

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE (MARCH) DEGREE

The program leading to the MArch degree is accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), <https://naab.org>.

Program Learning Outcomes for the MArch Degree

Upon completing the MArch degree, students will be able to:

1. Innovate the knowledge and practice of architecture through advanced critical thinking, experimentation, and research.
2. Develop or augment a comprehensive knowledge of the technical aspects of design and construction including an understanding of their impact on design and the environment at a level commensurate with advanced study.
3. Develop a comprehensive knowledge of diverse, advanced building technologies and their application to the design, construction, and operation of buildings, including environmental, material, structural, and mechanical systems, using leading computer applications and tools.
4. Develop or augment a comprehensive understanding of architectural practice and foster the development of innovative forms of practice at a level commensurate with advanced study.

Requirements for the MArch Degree

The MArch degree can be either a thesis or a non-thesis master's degree depending on the option the student pursues. For general university requirements for thesis master's degrees, please see [Thesis Master's Degrees \(https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-thesis-masters-degrees/\)](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-thesis-masters-degrees/). For general university requirements for non-thesis master's degrees, please see [Non-Thesis Master's Degrees \(https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-non-thesis-masters-degrees/\)](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-non-thesis-masters-degrees/). For additional requirements, regulations, and procedures for all graduate programs, please see [All Graduate Students \(https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/\)](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/). Students pursuing the MArch degree programs must complete:

- A minimum of 93 credit hours or 131 credit hours, depending on option pursued, to satisfy degree requirements.
- A minimum of 30 credit hours of graduate-level study (graduate semester credit hours, coursework at the 500-level or above).
- A minimum of 24 graduate semester credit hours must be taken at Rice University.
- For the Non-Thesis MArch degree program options, a minimum of 24 graduate semester credit hours must be taken in standard or traditional courses (with a course type of lecture, seminar, laboratory, lecture/laboratory).
- A minimum residency enrollment of one fall or spring semester of full-time graduate study at Rice University.
- A maximum of 2 courses (6 graduate semester credit hours) from transfer credit. For additional departmental guidelines regarding transfer credit, see the [Policies](#) (p. 4) tab.
- The requirements for one degree program option (see below for options). The MArch degree program offers two options:

- [Option 1 \(Thesis or Non-Thesis\)](#) (p. 2), *or*
- [Option 2 \(Thesis or Non-Thesis\)](#) (p. 3).

- A minimum overall GPA of 2.67 or higher in all Rice coursework.
- A minimum program GPA of 3.00 or higher in all Rice coursework that satisfies requirements for the thesis master's degree or the non-thesis master's degree with a minimum grade of B- (2.67 grade points) in each course.

The Master of Architecture (MArch) degree program understands architecture to be a generalist practice, while encouraging each student's freedom to forge a specific trajectory within this generalist milieu. We prepare students to engage an ever more ambiguous world—one that can no longer simply be flattened by such binaries as local and global, quantity and quality, mind and nature, form and function, or standards and exceptions. The challenge we pose to our students is to transgress the obsolescence of opposing values and to navigate the tricky waters of a world no longer organized around presupposed notions of solidity, permanence, rootedness, centrality, protection, and identity. Our program is the very place where visions of the future are tested and where students are asked to understand the world's complexity in order to focus on the tangible, the legible, and the relevant.

Individuals who possess a Bachelor's degree in any discipline can apply to the MArch degree program. Our curriculum offers a set of core courses (in Design, History and Theory, Technology, and Practice) and many free electives, both in the School of Architecture and across campus. In studio courses, strong emphasis is given to the very means by which architecture is able to change the world. The advanced option studios engage students in focused research methods, critical thinking, and the integration of other fields of knowledge to articulate an architectural project through a range of subjects (urbanism, climate, culture, history/theory, social equity, material and technology). In their final thesis semester, students are asked to engage the world through architectural imagination and a precise understanding of historical, political, economic, and physical dimensions, which can together define a better future.

