



Study Architecture Well

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with Alan Jones

RIBA 
Architecture.com

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President's Foreword

The world needs architects.

What architects achieve by working with others is integral to the collective success and wellbeing of society. The spaces and places where we all live and work, and how we travel between them, have a significant impact upon our world, and so governments, investors, and other stakeholders realise the need to fully engage with architects.

Addressing the climate emergency, the bio-diversity crisis, post-Grenfell life safety, health and well-being, and a sense of belonging, identity and joy, all need the skills, knowledge and experience of architects, from the strategic start to fine detail delivery and occupation, ensuring the performance promised in design is achieved and can be maintained once built.

Architects draw on a complex body of knowledge to solve problems, balancing risk, opportunity and interdependency. They connect multiple fields of knowledge and cross-disciplinary thinking. Their knowledge is deeper than that of generalists and broader than that of specialists, making them a natural fit to be the 'guardians of the built environment'. Within the academic world where specialism is the norm, the deep generalist nature of architects is beginning to be more appreciated.

This is what makes becoming an architect such a rich educational experience. Indeed, architecture graduates are equipped with many of the attributes identified in Nesta's *Future of Skills* report¹ as most desirable: judgement and decision-making; fluency of ideas; active learning; originality; reasoning; and complex problem-solving. While these are critical in architects' practice, they are also important in many related fields.

Architects' thinking is evolving from what architecture is and looks like to how it performs over time. Ideas, strategies, and proposals are now underpinned by more reasoning and research. To address the sustainability agenda, the focus is understandably switching away from demolition and creation to retrofitting and repurposing buildings, offering richer and more varied possibilities.

In this future, architects become strategic facilitators with a broad understanding of possibilities and risks, generating and making use of data and artificial intelligence. They facilitate engagement and unleash know-how.

Study Architecture Well has been written to support, guide and encourage you into architectural education to ensure that society has a new generation of architects capable of meeting this future.

A valuable and effective education involves significant personal change and development. Because studying architecture² is the route into our regulated profession, the course requirements are defined and demanding, and so the learning environment should ideally be both challenging and supportive. The experience is as much about becoming resilient as it is about acquiring skills, knowledge and behaviours.

The transition from secondary education is testing, which is why this guide focuses not just on doing well but on staying well despite the pressures on mental wellbeing from, for example, fitting in, finding out, personal performance, and finances.

We are all on trajectory of improvement and betterment, not least architectural education itself. The older ways and attitudes are changing in the light of new priorities and feedback from students. Education, research, and practice are collaborating to support and challenge each other. More part-time, earn-as-you-learn and apprenticeships are welcome new routes into our profession.

There is a huge opportunity for you to contribute value for the benefit of society and the profession itself, and this guide will help set you out on that fascinating journey on an even keel.

Society needs enthusiastic, skilled and knowledgeable people from diverse backgrounds and cultures to serve its urgent needs. If you have the ambition to improve the world, I urge you to consider studying architecture, well.

Professor Alan Jones FRIBA FHEA Hon FRIAS Hon AIA Hon RAIC PPRSUA
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Introduction

The purpose of this RIBA guide is to help current and would-be students of architecture in the UK both to do well during their studies and, importantly, to stay well as they cope with the opportunities, stresses and strains of learning. It is a companion to *Practise Architecture Well*, which is aimed at early-career architects.

1 Introduction

| About this guide

The purpose of this RIBA guide is to help current and would-be students of architecture in the UK both to do well during their studies and, importantly, to stay well as they cope with the opportunities, stresses and strains of learning. It is a companion to *Practise Architecture Well*³, which is aimed at early-career architects.

The word 'well' has a number of meanings:

- in a good or satisfactory way
- in a thorough manner
- in good health; free or recovered from illness

When the guide talks about 'studying well', it intends all of them.

The guide focuses on information that has immediate practical use to you as you consider studying and progressing through the study of architecture, and includes advice not just on how to cope but how to actively flourish.

Becoming an architect can be an immensely rewarding career path that opens many doors to a fulfilling life. You have the potential to make a real difference to peoples' lives and improve our environment.

Before then, studying architecture is an extraordinary opportunity. It leads to valuable knowledge, skills, behaviours, life-long friendships, and a load of excitement and fun.

Like everything worthwhile in life, though, it can be challenging.

Celebrating the upside benefits of this wonderful education and subsequent career without confronting its downside risks would be irresponsible and unhelpful to the next generation of professionals.

This guide aims to offer that balance. In writing it, the authors researched the relevant literature and available advice for doing and staying well, consulted key people in the profession, and subjected their work to review.

| The students' voice: the Study Architecture Well survey

While the authors of this guide have been involved in architecture and the education of architecture students for many years, much of its content comes from the students themselves.

This guide builds upon research into the student experience by RIBA President Alan Jones across a number of architecture schools in 2019. As well as interviewing students and engaging with relevant discussion forums, the authors undertook, with the support of the RIBA, the Study Architecture Well survey (SAW survey) in the winter of 2020. It asked architecture students at various stages of their education about their personal experiences of studying architecture.

While the findings should be treated with caution – those who responded did so during the worrying COVID-19 pandemic – enough of them (425) completed the survey to allow us to draw some general conclusions about the pressures experienced when studying architecture and to extract useful hints and tips about coping strategies.

This guide reports on the survey's general findings, zooming in on the personal stories of a few respondents who agreed to be interviewed for publication. You will find their insights in mini-case studies in the text. Their openness, honesty, and commitment to helping to improve life for other students are much appreciated.

Finally, the text contains quotations indicated by coloured text in quotation marks. Having been extracted directly from the research conducted by Alan Jones or the SAW survey, these are, in effect, the voice of architecture students.

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What does it mean to be an architect?

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For example, the London-based practice Hawkins\Brown describe themselves not just as architects but also designers, masterplanners, researchers, space planners, interior designers, collaborators, makers, negotiators, artists, visualisers, and problem-solvers.⁴

The title 'architect' is legally protected

It is against the law to call yourself an architect in the UK unless you have been admitted to the Register of Architects maintained by the Architects Registration Board (ARB).

This allows members of the public more easily to identify people who have received a full architectural education and have been examined and determined to be competent professionals.

The fact that the title is protected by law reflects just how difficult it is to design buildings and how important it is to use people with the right training.

Note that the legal protection extends only to the title and not the function. It is perfectly legal in the UK to sell architectural services without being on the ARB Register, provided you do not call yourself an architect.

It takes huge amounts of knowledge and skill to translate a client's brief into a completed building. That's because, as professionals, architects' work must not only satisfy the client's wishes, secure planning consent and comply with various regulations on time and to budget but also look good and, where possible, add social, environmental and cultural value.

