Academy of Fine Arts Vienna – Institute for Art and Architecture
Curriculum Commission for Architecture

Curriculum of the Master's Program in Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna **(MArch)**

Table of Contents

Art. 1 Legal foundation and scope of application 2

Art. 2 Qualifications 2

Art. 3 Academic degree 4

Art. 4 Duration and course of studies 4

Art. 5 Types of courses 4

Art. 6 Language of instruction 5

Art. 7 Curriculum diagram 5

Art. 8 Examination rules 6

Art. 9 Transfer provisions 6

Art. 10 Implementation 7

Art. 1 Legal foundations and scope of application

The curriculum is based on the University Act 2002, Federal Law Gazette 1 no. 120/2202 (Universitätsgesetz, UG 2002). This document defines the structure and contents of the Master's Program in architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. The objectives of this engineering-focused program of architecture are based on the qualifications outlined in Art. 2.

Art. 2 Qualifications

Architecture

Training in architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna has always focused on teaching reflective, intellectual, design and experimental positions. The program is addressed to students with excellent capabilities which have to be proven in entry exams. To be admitted to the program, students must furnish proof of having completed a bachelor's program in architecture or equivalent specialization.

Architecture is defined as a combination of reflection and production. Both are equivalent tools, materials and topics of architecture.

Architecture is considered as a multi-faceted profession which manifests itself in a variety of ways and at various scales. It is a cultural, social and political profession capable of co-determining and changing society.

Program

The program teaches ways and means of dealing with technical and structural knowledge from an experimental and creative angle with a critical approach to methods. This is based on projects and studies for developing three-dimensional programs, spaces, technologies and constructions – from technical details to shapes of constructions and urban planning, which are assessed for their ecological and historical as well as theoretical qualities in the context of geographies, landscapes and cities. The notion of architecture may refer to buildings, virtual constructions or organizational principles. In addition to this, students of architecture are asked to avail themselves of the multidisciplinary environment *(Fine Arts, Art and Cultural Studies, Natural Sciences and Technology in the Arts, Conservation and Restoration, Education in the Arts*) of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

The program applies the principle of research-guided teaching and thus contributes to current questions. These are defined and developed within five platforms, which also represent the essential notion of architecture as is taught at the Academy. Accordingly, students acquire skills via five specialized platforms. In the course of the Master's Program, they may select one of the five platforms as a focus of in-depth coursework.

Platforms

1. - ANALOGUE PRODUCTION, DIGITAL PRODUCTION
2. - CONSTRUCTION, MATERIAL, TECHNOLOGY
3. - ECOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY, CONSERVATION
4. - HISTORY, THEORY AND CRITICISM
5. - GEOGRAPHY, LANDSCAPES, CITIES

Teaching

The platforms provide a structure for the contents of the curriculum as well as for the faculty of the institute. They are forums for the development and transfer of knowledge; they create links between scientific and artistic investigations. Platforms function separately and independently of one another; they also overlap and comment on one another.
The core of architectural studies is the work on design projects. Design work requires and promotes reflection as well as the superposition and synthesis of the fields of knowledge brought together from the individual platforms.

The Master's Program in Architecture fosters open, research-based teaching. After an advanced introductory phase, students are largely free to select the focus of their curriculum. They are offered a choice between project and research focuses within the five platforms. They may concentrate on the topics of one platform or focus on a different platform each semester.

In the course of the program, the focus will gradually shift from learning the tools of the profession to actively using them in research. Students in the Master's Program are expected to write individual and research-based papers. They will formulate a thesis statement. At the core of their education is the exchange with other disciplines on issues from related fields. Such exchange takes place on two levels:

a) Within institute-wide events and formats, such as workshops, lecture series, publications and excursions, students from different years meet and discuss ideas and works across platforms.
b) Within the Academy of Fine Arts, a unique environment for interdisciplinary practice is offered. The architecture curriculum is geared to utilizing the opportunities offered through electives and project collaborations with other programs at the Academy. The curriculum for the Master's Program requires students to enroll in at least one elective course outside the Institute of Architecture.
c) There is an option of undertaking a semester project of the Master's Program in Architecture at an institute of the Academy of Fine Arts other than the Institute of Architecture if the project addresses topics relevant to other discipline or related fields. However, the option has to be discussed with and approved by the Curriculum Commission in advance.

