are ready to jump-start a career in architecture, consider applying for an IPAL option. Offered at over 25 NAAB-accredited programs, IPAL enables college students to earn their license shortly after graduation by incorporating professional experience and licensing exams into the curriculum. Learn more about the IPAL option.

- **Other Degree Types**

There are several two or four-year degrees that can help you start a career in architecture. Although these options will not satisfy the education requirements set by most license boards, they will enable you to work upon graduation and can with furthering education in the field.

- **Associate Degree (AA/AS)**

This two-year degree can be an entry point directly into the architecture workforce or a starting point to gain some foundation skills to transfer to a B.Arch program, such as Cal Poly Pomona, USC, or San Luis Obispo.

Mt. SAC offers AS Degrees in:

Architectural Design Concentration

Architectural Technology Concentration

Engineering and Construction Technology

Alternative Options

- **Bachelor of Arts or Science in Architecture (B.A. or B.S. in Architecture, Architectural Studies, Environmental Design, Architectural Engineering, etc.):**

These four-year, preprofessional degrees are a common precursor to the NAAB accredited M.Arch. If you decide to pursue such degrees, you will develop a comprehensive knowledge of the discipline of architecture. If you're unsure about becoming a licensed architect, one of these degrees could still encompass everything you enjoy about design and construction.

Cal States that offer alternative options:

Fresno State - Architectural Studies

Cal Poly Pomona - Landscape Architecture

Sacramento State - Interior Architecture

San Luis Obispo - Landscape Architecture

UCs that offer alternative options:

Berkeley - Architecture and Landscape Architecture

Davis - Pre-Landscape Architecture

Los Angeles - Architectural Studies

Santa Barbara - History of Art and Architecture

- **Master of Science (M.S. in Architecture):**

This one-year or two-year graduate-level degree is commonly a post-professional degree, meaning it comes after completing a B.Arch. or an M.Arch. It is usually research-focused and predicated on independent inquiry.

Cost & Salary

The cost of becoming an architect varies based on several factors, including where you decide to attend college, how early you start earning professional experience, and whether your future firm provides licensure support.

Architecture Education

According to the 2020 ACSA Institutional Data Report, the median tuition per year (excluding fees, room, and meal plans) are as follows:

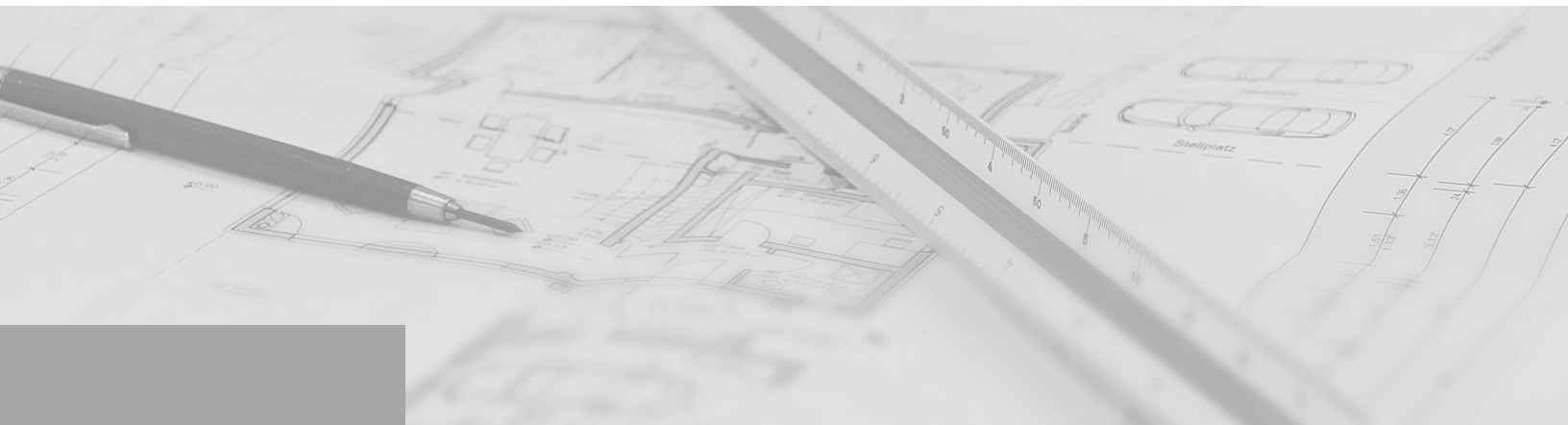
- Public B.Arch.
 - In-state: \$6,500 - \$11,499 | Out-of-state: \$21,500 - \$26,499 |
- Public M.Arch.
 - In-state: \$11,500 - \$16,499 | Out-of-state: \$21,500 - \$26,499
- Private B.Arch. and M.Arch.: \$41,500 - \$46,500

Licensure

The process of becoming a licensed architect is an investment in your future and a way to maximize career opportunities. Several programs offer financial aid, ranging from college scholarships to employer support for examination fees.