Many of the world's major challenges – population growth, urbanisation, migration, climate change, habitat loss, natural resource depletion, pollution, poor air quality, and social inequality – are mediated in some way by the multi-trillion pound global construction industry. Because they sit right at the heart of it, architects of all kinds have a role to play in tackling them.

With the potential to make a real difference, the work of architects is inspiring and exhilarating in equal measure.

What architects do

Architects combine their creativity with knowledge of architectural history, theory, technology, and professional processes to design spaces and places for clients in collaboration with other built environment professionals.

They help to refine the client's needs and wishes and then champion the design vision through to the end of their professional services contract.

They negotiate the planning system and regulatory landscape on behalf of the client.

They use advanced digital technologies, understand building science, systems and materials, know how buildings stand up, and manage projects on behalf of large teams.

They also have an ethical responsibility to tackle the big global challenges for the common good.



It takes huge amounts of knowledge and skill to translate a client's brief into a completed building.



| The ethical role of the architect⁵

Architects not only uphold the principles and standards that actively improve the world but sign up to a code⁶ to behave truthfully, honourably and with integrity at all times.

Understanding what this means begins with your architectural education and gradually permeates every aspect of your life.

Your attitudes and behaviours are as important during your studies, in both your work and interactions with tutors and fellow students, as they are in your working and professional life.

Once qualified, ethics affect everything: the fees you charge, your impact on the budget, your attitude to risk, your response to the client brief, project procurement, insurance, where products come from, how they are made, how you treat project team partners, the thought you give to the health, safety, wellbeing of future building users, the building's impact on its local community, its cumulative impact on the planet, and even what will happen to your building at the end of its life.

If you're a business owner too, your professional status affects how you conduct your business, comply with the law, and treat your staff.

The majority of architects are in mainstream practice or occupied elsewhere in the industry. Even if you are not in practice – and many registered architects are not – you are still expected to uphold all the ethical standards of a practising architect in every waking moment.

The bar is set high, and for good reason: you're in the service of society because society needs you to serve the common good. For example, society needs architects to ...

Tackle the climate emergency

Your work will directly address the climate emergency. As Alan Jones, RIBA President says, *“Given that the built environment is responsible for around 40% of our carbon footprint, the way we design and deliver, run and maintain buildings must transform if we are to effectively tackle climate change. This is an emergency, and we must all take action, without delay.”*

The RIBA has set the profession and the wider construction industry a target to achieve net zero whole-life carbon emissions for all new and existing buildings by 2030. This will take design creativity, knowledge of cutting-edge technologies and, importantly, fresh thinking.

Design for health, safety and wellbeing

Your work will help the people who use your buildings to stay safe and healthy so that, for example, the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire, which killed 72 people in 2017, is never repeated.

Understanding and complying with health and safety regulations is an integral and absolutely critical part of the design process.

It's not just about life safety either. As a professional, you have a duty to consider how your work might impact on lifestyle diseases and mental wellbeing, too. As Ben Channon, architect and author of *Happy by Design* and founder of the Architects Mental Wellbeing Forum says, *“We now spend more than 80% of our time in buildings, and this can affect our mood both positively and negatively. The quality of the places where we live, work and study therefore impacts our happiness significantly.”*

Transition to a post-pandemic society

As the world-wide vaccination programme gathers pace, your work will have to respond intelligently to the lessons and experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic to heal society.

The 'great reset' will see many temporary arrangements for working from home become permanent, with consequences for the design of homes, transport networks, local neighbourhoods, and workplaces. Politicians might rebuild economies in a way that accounts for social and natural capital, altering the basis for investing in buildings and thus how they are designed.

| The Way Ahead: the RIBA Education and Professional Development Framework

The challenges keep evolving and so, to keep up, architects must keep learning throughout their professional careers.

This process of continual learning and development for chartered architects (i.e. architects who are members of the RIBA) is formalised through the RIBA Education and Professional Development Framework.

As well as providing a clear qualification and career roadmap, it provides assurance to clients and users of buildings that chartered architects have a broad skillset, detailed knowledge in critical subjects, and the necessary documented professional experience to competently undertake their professional role.

Architects Registration Board (ARB) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA): what's the difference?

It is important to understand the difference between these two important professional bodies.

The ARB

The ARB was set up under the Architects Act 1997 as the independent UK regulator of architects. Anyone who is involved in designing and constructing buildings and describes themselves as an architect must be on their Register – see **What is the Register of Architects?** on page 27. People on the Register are held to minimum professional standards set out in the Architects Code.

The ARB also 'prescribes' (i.e. sets acceptable standards for) architectural qualifications, issues a code of professional conduct and competence, and investigates architects when claims of unacceptable professional conduct or serious professional incompetence are made against them.

The RIBA

The RIBA is a professional body established in 1834 to promote excellence in architecture and the built environment through campaigning and prize schemes.

It offers a chartered membership system that is entirely optional. Membership as an architect allows you to call yourself a 'chartered architect'. As a member, you are held to high standards of conduct as set out in the RIBA Code of Professional Conduct. (If they meet certain minimum criteria, practices can gain chartered status too, and are held to the standards set out in the RIBA Code of Practice.)

Architects choose to join because of the extraordinary range of benefits, services, resources and tools it offers, and because its high reputation around the world means that membership carries significant kudos.

While the two bodies have key roles in architectural education, understanding the difference can be difficult. The ARB is responsible for the standards of education and professional competence and 'prescribes' courses which meet these minimum standards. This is based on a school of architecture demonstrating that its programmes address and meet the set standards.

In contrast, RIBA 'validation' is a mark of quality which is the result of an evidence-based peer-review process which seeks to maintain and improve architectural education.

| Architecture needs you

With the potential to have such a lasting, positive impact on society at all levels, it's easy to see why studying to become an architect appeals to so many.

And yet, the skill, knowledge and behaviours needed to reach these heights do not come easily. Taking on the hopes, dreams and expectations of clients and, by extension, future building users and the wider community, is a daunting responsibility.

However, RIBA Council Member, Maryam Al-Irhayim is confident in the potential of new talent to step up. As she says, *"The next generation of students have the ambition, capability and drive to tackle issues facing society."*⁷

| Why become an architect?

Working as an architect is rarely 'just a job'. More often than not you will develop a passion for it that is deeply motivating and personally fulfilling.

Here are some of the reasons why.

Architecture makes the world a better place

Done well, design improves the quality of human life by facilitating comfortable and safe homes, inspiring educational facilities, productive workplaces, healing hospitals, fun cultural and leisure venues, accessible government offices, and countless other public and private spaces.