The Master's Program in Architecture reflects an engagement with the social, economic, political, cultural, artistic and technological forces which shape society today. In keeping with the general decision taken by the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna to promoting gender mainstreaming, all programs explicitly address students interested in developing and dealing with gender-relevant topics. Conditions of study are based on the non-discrimination policy of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, ensuring that there are no disadvantages for students due to their special needs or on account of their age, gender, state of health or religion.

Job prospects

Graduates of the Master's Program in Architecture have largely defined the focuses of their studies themselves. They are accustomed to open and research-based work. They formulate projects and fields of activity in architecture. They consider architecture as a cultural, social and political tool capable of

determining our society and effecting fundamental change. Based on sound training in working on architectural problems, they have the skills required for the assessment and analysis of architecture. Completion of the Master Program in Architecture enables and entitles students to:
- work as an architect
- The Master is a recognized prerequisite to set up an independent practice in architecture and urban planning.
- apply for admission to a doctoral program.

Art. 3 Academic degree

The Master's Program in Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna allows for specializations in the fields of knowledge reflected by the five platforms. The Master's Program in Architecture is completed upon graduation as a Master of Architecture with a focus (major) in:

- ANALOGUE PRODUCTION, DIGITAL PRODUCTION
- CONSTRUCTION, MATERIAL, TECHNOLOGY
- ECOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY, CONSERVATION
- HISTORY, THEORY, CRITICISM
- GEOGRAPHIES, LANDSCAPES, CITIES

The academic degree conferred is Master of Architecture (MArch).

The specialization is added to the degree in brackets:

Master of Architecture (with a major in Analogue Production, Digital Production)
Master of Architecture (with a major in Construction, Material, Technology)
Master of Architecture (with a major in Ecology, Sustainability, Conservation)
Master of Architecture (with a major in History, Theory and Criticism)
Master of Architecture (with a major in Geography, Landscapes and Cities)

Art. 4 Duration and course of studies

Completion of the four semester Master's Program in Architecture requires 120 ECTS credits. The Master's Program in Architecture is characterized by a project-based structure. The first semester is an advanced introductory phase familiarizing students with all five platforms. In the following three semesters, the fields of knowledge and potentials pertaining to the five platforms are developed and discussed in detail. In the second, third and fourth semesters, students may choose the platform in which they wish to pursue their design projects.

Art. 5 Types of courses

Students must register for all classes they attend and want to complete via the Campus Online System. Deadlines for registration are determined prior to the beginning of the semester.

(1) Project (P)
The design project is at the core of the curriculum. In the course of a project, students learn to combine, review and assess acquired knowledge and developed ideas. The design project is taught in small groups of approximately 12 students each. Intensive one-on-one tutoring allows for responding to students' individual capacities and ideas. Team teaching is encouraged as it confronts students and teachers with different views, incites them to think about variations and alternatives, and encourages them to take a position. In-progress projects are continuously reviewed and assessed in dialogue with the teachers and external guest critics. Together with the corresponding project lecture courses, the design projects constitute modules that can only be completed as a whole. Usually, the expected work load is equivalent to nine ECTS credits.

(2) Project lectures (PV)
Project lectures are thematically related with design projects and deepen knowledge concerning the issues and skills relevant to the specific project. Together with the projects, these courses constitute a module and a pass-grade that can only be obtained for the whole module. Depending on the project context, the expected work load for students is equivalent to two or three ECTS credits.