The MArch degree program is accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) and qualifies graduates to take the state professional licensing exams after completing the required internship in an architectural office.

Programs of Study

There are two program options at the Master of Architecture (MArch) level: Option 1 and Option 2. They differ according to the Bachelor's degree received prior to entering the graduate program. MArch students in Options 1 and 2 complete the degree requirements by either submitting a thesis or by taking alternative coursework. Thesis students are required to take Design Thesis Studio (ARCH 703, 10 credit hours) and Written Thesis (ARCH 729, 3 credit hours). Students who pursue the non-thesis MArch degree are required to take the Architectural Problems: Studio (ARCH 601, 10 credit hours) in lieu of the thesis studio and an additional elective (worth 3 credit hours) in lieu of the written thesis course. All students are required to enroll in Thesis Proposal (ARCH 701), even if they pursue the non-thesis degree program (Option 1 or 2).

The courses listed below satisfy the requirements for this degree program. In certain instances, courses not on this official list may be substituted upon approval of the program's academic advisor or, where applicable, the department or program's Director of Graduate Studies. Course substitutions must be formally applied and entered into Degree Works by the department or program's [Official Certifier \(https://](#)

registrar.rice.edu/facstaff/degreeworks/officialcertifier/). Additionally, these course substitutions must be approved by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Students and their academic advisors should identify and clearly document the courses to be taken.

Option 1 - MArch Degree Program

Offered to individuals who hold a four-year undergraduate degree with a major in a field other than Architecture or a major in Architecture with fewer than five semesters of architectural design studio. Preference for admission is given to those who have completed a balanced education in the arts, sciences, and humanities. A minimum of two semesters of college-level courses in the history of art and/or architecture and one semester of college-level courses in mathematics or physics is recommended. Previous preparation in the visual arts is also desirable, as are courses in philosophy, literature, and economics. In order to graduate, students in this program must complete, in addition to 6 semesters of design studios (70-72 credit hours), a curriculum of 34 credit hours with an additional free electives course load of 27 credit hours.

Summary

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Total Credit Hours Required for the MArch Degree		131

Option 1 Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Core Requirements		
ARCH 501	CORE STUDIO I - DESIGN CULTURE	10
ARCH 502	CORE STUDIO II - CONTEXT	10
ARCH 503	COMPREHENSION I - ASSEMBLY	10
ARCH 504	COMPREHENSION II - URBAN COMPLEX	10
ARCH 507	TECHNOLOGY I	3
ARCH 509	TECHNOLOGY II	3
ARCH 514	TECHNOLOGY III	3
ARCH 516	TECHNOLOGY IV	3
ARCH 525 / HART 525	INTRODUCTION TO ARCHITECTURAL THINKING	3
ARCH 601	ADVANCED OPTION STUDIO - RESEARCH PLATFORMS ¹	10
ARCH 602	ADVANCED OPTION STUDIO - RESEARCH PLATFORMS ¹	10
ARCH 623	PROFESSIONALISM AND MANAGEMENT IN ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE	3
ARCH 645 / HART 645	FOUNDATIONS AND THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE I (1450-1850)	3
ARCH 646 / HART 506	FOUNDATIONS IN THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE II (1850-1950)	3
ARCH 652	FOUNDATIONS IN THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE III (1950-2000)	3
ARCH 655	CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES IN ARCHITECTURE	3

Thesis Requirements		
ARCH 701	THESIS PROPOSAL ^{2,3}	1
ARCH 703	DESIGN THESIS STUDIO ^{2,3}	10
ARCH 729	THESIS WRITTEN DOCUMENT ^{2,3}	3
Elective Requirements		
<i>Students must complete 9 additional courses</i>		27
Total Credit Hours		131

Footnotes and Additional Information

- ¹ Students enrolled in the Paris program (RSAP) will register for ARCH 620 design studio in lieu of ARCH 601 (fall) or ARCH 602 (spring).
- ² All students are required to take ARCH 701 even if they pursue the non-thesis degree program (Option 1 or 2). Students who pursue the non-thesis MArch degree are required to take ARCH 601 (10 credit hours) in lieu of the thesis studio and alternative coursework (worth 3 credit hours) in lieu of the written thesis course ARCH 729.
- ³ ARCH 701, ARCH 703, and ARCH 729 are taken for a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grade and must be completed with a Satisfactory grade. As S/U courses, they do not apply to the requirement of a minimum grade of B- (2.67) in each required course.