Good design not only creates beautiful, inclusive places and spaces that meet pressing client and user needs but also addresses the physical, economic, social and environmental concerns of their local communities.

It helps to ensure that private and public investment of money and finite natural capital results in valuable, sustainable and equitable outcomes, with the potential to play a central role in, for example, mitigating global climate change.

*"Be dissatisfied with the way things are and be determined to contribute to change to something more positive."*⁸

Architecture is endlessly fascinating

Working as an architect means never (or least, rarely!) being bored. Because the core design skills can be applied in many ways, you are not limited in the kinds of project that you might end up working on or, indeed, where they are located. You can work on housing today, offices tomorrow, art galleries the day after, and emergency disaster relief shelters the day after that, either in the UK or abroad, for businesses or charities, governments or billionaires, the family down the road or multinational conglomerates.

Architecture can serve and influence society

The positive contribution of architects is acknowledged by many in society. The knowledge and skills you have and professional standards you maintain are rightly recognised as proof of competence, good citizenship and caring about ethics.

Your voice will be listened to, allowing you to command respect and influence the public debate. This can be very satisfying and motivating, reminding you that you are held in high regard and have good things to offer.

Architecture opens many doors

Even though studying architecture is primarily directed at your eventually becoming an architect, the many skills you acquire – complex problem-solving, analytical thinking, team-working, technical understanding, digital competence, and 3D design – are not only highly transferrable but also much sought after.

Thus, while a strong interest in architecture and design and its capacity to improve the world is the best reason to take the course, you should not worry that the time, effort and expense will be wasted in the unlikely event that that interest subsequently changes direction.

Architects and those who have studied architecture are valued for adjacent roles (sometimes with extra training) in the wider construction industry – project management, construction management, property development, estate management, engineering, manufacturing, planning, surveying, landscape and interior design, and various legal roles from contract management through to dispute resolution, mediation and adjudication.

Their qualification also opens doors into countless roles beyond the construction industry, such as graphic design, illustration, art production, industrial design, product design, set design, game design, research, academia, journalism, film-making, and software development.

Architects have the potential to earn a good living

Although there was considerable variability depending on location and practice size, the 2020 RIBA Jobs Salary Benchmark⁹ found that the median annual salary for Part 1 assistants (i.e. people who have completed 3 years of university study) was just over £21,000, rising to £28,000 for Part 2 assistants (i.e. people who have completed 5 years of study). The median annual salary for architects with less than 5 years' experience was £34,000. The median for registered architects was £45,000.



So, while you have as good a chance of becoming a millionaire as anyone, it is unlikely to be simply because you are an architect.

However, if you are self-employed, a company director, partner or own the practice, you can not only enjoy a salary but also take a dividend from profits and hold a share in the value of your business too. This covers a vast range of types of practice: the median annual salary for partners or directors in firms with over 100 members of staff, it rose to nearly £177,000.

While many architects go on to work for larger practices, there are many who have ambitions to set up in business for themselves. Although it might involve taking a gamble, this has many other attractions from the point of view of lifestyle, freedom to choose the kind of work you do, and, potentially, greater financial rewards.

Regardless of how their professional careers progress, architects' skills and experience mean that they will always be in demand in a whole range of other roles, with the potential to lead to equivalent or better payment. This is not the same as job security, but it should give reassurance that you will probably land on your feet no matter what life throws at you.

| What about the future of the profession?

Like many other professions, the role of the architect is changing. With the delivery of governmental commitments to the environment and health and safety becoming increasingly important, the pressure to specialise has never been greater. Furthermore, under pressure from artificial intelligence, digital technology and advanced manufacturing techniques, some commentators foresee the gradual evolution of the architect's role as tasks traditionally in their ambit are automated.

"The way to think about architecture to prevent its obsolescence is to stress things like lightness, adaptability, suppleness, the ability to think about program change, the ability to think about sudden economic changes and population increases. This kind of adaptability to economic, environmental, political change is really, really critical for the discipline to become important, vibrant and connected to what is happening."¹⁰

The current trend to offsite manufacturing, while still accounting for just a tiny proportion of the sector's overall output, is growing and quoted as evidence of this change.

It certainly has the potential to dramatically affect the relevance of what architects currently do if building

typologies are standardised and commoditised to any significant extent.

At the time of writing, this prospect is still in the distant future. That said, designing for manufacture and assembly (DfMA) is very much with us and an important new area of activity for architects that students would be wise to learn about.

Even if, decades down the line, large parts of the architect's current role are automated, it will almost certainly generate new and as-yet undreamed of tasks requiring precisely the complex problem-solving, adaptability and team-working skills possessed by today's architects.

| The step up to studying architecture

The step up to studying architecture at university is huge. Since the curriculum is broad, there is much to learn and you are under pressure to work hard. Without good time management and organisation, you can easily fall behind. If that happens, coping with the ensuing stress takes mental resilience.

A new style of learning

On top of that, the style of learning will be new to most.

Studying architecture is not simply about absorbing new facts. You must also develop your creative thinking within the context of understanding how buildings stand up, react to their environment, and serve the needs of their users.

Everything is centred on the integrated design studio, where you will be challenged to respond to a series of design projects that increase in complexity as you progress through the course. The design studio is a laboratory of ideas where taught lecture room topics such as history, regulations, and ethics get applied in practical design projects.

Rather than right or wrong answers, there are merely better and worse ways of approaching things. You develop ideas through exploration to the point where your final design can be entirely different from your starting concept.

Taking constructive criticism

If that weren't challenging enough, you must also present your ideas to your fellow students and tutors in a 'review' where you learn to take and respond to constructive feedback. These sessions become more and more formal and open to more people over time.

Reviews elicit excitement, nervousness, pride and fear in equal measure. You will need to manage these emotions to get the most from the experience.

Learning can be stressful

An effective and valuable education challenges, develops and changes students as they progress through the course.

To some, the self-confidence and mental resilience needed to cope with this transformation comes easily, almost as though they were born to it. To others – in truth, most of us – it can seem impossibly out of reach, triggering stress and anxiety as we grapple with uncertainty and soldier on anyway because the course and deadlines demand it.

This stress can be good, motivating you to focus and deliver. However, it can also turn bad. Along with the ordinary stresses of being away from home (perhaps for the first time), being in a new place with new people, and concerns about money, the transition, especially during the first year, can be difficult.

Although the majority of students overcome these difficulties with ease, for some they are more significant.