Typical costs associated with licensure include:

- NCARB Record fees while gaining work experience: \$270 (for three years)*



Cost & Salary

- Licensing board exam application fee: \$0-\$377 (range based on licensing board and residency status)
- Architect Registration Examination (ARE): \$1,410 (six divisions)*
- Licensing board initial registration fee: \$0-\$400 (range based on licensing board and residency status)

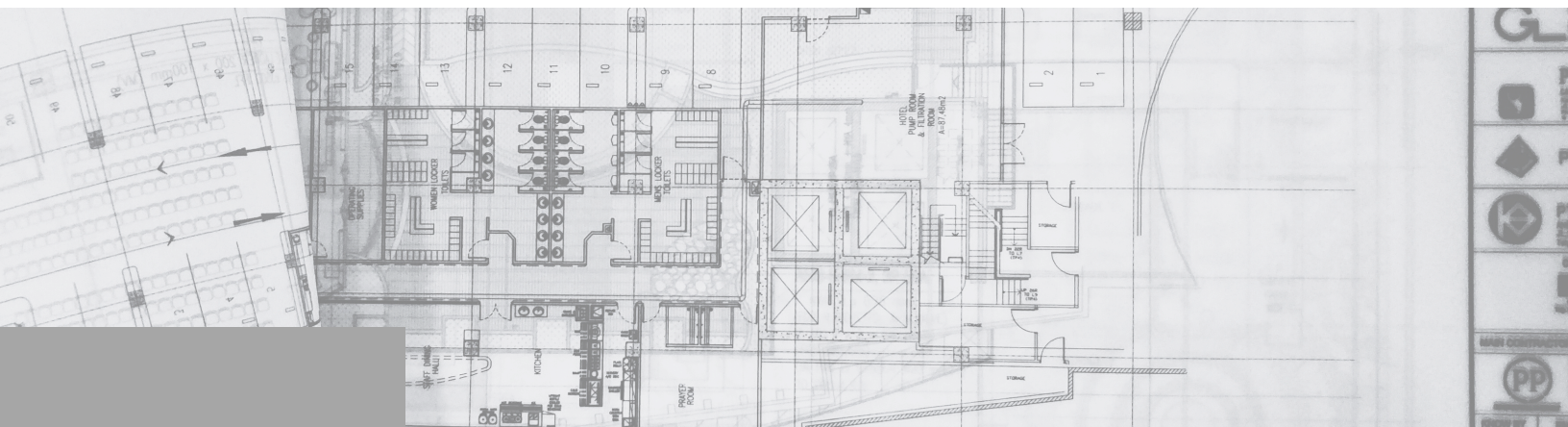
*Explore current licensure fees on the [NCARB](#) site. Keep in mind that individual licensing boards may have additional fees.



Salary

You may be wondering, “How much would I make?” Your salary will vary based on your job category and where you decide to practice. In 2019, the median salary for recent graduates was \$53,000, according to the AIA. Explore in-depth salary projections based on your region, city, and state using the [AIA salary calculator](#).

Note: The AIA salary calculator includes data for full-time architectural staff employees at AIA member firms in the U.S. with three or more architectural staff employees.



Resources

This booklet was developed by six key organizations that play an important role in the architecture profession. Each can provide you with additional resources and answers to questions you may still have about becoming an architect.

- The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA)
- The American Institute of Architects (AIA)
- The American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS)
- The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB)
- The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB)
- The National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA)

MT. SAC COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

Counseling Services



Please make sure that you are checking in with the Architecture Counselor, **Alana Bachor**, throughout your time at Mt. SAC to plan out your educational goals. To schedule an appointment, please visit the counseling website or call.

909-274-4380 | www.mtsac.edu/counseling/