Option 1 Plan-of-Study

Course	Title	Credit Hours
1st Semester		
ARCH 501	CORE STUDIO I - DESIGN CULTURE	10
ARCH 507	TECHNOLOGY I	3
ARCH 525 / HART 525	INTRODUCTION TO ARCHITECTURAL THINKING	3
Elective one	Elective one	3
Credit Hours		19
2nd Semester		
ARCH 502	CORE STUDIO II - CONTEXT	10
ARCH 509	TECHNOLOGY II	3
ARCH 645 / HART 645	FOUNDATIONS AND THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE I (1450-1850)	3
Elective two	Elective two	3
Credit Hours		19
3rd Semester		
ARCH 503	COMPREHENSION I - ASSEMBLY	10
ARCH 514	TECHNOLOGY III	3
ARCH 646 / HART 506	FOUNDATIONS IN THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE II (1850-1950)	3
Elective three	Elective three	3
Credit Hours		19
4th Semester		
ARCH 504	COMPREHENSION II - URBAN COMPLEX	10
ARCH 516	TECHNOLOGY IV	3
ARCH 652	FOUNDATIONS IN THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE III (1950-2000)	3
Elective four	Elective four	3
Credit Hours		19

5th Semester

ARCH 601	ADVANCED OPTION STUDIO - RESEARCH PLATFORMS ¹	10
ARCH 623	PROFESSIONALISM AND MANAGEMENT IN ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE	3
Elective five	Elective five	3
Elective six	Elective six	3
Credit Hours		19

6th Semester

ARCH 602	ADVANCED OPTION STUDIO - RESEARCH PLATFORMS	10
ARCH 655	CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES IN ARCHITECTURE	3
ARCH 701	THESIS PROPOSAL	1
Elective seven	Elective seven	3
Elective eight	Elective eight	3
Credit Hours		20

7th Semester

ARCH 703	DESIGN THESIS STUDIO ^{2,3}	10
ARCH 729	THESIS WRITTEN DOCUMENT ^{2,3}	3
Elective nine	Elective nine	3
Credit Hours		16
Total Credit Hours		131

Footnotes and Additional Information

¹ Students enrolled in the Paris program (RSAP) will register for ARCH 620 design studio in lieu of ARCH 601 (fall) or ARCH 602 (spring).

² All students are required to take ARCH 701 even if they pursue the non-thesis degree program (Option 1 or 2). Students who pursue the non-thesis MArch degree are required to take ARCH 601 (10 credit hours) in lieu of the thesis studio and alternative coursework (worth 3 credit hours) in lieu of the written thesis course ARCH 729.

³ ARCH 701, ARCH 703, and ARCH 729 are taken for a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grade and must be completed with a Satisfactory grade. As S/U courses, they do not apply to the requirement of a minimum grade of B- (2.67) in each required course.

Option 2 - MArch Degree Program

Offered to individuals who hold a four-year undergraduate degree with a major in Architecture. Advanced placement into Option 2 is at the discretion of the admissions committee, but generally preference for admission is given to those who have successfully completed five semesters or more of undergraduate design studio as well as undergraduate courses that are analogous to those given in the first year of Option 1. A minimum of two semesters of college-level courses in the history of art and/or architecture and one semester of college-level courses in mathematics or physics is expected. In order to graduate, students in this program must complete, in addition to 4 semesters of design studios (50-52 credit hours), a curriculum of 31 credit hours with an additional free electives course load of 12 hours.