(3) Lecture courses (V)
Lecture courses familiarize students with the theoretical foundation and methods of architecture. Supporting teaching materials are made available by the lecturers. Students are graded on the basis of written and/or oral examinations on the subject matter. The expected work load is equivalent to three ECTS credits.

(4) Seminars (S)
Seminars aim at deepening students' understanding of the subject via presentations. Students actively participate in the course through discussions, as well as written assignments and visual and oral presentations. Seminars also introduce students to research methodologies. The expected work load for students is equivalent to three ECTS credits.

(5) Excursions (EX)
Field trips are class excursions taking place outside school. They aim at illustrating the contents of courses in real-life contexts. The expected work load for students is equivalent to three ECTS credits.

Non-degree students and students who have not passed the entrance examination (concurrent enrollment) are only admitted to classes of type (V) and (S).

Art. 6 Language of instruction

Instruction may be in German or in English. For this reason, a good command of English is recommended in addition to the proficiency of German, which is required by law.

Art. 7 Curriculum diagram

Curriculum diagram 1 shows the structure of the curriculum within the five platforms, whereas curriculum diagram 2 specifies the courses according to each semester and the corresponding ECTS credits.

Art. 8 Examination rules

(1) Admission to the Master's Program in Architecture requires completion of a Bachelor's Program in Architecture. Admission is also possible for graduates of bachelor, master or diploma programs in related technical or artistic-scientific fields if these are equivalent in scope to the Bachelor's Program in Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Equivalence is determined by the person in charge of legal issues concerning studies.

(2) Entrance examination for the Master's Program in Architecture
The entrance examination for the Master's Program in Architecture serves to determine if the prospective student is suited for the program. The entrance examination is held once a year prior to the beginning of the academic year and seeks to assess prospective students of their creative and intellectual aptitude for the architecture program. It is held by a board of examiners and consists of two parts:

- Submission of a portfolio, a letter of motivation and two letters of recommendation
- Completion of assignments within a defined period
- Personal interview (hearing) with the board of examiners.

To qualify for the personal interview, candidates must have passed the first part of the exam.
For graduates of the Bachelor's Program in Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, the entrance examination consists of the personal interview with the board of examiners only.
Students are recommended to undertake a practice-oriented, realistic training in the form of a three-months internship prior to applying for admission to the Master's Program in Architecture.

(3) Courses:
The examinations for lecture courses (V) and project lectures (PV), seminars (S) and excursions (EX) may cover the entire contents of the courses and may be in written and/or oral form. Classes are subject to continuous review and assessment of progress by teachers. The examination mode and the conditions are determined by teachers at the beginning of the semester. Students have to register for exams via the Campus Online System and will be assessed and graded once a deadline for possible de-registration has expired.

(4) Modules:
Each module consists of a project (P) and several project seminars (PS). The Master's program comprises 3 modules. For successful completion of the entire module, pass grades for all individual parts are required within one semester.

(5) Master thesis and completion of the Master's Program:
Completion of the Master's Program in Architecture requires the following:

a) Completing all compulsory courses and obtaining the related ECTS credits
b) A Master's thesis project, which consists of a design project and work documentation, is presented and assessed in a thesis defense session.

The defense session is an oral examination before a board of examiners. The board of examiners may be composed of in-house and external examiners. The defense consists of the presentation of a Master's thesis and related documentation, and serves as proof of the overall skills and knowledge acquired during the program. The Master's thesis and documentation reflect the creative, intellectual and critical aptitude of students and their ability to work independently.

The final certificate will include the grade of the Master's thesis as well as the project title, and the grades of each of the five platforms based on the total sum of all classes, weighted according to their ECTS credits.

(6) Credit transfers
Courses completed under what has so far been the curriculum of the diploma program will be credited if they largely conform to the respective Master's Program classes in contents and scope.

Art. 9 Implementation

This curriculum for the Master's Program in Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna is effective as per 1. October 2008.

