

PORTFOLIO GUIDE

IIT ARCHITECTURE
CHICAGO

Of all the materials required to assemble an application packet for the graduate programs at IIT College of Architecture, the portfolio is probably the most challenging. Unquestionably, the portfolio carries out-sized importance in the evaluation process and is a significant aspect in the review process. The College does not have specific requirements for the material presented but this guide offers a few suggestions to assist with the creation of your portfolio and format.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

The College of Architecture does not set a limit to the number of pages allowed, however, 15 to 30 pages are suggested. The most successful portfolios are clear, concise, carefully organized, and graphically compelling. Designing the portfolio demonstrates critical working skills and we will consider the portfolio as an object as well as a showcase for your interests and abilities. Portfolio dimensions should not exceed 8.5 by 11 inches (or A4 formats). Portfolios may be hard or soft bound but should not be boxed in folio style. Pages should be securely bound and open without intricate unfolding processes. Please note that elaborately fabricated portfolios featuring hinges, grommets, or rigid boxes are usually disassembled and placed in manila folders to facilitate viewing.

Reproductions of images or drawings should be in high resolution and neatly composed on the page. Labels and captions should be clear and legible. Do not include irreplaceable originals. Applicants who are denied or decline acceptance can have portfolios returned if a self-addressed stamped envelope is included; however, we do not guarantee the return of portfolios. Authorship of each drawing, image or project must be clearly indicated. Your role in any group or collaborative work must be clearly described.

Text should be held to a minimum. Please be sure to proofread whatever text is included. Careless text editing has a negative impact during the committee's reviews.

FULL PROGRAMS (M. ARCH, MLA & M. ARCH/MLA)

For applicants to the three year programs, the portfolio is a very important part of the application packet and should offer the admission committee a view of your aptitude for design work. For those applicants coming from allied fields, the challenge will be to demonstrate that your design ability and work skills are adequate to advanced architectural studies. For those students coming from fields that are not architecture, landscape architecture or design related the work shown should demonstrate an aptitude for the unique way of engaging in design. Examples of work showing ability in drawing or graphics is helpful. Work from other disciplines should certainly be included, especially for those candidates applying from non-design fields. Previous successful portfolios have included drawing, watercolors, sculpture, graphic design, photography and creative writing.

ADVANCED STANDING PROGRAMS (M. ARCH, MLA & M. ARCH/MLA), MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ARCHITECTURE & PHD IN ARCHITECTURE

For applicants with undergraduate degrees in architecture or landscape architecture, the portfolio is the single most important component of your application. While the committee takes the entire file contents into consideration, the portfolio offers the clearest insight into an applicant's range of work, skill sets, overall design abilities, level of technical mastery, architectural acculturation, and intellectual engagement. The portfolio should be assembled with care and should offer a view of the full range of abilities and talents. Project selection should be heavily skewed towards large-scale comprehensive design projects developed across several scales. Mastery of structural design, familiarity with advanced building technologies, thorough knowledge of building practices, urban planning and readiness to conduct research should be clearly communicated. The graphic qualities of the portfolio are especially critical. The PhD Program requires prospective students to submit a portfolio with three samples of written work including graduate school essays and/or publications, and (if applicable) three samples of research-based design work.

REVIEW PROCESS

It is important to understand the review process. Once all the application materials have been received by the College, the entire file is sent to the graduate admissions committee. Committee members are all senior faculty, and are directly involved in teaching graduate students. Each file is reviewed by several members of the committee before the admissions decision is made. The aim of the admission committee is to 1) determine whether the candidate is capable of advanced academic work, 2) determine whether the candidate would make for a good fit with our program's strengths, 3) assemble a strong class from the applicant pool and 4) determine candidacy for first-year scholarships.

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