

Architecture as a Career



WHAT IS ARCHITECTURE?

At its simplest, architecture is the design of buildings, groups of buildings and often the space between buildings. But the scope of architecture goes well beyond just the drawing of plans. Architecture takes imagination; the ability to order ideas and communicate them clearly; creativity (not necessarily artistic ability); a keen interest in human behaviour, our habitat and the natural environment; and problem solving skills.

WHAT DO ARCHITECTS DO?

As an architect you are unlikely to spend all your life designing at the drawing board or on the PC using computer-aided-design programmes. In addition to time spent in the office, the architect moves around between various building sites and is in constant contact with clients and the many disciplines involved in the building process. Skills such as computer literacy, site supervision and project management are essential.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Architecture can be practiced in a variety of professional capacities: registered Professional Architects design and manage projects with the assistance of technologists and draughtsperson. Lecturers at universities are often registered architects and may also be in private practice. Developers often include registered architects in their in-house professional teams. Work ranges from massive complexes for public bodies to say, a meticulous restoration of an historic building. Architects often specialise in a particular field of expertise such as: hospitals, shopping centres, or residential buildings. Architects in South Africa, through the SA Institute of Architects, benefit through relations with international bodies such as the International Union of Architects (UIA), the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA), the Africa Union of Architects (AUA) and other international organisations. These associations organize their own conferences and seminars which are open to South African architects.

How to become an Architect

APTITUDE

If you are creative – not necessarily artistic – have the mental ability to juggle different problems and come up with good solutions and enjoy subjects like maths, and art, architecture may be a good career choice. An interest in human behaviour, the way people live and the natural environment are also important.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Architecture can be studied either at a university or a university of technology. A Grade 12 exemption with mathematics is a requirement. The course includes general subjects such as design, the history of architecture, construction and a host of technical subjects ranging from water reticulation to electrical installation. Computer-aided draughting is part of the course.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The receipt of a qualification in architecture is followed by a two-year in-service training period as a candidate in any one of the categories. After passing a Professional Practice Entrance examination, one may register with the South African Council for the Architectural Profession as a professional. This is a statutory requirement for practicing architecture in South Africa.

COURSE DURATION

The university course is structured in two parts: the first is a three-year course leading to a B.Architectural Studies or BSc (Architectural) degree. The second is an additional two-year professional degree in Architecture which qualifies you to become an Architect. A student who leaves university after completing the three-year degree course will be able to become a senior technologist. The University of Technology course consists of a three-year National Diploma in Architecture and after an additional year of study, a B Tech degree can be obtained. This will enable a student to become an architectural technologist or senior technologist.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Bursaries are offered by government, including municipalities, and several public institutions. The Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA) make bursaries available annually. Visit their website at www.ceta.org.za. Banks offer special facilities for funding higher education. Some firms of architects will assist aspirant architects. Application can also be made to universities and universities of technology for help in funding your studies.

For information about a career as an architect, contact:

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21 Pell Street, Office No. 10, Beacon Park,
BEACON BAY
TEL: (043) 748 1156
e-mail: bkia@sainet.co.za
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Or the Universities of Cape Town, Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal or the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

For information about a career as an architectural technologist, contact:

The South African Institute of Architectural Technologists

P O Box 807, BEDFORDVIEW 2008
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Or one of the following universities of technology: Johannesburg, Tshwane, Cape, Durban, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University – Technology.



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