Curriculum Diagram 1 - Master in Architecture (MArch) at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

28.05.2008	SUBJECT	TYPE	ECTS	ECTS SUM
1. Semester	DESIGN PROJECT	P	9	MODULE
	DESIGN SEMINAR	S	3	MODULE
	ANALOGUE, DIGITAL PRODUCTION	V	3	
	CONSTRUCTION, MATERIAL, TECHNOLOGY	V	3	
	ECOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY, CONSERVATION	V	3	
	HISTORY, THEORY, CRITICISM	V	3	
	GEOGRAPHY, LANDSCAPES, CITIES	V	3	
	FREE ELECTIVE**		3	
		TOTAL		30
2. Semester	DESIGN PROJECT	P	9	MODULE
	DESIGN SEMINAR	S	3	MODULE
	ANALOGUE, DIGITAL PRODUCTION	S	3	
	CONSTRUCTION, MATERIAL, TECHNOLOGY	S	3	
	GEOGRAPHY, LANDSCAPES, CITIES	S	3	
	ECOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY, CONSERVATION	S	3	
	HISTORY, THEORY, CRITICISM	S	3	
	FREE ELECTIVE**		3	
		TOTAL		30
3. Semester	DESIGN PROJECT	P	9	MODULE
	DESIGN SEMINAR	S	3	MODULE
	ANALOGUE, DIGITAL PRODUCTION	S	3	
	CONSTRUCTION, MATERIAL, TECHNOLOGY	S	3	
	GEOGRAPHY, LANDSCAPES, CITIES	S	3	
	ECOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY, CONSERVATION	S	3	
	THESIS SEMINAR	S	3	
	FREE ELECTIVE**		3	
		TOTAL		30
4. Semester	THESIS PROJECT*		21	
	THESIS DOCUMENTATION*	S	6	
	FREE ELECTIVE**		3	
		TOTAL		30
All Semesters				
	DESIGN PROJECT		54	
	DESIGN SEMINAR		9	
	ANALOGUE, DIGITAL PRODUCTION		9	
	CONSTRUCTION, MATERIAL, TECHNOLOGY		9	
	ECOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY, CONSERVATION		9	
	HISTORY, THEORY, CRITICISM		9	
	GEOGRAPHY, LANDSCAPES, CITIES		9	
	FREE ELECTIVES		12	
				120
	* The choice of the Platform in which the thesis, as well as the 3rd term studio project are taken, determine the major of the student's Masters Degree. In order to major the 3rd and 4th term studio need to be taken from the same Platform.			
	** At least one free elective course is to be taken at another department than the Institute for Art and Architecture			

Curriculum Diagram 2 - Master in Architecture (MArch) at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

28.05.2008	SUBJECT	TYPE	CONTACT HOURS / WEEK	ECTS	ECTS SUM
1. Semester	DESIGN PROJECT	P	12	9	
	DESIGN SEMINAR	PS	2	3	
	ADVANCED INTRODUCTION TO ANALOGUE DIGITAL PRODUCTION	V	2	3	
	ADVANCED INTRODUCTION TO CONSTRUCTION, MATERIAL, TECHNOLOGY	V	2	3	
	ADVANCED INTRODUCTION TO ECOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY, CONSERVATION	V	2	3	
	ADVANCED INTRODUCTION TO HISTORY, THEORY, CRITICISM	V	2	3	
	ADVANCED INTRODUCTION TO GEOGRAPHY, LANDSCAPES, CITIES	V	2	3	
	FREE ELECTIVE**		2	3	
		TOTAL	26		30
2. Semester	DESIGN PROJECT	P	12	9	
	DESIGN SEMINAR	PS	2	3	
	PARAMETRIC MODELING AND MATERIAL FABRICATION	S	2	3	
	PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE I (BLDG PROCESSES/LAW)	S	2	3	
	TOPOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY	S	2	3	
	WELL TEMPERED ENVIRONMENTS	S	2	3	
	CONTEMPORARY DEBATES ON ARCHITECTURAL THEORY	S	2	3	
	FREE ELECTIVE**		2	3	
		TOTAL	26		30
3. Semester	DESIGN PROJECT	P	12	9	
	DESIGN SEMINAR	PS	2	3	
	ALGORITHMS IN ARCHITECTURE	S	2	3	
	PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE II	S	2	3	
	CITIES, GROWTH, POLITICS AND POWER	S	2	3	
	LANDSCAPE URBANISM	S	2	3	
	THESIS SEMINAR	S	2	3	
	FREE ELECTIVE**	S	2	3	
		TOTAL	26		30
4. Semester	THESIS PROJECT*	P		21	
	THESIS DOCUMENTATION*	S	2	6	
	FREE ELECTIVE**		2	3	
		TOTAL	4		30
All Semesters					
	DESIGN PROJECT			54	
	DESIGN SEMINAR			9	
	ANALOGUE, DIGITAL PRODUCTION			9	
	CONSTRUCTION, MATERIAL, TECHNOLOGY			9	
	ECOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY, CONSERVATION			9	
	HISTORY, THEORY, CRITICISM			9	
	GEOGRAPHY, LANDSCAPES, CITIES			9	
	FREE ELECTIVES			12	
		TOTAL	82		120