Like any other university course, and especially along the long path to professional qualification, some students drop out along the way.¹¹

There are many possible reasons for this. For example, the students might calculate that the likely rewards are not worth the investment, or they would rather be studying a different subject, or quite simply that they can't meet the commitment that full-time studying demands.

There could also be systemic causes bound up in the cost, structure, and culture of the courses that make them particularly difficult. These causes reflect wider issues within higher education, which are at least in part addressed by various alternative routes into architecture – see **Chapter 3**.

The start of a life-long journey of learning

The architectural pathway may have defined milestones – acceptance onto a course; graduation; practical experience; post-graduation; and professional qualification – but the learning is never complete.

Indeed, architects must undertake continuous professional development throughout their careers to stay competent and, with the adoption of the RIBA's *The Way Ahead* framework, the process of lifelong learning is embedded more strongly than ever.

This serves to show that you do not somehow arrive at perfect understanding on qualification but actually remain a fellow traveller on a never-ending road to more knowledge.

If qualified architects appear unattainably confident, knowledgeable and savvy to you at the start of your architectural education, it's because they've had the time and opportunity to gain experience, learn, and strengthen their mental resilience.

This should give you the solace of knowing that, however uncertain and uninformed you feel now, you are not alone and things will get better.

For more detail on the design process and the nitty-gritty of architectural education, read Neil Spiller's book *How to Thrive at Architecture School*.

3

The routes to becoming an architect

A full architectural education in the UK, i.e. where you go on to qualify as an architect, currently involves three clearly defined stages known as Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3.

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Most students start the Part 1 aiming eventually to complete the Part 3 and become an architect, but of course you do not have to. There is value in Parts 1 and 2 and even just Part 1 by itself.

- Part 1 leads to an undergraduate degree: usually a BA (Hons) or a BSc (Hons);
- Part 2 is post-graduate study: usually leading to a BArch (Hons), Diploma, or MArch;
- Part 3 is the professional qualification that leads to formal registration as an architect.

Before you can complete your Part 3, you also need 24 months of formally documented practical work experience. One year of this experience is usually acquired between the end of Part 1 and the beginning of Part 2, the other following your Part 2 as you undertake your Part 3.

Note that you need a minimum of 12 months' qualifying work experience after your Part 2.

Thus, the shortest possible path to becoming an architect in the UK is seven years.

Needless to say, you may not wish to speed through. Taking your time gives you a breather from studying and allows you to gain work and life experience, earn some money, build confidence, and explore other options before you finally commit.



Not all qualifications are equal

The route through university to registering as an architect is rather confusing.

Only certain architecture qualifications – those described as 'prescribed' by the ARB – make you eligible to become architect.

In practice, almost all the courses on offer in the UK that lead to qualifications at either Part 1, 2 or 3 are prescribed by the ARB – although it is worth checking with your course provider or the ARB to be sure.

If you have non-prescribed qualifications (awarded in the UK or overseas) or simply many years of relevant experience, it is still possible to register as an architect in the UK. However, you must first pass the ARB-prescribed Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 *Examinations for Equivalence to Prescribed Qualifications*.

Because of the many possible permutations of qualifications around the world and stages of learning, the full eligibility criteria are rather complex. To find out more, go to ARB's website.¹²

| The different paths to qualification

There are different paths through each of the Parts, developed in response to people's differing needs. The two major differentiating factors affecting which route you choose are duration and cost:

- full-time options conclude in less time but cost more;
- part-time options, which include the RIBA Studio Certificate, take longer but are more affordable;
- the apprenticeship route allows you to earn while you learn.

(The only other path is through the APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) system, a formal way for universities to recognise relevant experience acquired previously from other walks of life.)

Part 1	Full-time	Part-time while working	RIBA Studio Certificate while working in an architectural practice	Apprenticeship while working in an architectural practice
Duration	3 years	4 years	4 years	4 years
Cost	£ 27,750 (£ 9,250/year) †	Students pay per module. The fee is commensurate with full-time fees.	£ 10,888 (£ 2,722/year) †	No cost to apprentice
Where you are based	Living in or near university	Living in or near university	Anywhere in the European Economic Area	Near workplace; apprenticeships are only offered by certain practices
Entry requirements	approx. 128-136 UCAS points; portfolio; interview	approx. 128-136 UCAS points; portfolio; interview	Portfolio; interview; working a minimum of 25 hours/week in an architectural practice	A-levels; working in an architectural practice that offers the apprenticeship
Expected workload	30 hours/week	This depends on number of modules being taken.	20 hours/week	The equivalent of one – two day a week
Contact time at university	3 days/week (i.e. full-time)	2 days/week	Up to 8 days/year	1 day/week for 30 weeks/year
Outcome	Architecture BA (Hons); Architecture BSc (Hons); Part 1 qualification	Architecture BA (Hons) or BSc; Part 1 qualification	Part 1 qualification	Architecture BA (Hons); Part 1 qualification

Part 2	Full-time	Hybrid part-time study while working in an architect's practice, where both your paid work and your study count towards your educational qualification	Part-time study	RIBA Studio Certificate while working in an architect's practice a minimum of 25 hours/week	Apprenticeship while working in an architect's practice
Duration	2 years	2 years	3 years	3 years	4 years – (during which you gain Parts 2 and 3)
Cost	£ 18,500 (£ 9,250 /year) †	£ 18,500 (£ 9,250 /year) †	Students pay per module. The fee is commensurate with full-time fees.	£ 8,166 (£ 2,722/year) †	No cost to apprentice
Where you are based	Living in or near university	Near workplace but with access to course provider	Living near university	Anywhere in the European Economic Area	Near workplace; apprenticeships are only offered by certain practices
Entry requirements	Usually, successful completion of Part 1; portfolio; interview; English proficiency (at least IELTS 6.5)	Successful completion of Part 1 with a minimum grade and confirmation of a placement with a partner practice	Successful completion of Part 1 with a minimum grade	Successful completion of Part 1	Successful completion of Part 1 with a minimum grade
Expected workload	30 hours/week	30 hours/week	This depends on number of modules being taken.	15 hours/week	The equivalent of one – two days a week
Contact time at university	2 days/week (i.e. full-time)	3-4 days/week practice and 1-2 day/week at university.	2 days/week	190-200 hours/year + 8-12 half-hour online meetings with teaching staff	1 day/week for 30 weeks/year
Outcome	BArch (Hons); Diploma; MArch; Part 2 qualification	Architecture MArch (Hons); Part 2 qualification	Architecture MArch (Hons); Part 2 qualification	Architecture MArch (Hons); Part 2 qualification	Architecture MArch (Hons); Part 2 qualification; Part 3 qualification

† Although correct at the time of publication, the fees quoted are subject to change and are for British students attending universities in England and Wales only. They are included to give a fair picture of the possible cost of an architectural education. Note that fees for British students studying in Northern Ireland or Scotland are different and will vary. Fees for international students are also different and significantly more expensive. In all instances, apply to individual institutions for up-to-date, accurate details.