Summary

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Total Credit Hours Required for the MArch Degree		93

Option 2 Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Core Requirements		
ARCH 503	COMPREHENSION I - ASSEMBLY	10
ARCH 504	COMPREHENSION II - URBAN COMPLEX	10
ARCH 507	TECHNOLOGY I ¹	3
ARCH 509	TECHNOLOGY II ¹	3
ARCH 514	TECHNOLOGY III ¹	3
ARCH 516	TECHNOLOGY IV ¹	3
ARCH 525	INTRODUCTION TO ARCHITECTURAL THINKING	3
ARCH 601	ADVANCED OPTION STUDIO - RESEARCH PLATFORMS ²	10
ARCH 602	ADVANCED OPTION STUDIO - RESEARCH PLATFORMS ²	10
ARCH 623	PROFESSIONALISM AND MANAGEMENT IN ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE	3
<i>Select 2 courses from the following:</i>		6
ARCH 645	FOUNDATIONS AND THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE I (1450-1850)	
ARCH 646 / HART 506	FOUNDATIONS IN THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE II (1850-1950)	
ARCH 652	FOUNDATIONS IN THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE III (1950-2000)	
ARCH 655	CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES IN ARCHITECTURE	3
Thesis Requirements		
ARCH 701	THESIS PROPOSAL	1
ARCH 703	DESIGN THESIS STUDIO ^{3,4}	10
ARCH 729	THESIS WRITTEN DOCUMENT ^{3,4}	3
Elective Requirements		
<i>Students must complete 4 additional courses</i>		12
Total Credit Hours		93

Footnotes and Additional Information

¹ Students who have previously taken courses equivalent to Technology I, II, III, or IV (ARCH 507, ARCH 509, ARCH 514, or ARCH 516) at another institution may instead take electives with permission from the director of graduate studies.

² Students enrolled in the Paris program (RSAP) should register for ARCH 620 design studio in lieu of ARCH 601 (fall) or ARCH 602 (spring).

³ All students are required to take ARCH 701 even if they pursue the non-thesis degree program (option 1 or 2). Students who pursue the non-thesis MArch degree are required to take ARCH 601 (10 credit hours) in lieu of the thesis studio and alternative coursework (worth 3 credit hours) in lieu of the written thesis course ARCH 729.

⁴ ARCH 701, ARCH 703, and ARCH 729 are taken for a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grade and must be completed with a Satisfactory grade. As S/U courses, they do not apply to the requirement of a minimum grade of B- (2.67) in each required course.

Option 2 Plan-of-Study

Course	Title	Credit Hours
1st Semester		
ARCH 503	COMPREHENSION I - ASSEMBLY	10
ARCH 507	TECHNOLOGY I ¹	3
ARCH 525	INTRODUCTION TO ARCHITECTURAL THINKING	3
Elective one	Elective one	3
Credit Hours		19
2nd Semester		
ARCH 504	COMPREHENSION II - URBAN COMPLEX	10
ARCH 509	TECHNOLOGY II ¹	3
History and Theory	History and Theory ⁵	3
Elective two	Elective two	3
Credit Hours		19
3rd Semester		
ARCH 514	TECHNOLOGY III ¹	3
ARCH 601	ADVANCED OPTION STUDIO - RESEARCH PLATFORMS ²	10
ARCH 623	PROFESSIONALISM AND MANAGEMENT IN ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE	3
History and Theory	History and Theory ⁵	3
Credit Hours		19
4th Semester		
ARCH 516	TECHNOLOGY IV ¹	3
ARCH 602	ADVANCED OPTION STUDIO - RESEARCH PLATFORMS ²	10
ARCH 655	CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES IN ARCHITECTURE	3
ARCH 701	THESIS PROPOSAL	1
Elective three	Elective three	3
Credit Hours		20
5th Semester		
ARCH 703	DESIGN THESIS STUDIO ^{3,4}	10
ARCH 729	THESIS WRITTEN DOCUMENT ^{3,4}	3
History and Theory	History and Theory ⁵	3
Elective four	Elective four	3
Credit Hours		16
Total Credit Hours		93

Footnotes and Additional Information

¹ Students who have previously taken courses equivalent to Technology I, II, III, or IV (ARCH 507, ARCH 509, ARCH 514, or ARCH 516) at another institution may instead take electives with permission from the director of graduate studies.