* The choice of the Platform in which the thesis, as well as the 3rd term studio project are taken, determine the major of the student's Masters Degree. In order to major the 3rd and 4th term studio need to be taken from the same Platform.

** At least one free elective course is to be taken at another department than the Institute for Art and Architecture

Master in Architecture (MArch), Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
Courses and Teaching Goals

	SUBJECT	TYPE	CONTACT HOURS/	ECTS	ECTS SUM
1. Semester	DESIGN PROJECT	P	12	9	
	The design studio provides a framework for a particular design project, defined within one of the five platforms. Students learn to synthesize and channel the knowledge acquired in lecture and seminar courses into an architectural position and design proposal.				
	DESIGN SEMINAR	S	2	3	
	The seminar is integrated into the Design Project and provides a theoretical framework. It allows for critical reflection on design methodologies and the production process.				
	ADVANCED INTRODUCTION TO ANALOGUE PRODUCTION, DIGITAL PRODUCTION	V	2	3	
	The course familiarizes students with state-of-the-art modeling applications, advanced animation and simulation techniques, as well as new tracking technologies and fabrication methods. The fluid transition from one software application to another is the central concern.				
	ADVANCED INTRODUCTION TO GEOGRAPHY, LANDSCAPES, CITIES	V	2	3	
	The lecture course addresses issues of contemporary debates in the field of urbanism, landscape and geography. It gives students insights into the layered and relational complexity of urban systems or other ecosystems.				
	ADVANCED INTRODUCTION TO CONSTRUCTION, MATERIAL, TECHNOLOGY	V	2	3	
	This course provides students with in-depth contemporary knowledge of construction, material and technology. The course takes on the format of hands-on project workshops in which students work the materials and or develop own prototypes.				
	ADVANCED INTRODUCTION TO ECOLOGY, SUSTAINABILITY, CONSERVATION	V	2	3	
	The lecture course addresses pressing questions regarding ecology and the environment in face of declining natural resources. It surveys the broad range of issues intertwined with the issue of sustainability, from energy to water and food supply, from ideas of economic growth to the distribution of wealth.				
	ADVANCED INTRODUCTION TO HISTORY, THEORY, CRITICISM	V	2	3	
	The course provides an understanding for theories of history and their relation to contemporary discourse. It reflects on contemporary practice through theories of history in architecture and other disciplines.				
	FREE ELECTIVE		2	3	
	At least one of the free electives within the Master program is required to be taken at an institute other than the Institute for Art and Architecture.				
		TOTAL			30
2. Semester	DESIGN PROJECT	P	12	9	
	The design studio provides a framework for a particular design project, defined within one of the five platforms. Students learn to synthesize and channel the knowledge acquired in lecture and seminar courses into an architectural position and design proposal.				
	DESIGN SEMINAR	S	2	3	
	The seminar is integrated into the Design Project and provides a theoretical framework. It allows for critical reflection on design methodologies and the production process.				
	PARAMETRIC MODELING AND DIGITAL FABRICATION	S	2	3	
	The course explores parametric and associative modeling techniques as well as digital fabrication. Students experience the full cycle from design to fabrication involving numeric-controlled instruments and rapid prototyping with an emphasis on analogue-digital conversions.				
	PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE I (BLDG PROCESSES/LAW)	S	2	3	
	This course initiates students in professional practice. The responsibilities attached to the erecting or adjustment of our built environment are explored, as well as the processes and administrative hurdles to building.				
	TOPOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY	S	2	3	
	The course discusses cartography and mapping as a medium for understanding broad, societal patterns and forms of organization. It differentiates between intensive and extensive cartography and provides an insight into topology. It addresses issues related to topography and city planning.				