It is possible to mix and match paths: if you complete your Part 1 qualification on one track, you can switch to a different track for Part 2.

Note that:

- the 'expected workload' figures in the tables above are formally stipulated and assume that you will work at optimum efficiency and effectiveness.
- the Full-time route is the most popular, which means that it affords you the most choice.
- the Part-time option has a much smaller uptake and is not offered by all institutions. Note that if you are working during it, your work need not be connected to architecture. For example, you can be working at a supermarket if you want.
- the RIBA Studio Certificate is rather like a distance learning option, and is delivered in partnership between the RIBA and Oxford Brookes University.
- On the Hybrid path, the work your employer gives you substitutes for course modules that you would have done at university had you been studying full-time. This is how you can complete it in just two years.
- the Apprenticeship route is relatively new and yet to mature, particularly for Part 1 students, but offers a much more financially accessible route as you will earn as you study, with no fees to be paid by the student.

The blended options – where you earn as you learn – are not just generally less expensive than other paths but are much better suited to people who like to be grounded in the commercial, day-to-day realities of architectural practice. However, you also miss out on the full university experience and the intense relationships that can be forged in the studio.

Of course, while many students are able to proceed through the Parts without any hiatus, many others are not so fortunate. Even if you successfully attain your degree and post-graduate qualifications without hiccup, you may not be quite so lucky when it comes to securing work experience, which of course slows you down.

Apprenticeships

Architecture apprenticeships are relatively new. They combine practical experience in an architectural practice with academic training from a university.

A fifth of an apprentice's contracted hours must be spent on this formal, off-the-job training – see the case study about Laura on page 47.

A major benefit of the scheme is that you earn as you learn, and do not pay tuition fees, making the course more accessible to a far greater diversity of candidates.

There are two architecture degree apprenticeships in the UK:

- Level 6 Architectural Assistant, including Part 1 qualification
- Level 7 Architect, including Part 2 and Part 3 qualifications

To find current apprenticeship opportunities, visit RIBA Jobs¹³ or the Government's *Find an Apprenticeship* platform¹⁴.

For a list of universities providing apprenticeship courses, visit the RIBA website.¹⁵



It is possible to mix and match paths: if you complete your Part 1 qualification on one track, you can switch to a different track for Part 2.



Choosing a university

“When I was choosing architecture, I wish I had been more aware of the different architecture courses that are around.”¹⁶

There are over 50 course providers in the UK and so you are spoilt for choice, although none supports all the path options listed in the tables above. Note also that the apprenticeship, studio certificate and hybrid paths require you to have secured work with an architect’s practice, which means that there are fewer such opportunities.

Each provider has its own particular characteristics, pivoting around where it is based, whether it is focused more on the arts or technology, how politically engaged it is, and how large the intake of students is. Also, some courses offer different specialisms in architecture, and with that, dual accreditation to both the RIBA and another professional institution, for example, the Royal Institution of Town Planners or the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers.

Their reputations are generally reasonably easy to gauge from their websites but if in doubt, attend their open days, visit their end of year shows, attend their public lectures, and ask the staff or admissions officers.

In recent years, universities have become much more aware of issues of wellbeing, equality, diversity, and inclusion, with many investing in equitable measures to ensure that disadvantaged groups are properly supported and to close known attainment gaps. If these issues are a particular concern, make sure you ask staff or admissions officers about what measures they have in place to help.

You can check whether prospective universities ‘take mental health seriously’¹⁷ by visiting the well-being and student support stand at open days, observing the prominence of signs and literature promoting phone lines, counselling, and other services, talking with current students, looking at commentary on social media, and consulting online forums such as Student Room.¹⁸

Most applicants select a university by deciding where they would like to be before investigating what course options are available locally.

Note that schools of architecture can be structured in slightly different ways, which might also affect your choice. Some have a ‘year system’, where the whole year intake works on the same design projects.

Others run a number of semi-independent teaching units within the one year – the ‘unit system’ – and the year’s intake is split up. Project work, while meeting the same criteria, can vary in subject and better reflect the interests of particular students, with the result that they don’t all work on the same project briefs.

Studying in the UK as an international student

The UK is lucky to have a highly respected educational system. This is particularly true of its architectural courses, which have an exceptionally strong reputation internationally.

This attracts a significant number of international students. While the means of application is through the same UCAS process as students from the UK, there are some distinct differences.

Students require an English language proficiency qualification (IELTS or equivalent) with scores that meet the requirements of the universities being applied to. Students will also be required to prove that they have the finances to cover their living expenses as well as their fees.

Students will receive free healthcare while in the UK, however there is an Immigration Health Surcharge (IHR) which must be paid on an annual basis. Evidence of this is required in order to apply for a Tier 4 (General) student visa. The visa application has to be made in no less than three months before study begins.¹⁹

Some international students choose to undertake their entire architectural education at a UK institution. Others only undertake part. For students arriving in the UK to take their Part 2 or 3, in order to practice as an architect, they will be required to take the ARB prescribed exams for the missing Parts. The RIBA offer a short course to help students to prepare for this process.²⁰

| Entry requirements

Academic entry requirements vary from university to university.

In the vast majority of cases, places are offered competitively through the Universities and Colleges Admission System (UCAS) to the best students on the basis of their:

- academic grades (usually expressed as cumulative UCAS points) and
- personal statement (usually communicated through your UCAS application).

Some will also require you to present a portfolio of relevant creative work and/or be interviewed.

Most universities will accept A-Levels, International Baccalaureate, BTEC and HND qualifications or equivalent as a means to achieving the correct UCAS Points.

There is a persistent myth that you need passes in Maths, Physics or Art at A-level. Although some universities will ask for specific subjects, many do not. Check the requirements of the individual courses that you wish to apply to for precise details.

Many institutions have widening participation programmes or scholarships which make the journey onto an architecture course accessible to those who, for many reasons, might otherwise find themselves unable to apply.

Also, there are a number of foundation programmes or step-up programmes for those who find themselves underqualified or uncertain if architecture is the correct route for them. (See **Chapter 10** for further resources.)

Foundation programmes

If you are uncertain about studying architecture or can't readily evidence your interest, a foundation programme might be just the ticket.

