



Becoming an Architect in Canada

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March 2017



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This e-booklet is freely available for downloading at <http://architecture.athabascau.ca/publications/index.php>

## **DISCLAIMER**

Becoming an architect in Canada is a complicated process that involves many years of study and work experience. These requirements also change over time and continue to evolve. This document is an attempt to summarize those requirements as of Spring 2017, however, all students and interns are advised to verify this information with their university or provincial architectural association. The Centre for Architecture cannot guarantee that this document represents the most up to date information.

## **TWO PATHWAYS**

There are two ways to become an architect in Canada:

- 1) The Masters Route
- 2) The Syllabus Route

Both are described in more detail below but both involve:

- 1) Education
- 2) Experience
- 3) Exams

## THE MASTERS ROUTE

This route involves earning a Masters of Architecture degree from an accredited Canadian university.

*What does accredited mean?*

Accredited means a school of architecture has been reviewed by the Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB) and they have approved its program of education as adequate preparation for its students to apply to become architects. If you want to follow the Masters Route to becoming an architect you MUST go to an accredited school.

For more information please visit:  
<http://cacb.ca/en/cacb-accreditation/>

### EDUCATION

To be accepted into a Masters of Architecture program, or M. Arch, you must first complete an undergraduate degree or Bachelors degree.

#### *Undergraduate Degrees in Architecture*

More than a dozen different post-secondary institutions offer undergraduate degrees in architecture but these can be very different credentials. Some like McGill University offer a Bachelor of Science in Architecture; others like the University of Toronto offer a Bachelor of Arts (Architectural Studies). Some of these credentials (like McGill's) are considered a pre-professional degree and others (like the University of Toronto's) are considered to be a degree in architectural studies. The difference is that pre-professional programs include more design studios and more technical courses. As such there are generally regarded as more intensive than a program of architectural studies.

The undergraduate degree you obtain can have a real impact on where you are placed in a Masters program. Some Masters program may require you to take an extra year of study if your undergraduate degree is not considered to be rigorous enough. Make sure you ask about this when applying to any undergraduate program.

### *Masters of Architecture*

There are currently 11 universities in Canada with accredited Masters of Architecture programs. A complete list of schools can be found here:

[http://www.canadianarchitect.com/links/links.asp#Schools\\_of\\_Architecture\\_in\\_Canada](http://www.canadianarchitect.com/links/links.asp#Schools_of_Architecture_in_Canada)

It is difficult to get into these schools since they usually have 4 applicants (or more) for every seat in their programs. In addition to your undergraduate degree they may require you to submit a portfolio, letters of reference and other materials. In general you'll also need a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or more.

BUT, each school is different. Each has a website which will list the admission requirements. Consider which school is right for you; talk to recent graduates; and visit the ones that seem right for you.

### **WORK EXPERIENCE: THE INTERNSHIP IN ARCHITECTURE PROGRAM**

Each province in Canada has an Architectural Association that regulates the profession in that province. To practice you must be a member of an association such as the AIBC (Architectural Institute of British Columbia) or the AAA (Alberta Association of Architects).

When you graduate from an M. Arch program, you can apply to the appropriate association to enter the Internship in Architecture Program or IAP. During this program you must be working for a licensed Canadian Architect and log the hours you work in out a Canadian Experience Record Book or CERB. Typically you need to accumulate 3720 hours in a variety of areas but again each province can be different.

For more information on the IAP download the pdf from:  
<http://www.oaa.on.ca/the%20oaa/join%20the%20oaa/intern%20architect>

## **EXAMS**

Once you have completed a certain number of experience hours (usually about 2800) you are eligible to write the four Examination for Architects in Canada (ExAC) exams. These cover a variety of topics from Programming to Building Codes to Project Management. For more information on the ExAC download the pdf from:

<http://www.exac.ca/en/preparation/guide.html>

## **REGISTRATION**

Once you have successfully completed your work experience and exams, you can apply to your provincial association to become a licensed architect. You may still have to complete additional items such as an interview so again check with your association

## THE SYLLABUS ROUTE

The RAIC or Royal Architectural Institute of Canada operates the RAIC Syllabus, which consists of studio, work experience and academic components taken while working under the supervision of a licensed Canadian Architect. Students who wish to become part of the RAIC Syllabus first register with, and apply to, the RAIC. Like applying to a Masters program, this involves the submission of a portfolio, letters of reference and other materials.

Those who successfully complete all the requirements of the program will be awarded the RAIC Syllabus Professional Diploma in Architecture and can then apply to the Canadian Architecture Certification Board (CACB) for individual assessment and certification and eventual licensure by their relevant provincial/ territorial regulatory authority.

*What does certified mean?*

Certified means that your education as an architect meets the requirements of the Canadian Education Standard. For more information please visit:

<http://cacb.ca/en/cacb-academic-certification/>

### EDUCATION

The academic components of the program consist of online courses in history, theory and technical subjects delivered by Athabasca University and face to face studios operated by the RAIC in major cities across Canada. To deliver the academic components the RAIC and Athabasca University have formed the RAIC Centre for Architecture at Athabasca University.

For more information or to register for the Syllabus please visit:

<http://www.raic-syllabus.ca/home>

For more information or to register with Athabasca University for an academic course please visit:

<http://architecture.athabascau.ca/>

Students who have successfully completed a diploma in an area such as Architectural Technology may be eligible for transfer credits for some of the academic courses in the Syllabus.



Please note that Athabasca University now offers both a Bachelor of Science of Architecture (BSc. Arch) and a Post Baccalaureate Diploma in Architecture (PBDA), however, these are not accredited programs. On the other hand, the BSc. Arch. has been designed as a pre-professional degree and as such may be accepted as an appropriate undergraduate degree for entry into an accredited Masters of Architecture program at another university. This has yet to be tested, however, since the program is very new. Again, the best advice is to check with the program you are interested in.

### **WORK EXPERIENCE**

The Syllabus has an intensive work experience component that is divided into three parts:

In Part I, it is not required that a student be working full time for a licensed Canadian architect – but it is recommended. During this part, the student takes a number of preliminary academic courses and design studios.

In Part II, the student must be working for a licensed Canadian architect and log 2000 hours of work experience in a number of areas. The student also continues to take academic courses and design studios.

In Part III, the student must be working for a licensed Canadian architect and log 7800 hours of work experience in a number of areas. The student also continues to take academic courses and design studios.

Depending on the provincial association, upon the award of the RAIC Syllabus Professional Diploma in Architecture, the student may still be required to enter into the Internship in Architecture Program (as described above in the Masters Route) and complete 3720 hours of additional work experience. Again, check with your provincial association.

For more information and to download the RAIC Syllabus Architectural Experience Manual please visit:

<http://www.raic-syllabus.ca/architectural-experience-manual>

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## **REGISTRATION**

Again, like the Masters Route, once you have successfully completed your work experience and exams, you can apply to your provincial association to become a licensed architect. You may still have to complete additional items such as an interview so again check with your association

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

As noted above, this is a complicated process. If you have questions which are not answered by this document or the websites provided here, feel free to contact:

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