	WELL-TEMPERED ENVIRONMENTS	S	2	3	
	The course introduces historical and contemporary ideas of bioclimatic architecture. The relation of tempered environments to technology and scales of environmental management in architecture and urban design will be examined.				
	CONTEMPORARY DEBATES ON ARCHITECTURAL THEORY	S	2	3	
	The seminar discusses selected topics of contemporary architectural theory. It questions the relevance of contemporary archtiectural production within the broad field of theory.				
	FREE ELECTIVE		2	3	
		TOTAL			30
3. Semester	DESIGN PROJECT	P	12	9	
	The design studio provides a framework for a particular design project, defined within one of the five platforms. Students learn to synthesize and channel the knowledge acquired in lecture and seminar courses into an architectural position and design proposal.				
	DESIGN SEMINAR	S	2	3	
	The seminar is integrated into the Design Project and provides a theoretical framework. It allows for critical reflection on design methodologies and the production process.				
	ALGORITHMS IN ARCHITECTURE	S	2	3	
	The course explores algorithms and scripting for solving or optimizing complex design problems, as well as transcending factory limitations of current 3D CAD software via customizing procedures and applications.				
	PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE II	S	2	3	
	The course develops students' understanding of professional practice. The legal implications attached to building are explored. Recent legal cases and court decisions are probed and explained. The student is made familiar with best practices in architecture, traps to avoid, and possible methods of protection in case of litigation.				
	CITIES, GROWTH, POLITICS AND POWER	S	2	3	
	The course provides an understanding of the multiple forces at play in shaping and producing our built environment. It describes the impact of social and political structures and decision-making processes on the development of cities, and vice versa: the effects of buildings and urban form on society and culture.				
	LANDSCAPE URBANISM	S	2	3	
	The course addresses conditions at the fringe of metropolitan areas, where the amalgam of landscape, housing, industry and infrastructure exceed the former ideas of the city. Landscape becomes an organizational device for the urban territory.				
	THESIS SEMINAR	S	2	3	
	The seminar aims to advance students' capacities in constructing and articulating a hypothesis and an intellectual framework for their project. The seminar supports students' preparations of their thesis proposals. Students will develop the topic of their thesis/diploma and elaborate their focal point.				
	FREE ELECTIVE		2	3	
		TOTAL			30
4. Semester	THESIS PROJECT*	P	6	21	
	This is the final project students are encouraged to develop based on the intellectual framework they have established within the proseminar in order to reach their Master degree.				
	THESIS DOCUMENTATION*	S	2	6	
	This course tutors students in synthesizing and concluding their thesis project and turning it into a coherent written and graphic document.				
	FREE ELECTIVE	S	2	3	
		TOTAL			30
All Semesters		TOTAL			120
	* The choice of the Platform in which the thesis, as well as the 3rd term studio project are taken, determine the major of the student's Masters Degree. In order to major the 3rd and 4th term studio need to be taken from the same Platform.				

28.02.2011 prepared by Stefan Gruber