Run by a few universities, these year-long programmes lead to Merit awards. They serve a couple of purposes, including:

- introducing you to architectural study before you commit to the full programme
- allowing you to step up onto an architecture degree programme if you didn't get the correct grades at school or have the correct subjects
- providing the opportunity to build your confidence and portfolio
- smoothing the way, formally, into further architectural education.

There are several paying options, which cost, at the time of writing, £9,250 for the year. There is also the RIBA Foundation in Architecture²¹, where you work part-time in an architectural practice or other employer in the creative industries while you study, the idea being that your earnings allow you to recoup the cost, which, at the time of writing, is about £2,500. The course involves 9 hours a week of study plus some online contact time with Oxford Brookes University.



| The personal statement

While universities will look to your predicted or already achieved grades to understand your academic ability, your personal statement is often the key to a successful application – or at least, to win you an invitation to interview.

It must persuade the university that you are interesting, interested, worthy, and likely to succeed. At the very least, it must honestly:

- explain why you are interested in architecture, with some evidence;
- state your architectural ambitions; and
- describe your suitability.

Ambition

If you are considering architecture at all, you will already know your reasons for doing so. It might be that you are obsessed by great design, inspired by particular buildings, fascinated by digital design technology, passionate about helping to mitigate climate change through low-energy buildings, or personally committed to making good architecture more accessible to all sections of society.

Whatever your reason, it should be authentic and communicate your ambition, enthusiasm and energy.

Supporting evidence

The stronger your supporting evidence, the more convincing your statement. The kind of information that is likely to make you stand out includes, for example:

- work or voluntary experience in an architecture office or some related field, such as a construction site.
- having attended (in person or online) events, lectures, open days, or other activities related to architecture – especially if they are connected to the course you are applying to, such as their end of year show, which usually happens in June.
- having read articles, watched videos or listened to podcasts about and being able to discuss topics related to architecture, including issues that you feel strongly about, such as climate change and specific places and spaces you admire and why.
- essays, videos, podcasts, or blogs related to architecture created by you.
- art works or designs created by you (that you will feature in your portfolio – see below) or creative competitions that you have entered.

Personal qualities

Note that course admissions staff take into account that most candidates are relatively inexperienced and unlikely to have had the resources or opportunities to pursue their interest to any sophisticated extent. What they are looking for is creativity, design sensitivity, passion, curiosity and engagement in the world.

Your statement should not be constrained just to the field of art, architecture and design. Details of hobbies and pastimes, including travel, music, sports, crafts, volunteer and community work, and so on, are all potentially relevant. The best design comes from having deep empathy with and insights into all kinds of people in all sections of society all round the world.

Maturity

Finally, there are several learnt behaviours that will serve you particularly well during your studies and, indeed, on into professional practice;

- well-founded confidence;
- mental resilience;
- good time management and self-discipline;
- perseverance and determination;
- the ability to collaborate.

If you feel that you have already begun to develop some or all of these behaviours, be sure to mention it, if there is room. Allude to the things you achieved in your spare time and how you managed to do well despite some personal challenge. Describe how you overcame the odds by recruiting a friend's help to complete a project.

Style and presentation

Keep it simple, short and, above all, clear. The assessors will welcome an easy read and if they want more detail, so much the better: they are more likely to invite you for an interview!

And of course, check your writing for correct spelling and grammar. If you have the option, ensure that it is laid out simply and attractively. While you won't need perfect English to succeed in the course (it helps, though!), here it will demonstrate your attention to detail and ability to communicate effectively, both critical skills for thriving at university.

Before you send it off, ask others to review it with a critical eye for how it can be improved. With a bit of luck, they will also pick up on lingering typographical errors.

Should you be invited to present yourself, or examples of your work, or both as part of your application, be sure to put your best foot forward.

| The portfolio

Format

The portfolio is all about convincing that you have the artistic and design potential to complete the course. In his book 'How to Thrive in Architecture School', Neil Spiller recommends that you:

- keep to about 25 sheets,
- start and end with your strongest pieces to leave the best impression, and
- be prepared to tell the story of each piece succinctly.

Content

There is no definitive list of what you should include, although generally it will be original two-dimensional artworks created by you in a variety of media, or photographs of 3D works. Fortunately, many programme organisers give guidance as to what is required.

It helps if some of the subject matter is connected to architecture, but that is not essential. Spiller says that people have been accepted onto courses on the strength of works in many other art forms, including poetry, clothes, pottery, music, and sculpture. But if in doubt, leave it out: only include works that you are confident you can talk about with enthusiasm.

| The Interview

Your attitude

The interview is a two-way process that allows you the opportunity to meet and consider the lecturers and staff who will be overseeing and partly responsible for delivering your education.

Think about what *you* want from *them* and be prepared to ask questions. This approach not only yields information that helps you to decide whether the course is for you, it is also empowering, giving you some control over what can be a nerve-racking experience, and impresses your interviewers.

What they are looking for

For their part, your interviewers are looking to confirm the positive impression they formed about you from your personal statement and your portfolio. Spiller recommends that you be up-beat, self-reflective, and concise. You will be nervous, but so will all candidates, and your interviewers will understand and try to put you at your ease.

Preparation

A little basic homework is strongly advised, including:

- reading through your personal statement to remind yourself of what you told them: this is going to be what you talk about, so be ready!
- rehearsing what you want to say about your portfolio.
- In relation to where you live, thinking through why a particular building works well there and what it brings to the place.
- Reflecting on what fascinates you about architecture. Consider particular spaces or places that you find interesting and, in particular, what qualities they have to make them so. If possible, find out who the designers were.

Format

Interviews are either just with you, or in small groups of other candidates, and can involve several interviewers. If you haven't already sent it on ahead, do not forget your portfolio. Be sure to arrive early so that you have time to compose yourself.

Universities run open days and sometimes invite candidates in to participate in group exercises in advance of the interview. Attending and participating shows enthusiasm and commitment, and is highly recommended if you can afford the cost of travel.

4

What to expect during your studies

Architecture is a broad subject that spans the creative and technical. It requires you to use both sides of your brain, and within your studies, different modules require different skills. Acknowledging this will help you to be both effective and efficient.

4 What to expect during your studies

| The curriculum

Architecture is a broad subject that spans the creative and technical. It requires you to use both sides of your brain, and within your studies, different modules require different skills. Acknowledging this will help you to be both effective and efficient.