- ² Students enrolled in the Paris program (RSAP) should register for ARCH 620 in lieu of ARCH 601 (fall) or ARCH 602 (spring).
- ³ All students are required to take ARCH 701 even if they pursue the non-thesis degree program (option 1 or 2). Students who pursue the non-thesis MArch degree are required to take ARCH 601 (10 credit hours) in lieu of the thesis studio and alternative coursework (worth 3 credit hours) in lieu of the written thesis course ARCH 729.
- ⁴ ARCH 701, ARCH 703, and ARCH 729 are taken for a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grade and must be completed with a Satisfactory grade. As S/U courses, they do not apply to the requirement of a minimum grade of B- (2.67) in each required course.
- ⁵ Students are required to enroll in ARCH 525 (*the ARCH 525 course serves as a History and Theory I Introduction*), after which students must select two further History and Theory courses from the following options: ARCH 645, ARCH 646, or ARCH 652. The additional credit hours earned from the two History and Theory courses will complete the 93 credit hours required for the MArch degree, Option 2.

Notes for the MArch Degree Program

All courses above (for both Option 1 and 2) must be taken in the sequence and semester prescribed by the School of Architecture and completed with a minimum program GPA of 3.00 in required coursework and a minimum grade of B- (2.67 grade points) in each course.

Policies for the MArch Degree

School of Architecture Graduate Program Handbook

The General Announcements (GA) is the official Rice curriculum. As an additional resource for students, the school of Architecture publishes a graduate program handbook, which can be found here: https://gradhandbooks.rice.edu/2024_25/Architecture_Graduate_Handbook.pdf.

Transfer Credit

For Rice University's policy regarding transfer credit, see [Transfer Credit](https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/#transfer) (<https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-procedures/regulations-procedures-all-degrees/#transfer>). Some departments and programs have additional restrictions on transfer credit. Requests for transfer credit must be approved for Rice equivalency by the appropriate academic department offering the Rice equivalent course (corresponding to the subject code of the course content) and by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS). Students are encouraged to meet with their academic program's advisor when considering transfer credit possibilities.

Departmental Transfer Credit Guidelines

Students pursuing the MArch degree should be aware of the following departmental transfer credit guideline:

- No more than 2 courses (6 credit hours) of transfer credit from U.S. or international universities of similar standing as Rice may apply towards the degree.

Additional Information

For additional information, please see the School of Architecture website: <https://arch.rice.edu/>.

Opportunities for the MArch Degree

Master of Architecture (MArch) Thesis Requirement

Thesis is when students build upward and outward from what they've learned over the years, giving back to the school by providing new disciplinary insights and knowledge. Our students discover and invent new territories within architectural and urban paradigms. All MArch degree candidates are required to propose an independent thesis, articulating an ambition, and envisioning its architectural specificity. Students develop their individual thesis proposals during their penultimate semester. Students in Options 1 and 2 complete the degree requirements by either submitting a thesis or by taking alternative coursework. Thesis design evolves from the honing of that proposal and continues through the final semester, under the guidance of an individual advisor. Thesis projects are reviewed publicly by a panel of invited guest scholars and practitioners.

RSA Paris

MArch degree (Option 1 and Option 2) students may apply to RSAP to complete one semester in Paris: Option 1 students may do so in their fifth or sixth semester, Option 2 in their third or fourth semester. BArch students may apply to RSAP in their final year of study.

Additional Information

For additional information, please see the School of Architecture website: <https://arch.rice.edu/>.