All schools of architecture cover the same general ARB and RIBA curriculum across both Part 1 and Part 2, reflecting the following themes and values²²:

1. **Health and life safety:** demonstrating authoritative knowledge of statutory frameworks to safeguard the community and end users.
2. **Ethical and professional practice:** acquiring professional and communication skills to ensure projects are delivered with integrity and accountability within global, national and professional climate targets.
3. **Structures, construction and resources:** demonstrating climate literacy, responsible specification, and ethical sourcing to enhance wellbeing, minimise embodied carbon, waste and pollution, and reduce demands on energy and water.
4. **Histories, theories and methodologies:** critically analysing and researching narratives and cultural, environmental and social values in architecture to understand and extend architectural pedagogy.
5. **Design pedagogies and architectural expression:** critically evaluating authentic aesthetic, compositional and spatial principles to synthesise socially, ecologically and environmentally sustainable integrated studio projects.
6. **Business skills:** developing capability in business skills relevant to working in practice and practice management.

While Part 1 students are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of these themes and values, Part 2 students are expected to be able to apply them to their own work.

The impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating consequences for students' experience of university.

The extraordinary effort to move courses online – unthinkable at the start of 2020 – had the effect of requiring students to work remotely, without face-to-face interaction or access to universities' equipment, facilities, or other benefits.

This has clearly had a negative impact on students' learning and their mental wellbeing.

Architecture students in particular have missed on the dynamics of studio culture, leaving them isolated – an additional stressor that anecdotally has affected students' mental health. Social-distancing has also denied them the time to develop the soft skills of oral communication, active listening, and generally how to get on with others in teams.

Also, they have been denied access to universities' computer hardware, software and internet connections, exposing considerable 'digital poverty' that of course has dramatically impacted their ability to complete their work.

At the time of writing, the international vaccination roll-out was alleviating the situation considerably, allowing us to contemplate better times ahead. Clearly, the long-term consequences have yet to be seen but there is every reason to hope that normal – or perhaps improved – services at schools of architecture will resume soon.

What you study and how you are assessed

Schools of architecture continuously evolve their methods of teaching and so the precise details of what happens day to day varies not just from school to school but from year to year and even from group to group. Even so, all use a project-based approach.

The specifics of the curriculum are often taught through lectures and seminars. However, it is through the design studio where this knowledge will be applied and integrated into design projects of varying form, abstraction, size and complexity. Design Studio work is normally assessed continuously, and will account for at least 50% of your yearly mark.

After being given an overarching brief, you are expected to explore ideas and experiment with options, guided by a tutor, gradually making the case for a reasoned solution. You will sometimes work by yourself and sometimes in small groups.

The rest of your marks will relate to the other aspects of the curriculum.

Some universities use examinations to assess these subjects at the end of each year but more often they are assessed continuously.

“Try to understand how your modules work and the skills that you need to prioritise developing when you undertake each module.”²³

These comments relate to the traditional form of architectural education. In recent years, a number of different routes have been developed which offer an educational model that integrates with working in practice (see table on page 16). While each of these routes will also have input from all of the areas of studio previously mentioned, the practice experience will also be a contributing factor.

While technology, history and professional skills are often taught in lecture halls and seminar rooms, design is usually undertaken in a studio space where you may have your own desk or be asked to share with others through the week.

After being given an overarching brief, you are expected to explore ideas and experiment with options, guided by a tutor, gradually making the case for a reasoned solution.

You will sometimes work by yourself and sometimes in small groups.

The review

Your project is assessed during a review, which either happens once you've completed it or, if it's a big project, at interim stages too.

The review is when you present your work both verbally and visually to your fellow students, your lecturer/tutor and, sometimes, other lecturers and visitors.

Since your work may be assessed and moderated by different members of staff and not always someone who knows your project well, you must ensure that you communicate its essence clearly.



The review process

Reviews (previously known as 'crits') have been used in architectural education for decades. Done well and with practice, the process not only develops your powers of argument but also opens your eyes to fresh perspectives, things you may have overlooked, and differing opinions so that you can learn and improve.

The system has real merit. Presenting and responding to questions about your work in public builds resilience and can help to clarify your thinking. It also allows you to see the work of your fellow students and to offer your views and advice in return.

Your ability to 'take on board' constructive criticism from others is an excellent skill (in many walks of life but especially architecture) that generally improves outcomes. It also gets you used to speaking up, making cogent arguments, and habituating you to feedback, which you will get from clients, planners, stakeholder groups, and so on in practice.

Staff will offer reassurance and guidance on how to prepare for reviews, but even so, the review elicits nervousness among students.

*"I used to be so scared that at the end I didn't know what the tutors had said to me, so I got my friend to make notes during. The tutors usually said some really helpful stuff and they always gave useful precedents but I could never remember. By getting notes, my reviews became a useful part of my project development."*²⁴

This is normal. It takes maturity and mental resilience to cope, especially as the reality of studying a creative discipline is that there will be a mix of opinions and comments about your work.

*"Tutors' opinions vary greatly, and what one tutor criticizes, another loves. Take criticism on board and value it, but stick to your guns when you feel you need to."*²⁵

Some of these will be good but the majority of the discussion in a review will be focused on opportunities to develop and improve your work, which can be difficult to hear.

While it is impossible to control everyone's comments during a review, it is unlikely that reviewers are anything less than fair and well-intentioned. Despite that, it can be difficult to accept constructive criticism. In the most serious cases, it can affect your confidence and mental wellbeing. (See **Common cognitive distortions** on page 39 for more.)

So, if you find yourself thinking that you have been subject to a personal attack, pause, rewind, and play it back with neutral ears. Reflect openly on the comments, remembering that those reviewing you have been through this process and are trying to help.

*"Some tutors will be harsh during critiques, but it's not a reflection on you as a person – they might just not like the design, and that's okay."*²⁶

Doing so is the route to mental resilience, and listening to the substance of their criticism is how you learn.

*"The best thing to do is to keep presenting every step of the journey and learning from new ideas and mistakes. Being open to change and project evolution is the key to success and reward."*²⁷

Of course, as in any system, there's always room for improvement and things do go wrong. If something in your review oversteps the mark, don't bottle it up or brush it under the carpet: speak to a member of staff about it.

Respondents to the Study Architecture Well survey highlighted the review as a major cause of stress and anxiety. While some felt that the process was a personalised attack, others were able to see that they had taken criticism of their work the wrong way, and advised others not to repeat their mistake – see **The review process** box.

Reviews go better when you are rested, organised, ready on time, and have rehearsed your presentation. Don't leave things to the last minute or stay up the night before to get it finished. Being exhausted and stressed is no fit state to receive criticism in. The SAW survey respondents were very vocal about the importance of sleep in building resilience – see **Chapter 6**.

Developing your technical design and communication skills

Good architecture cannot develop without good communication to explain your ideas to others.

The most important skill here is oral communication – and its silent partner, active listening. Your ability to articulate thoughts, enthuse people to your ideas, and persuade with your arguments is not only vital for doing well in reviews, it will also serve you extraordinarily well during your professional working career. Similarly, really listening to answers and taking in the messages you hear is a fundamentally important skill.

Otherwise, the primary non-verbal mode of communication of your design work will be through drawings, often supplemented by both physical and digital models.

Simple sketches are the quickest, most intuitive way to express initial ideas and develop them. However, they are not a reliable way to see how the ideas work in three dimensions, at which point you will be encouraged to build physical models, usually out of card.

As the level of design detail increases, these analogue techniques become less useful. Although good draughtsmanship and simple physical models are still highly prized, the primary method of communication in practice today is digital, using computer-aided three-dimensional design software packages such as AutoCAD, SketchUp or Rhino.

In recent years the development of Building Information Modelling (BIM) has revolutionised how projects are developed in practice by the whole design team, including engineers, contractors and suppliers. While in the past they would have developed their own models in isolation, BIM allows them to work on the same model using, for example, Revit, resulting in better coordination and less wasted effort.

During your architectural study, you will learn about many of these different digital design tools (there are many!) and the procedures that they entail. You will also be introduced to presentation tools such as Photoshop and InDesign.

While all schools of architecture provide access to computer facilities with a range of digital tools, you will find that investing in your own computer will be very useful in support your studies. Most software is available in a student version with a greatly reduced license fee (if any).

Year end

The academic year normally finishes with an end-of-year show open to the public that demonstrates not just your final design proposal but also the process of how you got there.

By then, your work will have been examined, moderated and you will, most probably, know whether or not you have passed the year or, in the final year, gained your Part 1 qualification.

What happens if you don't pass the year?

As you would expect of a vocational course like architecture, you usually have to pass the year to be accepted onto the next year.

If you don't pass straight away there are a number of possible outcomes. You might be:

- allowed to start the new year but still expected to carry over and complete the modules (credits) that you failed in the previous year
- invited to re-sit examinations and/or fix your assessed projects and re-submit them for reassessment
- invited to re-take the year or part of the year
- asked to leave.

Every institution has its own policies, which can be found in your course documentation.

Extenuating circumstances

Life sometimes knocks us off course in ways that are beyond our control. For example, you might suffer a close family bereavement, mental or physical illness, or some other unforeseen situation that affects your ability to perform well.

Universities fully acknowledge these 'extenuating circumstances', and all have their own policies for dealing with them.

If you feel you faced or are still facing such circumstances, speak to a member of the teaching staff about it as soon as possible.

They will be sympathetic and, if it looks like affecting your ability to perform, they will usually require you to fill out a form to explain what has happened. Your submission will be used to decide whether your situation warrants an extension of time or an opportunity to repeat a piece of work without any penalty.

| Part 2

Under normal circumstances, it is normally expected to have formally documented at least one year's worth of practical work experience before being accepted onto a Part 2 course. (The exceptional circumstances precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic have loosened this requirement in acknowledgement of the difficulties of securing work and gaining adequate experience.) See **Chapter 5** and the companion to this guide, *Practise Architecture Well*,²⁸ for more information about this.

The focus of Part 2 is much more student-led and self-directed, with more links to the professional context, including a consideration of digital and project management skills, and the relevant legal frameworks.

While the core subjects studied are similar to those in Part 1, at Part 2 you will be required to synthesise complex environmental, social and spatial issues while developing your own particular architectural position. Your work must be grounded in academic research, with significant depth, detail, and sophistication.

As well as undertaking project work, you will be expected to write a lengthy thesis²⁹, all aligned to the Architects Registration Board's general criteria and the RIBA's *Themes and Values for Architectural Education*.³⁰

| Part 3

You must have formally documented at least twenty-four months of relevant practical work experience, at least twelve months of which must be post-Part 2, to take the professional examination.³¹ Note that you may start studying for the Part 3 exam before then, though. (Again, see **Chapter 5** and the companion to this guide, *Practise Architecture Well*,³² for more information about this.)

Part 3 is the gateway to professional qualification. You generally take a part-time course while also acquiring work experience, leading to an examination that asks questions based on realistic scenario-based problems.

Alternatively, some courses use continuous assessment, with no exam. Since you may not have sat an exam for many years, you may very well prefer this route.

Note that even if you don't sit an exam, you will still have to submit documentary evidence (including a case study and the PEDR – see **How do you formally document your work experience?** on page 30) and pass an oral examination.

Courses vary in how they deliver the training. Some do it all at once in a concentrated burst; others spread it out over

several weeks/months. Go to the RIBA³³, ARB³⁴, or your course provider's website for precise details.

By this stage, the study topics have come round more squarely to the practical day-to-day nitty-gritty of professional practice, including business and project management, professionalism and ethics, legal and regulatory frameworks, building procurement, and communication skills.

If you are successful, you can join the Register of Architects and so call yourself an architect. If you want, you can also become a Chartered Member of the RIBA.

What is the Register of Architects?

To call yourself an architect in the UK must have passed your Part 3 and paid a yearly fee to the Architects Registration Board (ARB – see **ARB and RIBA: what's the difference?** on page 10) so that your name can be added to the Register of Architects.

The Register is the way that ordinary citizens can be confident that a person presenting themselves as an architect actually meets the minimum standards of professionalism and competence.

| The financial costs

The total cost of an architectural education is significant.

To gain your Part 2 qualification by the shortest route (see **Chapter 3**) includes at least five years of formal full-time-equivalent study at university. At the time of writing, this equates to £9,250 a year in fees alone for English and Welsh courses, amounting to £46,250 in total if you go down the full-time or hybrid paths³⁵. Completing your Part 3 examination varies by course but will cost anything from about, at the time of writing, £2,500 to £4,200. Costs are significantly less if you live and study in Northern Ireland or live and study in Scotland, and significantly more if you are an international student.

Grants, bursaries, scholarships and hardship funds

Extra funding for university is available from a variety of sources, and it is not just reserved for the smartest. You can qualify for a whole range of reasons, from your sporting prowess all the way through to what your parents do for a living. In particular, the RIBA has a number of bursaries and a student hardship³⁶ fund that you can apply to for financial relief.

To find out what's out there, have a look at the RIBA website or the Save the Student website for up-to-date guidance.³⁷

You can get emergency extra money from the government. Known as hardship funds³⁸ and paid either as a lump sum or in instalments from your university, they are available to students experiencing financial hardship. For example, you might be:

- a student with children, especially a single parent
- a mature student with existing financial commitments
- from a low-income family
- disabled
- a student that was previously in care (a 'care leaver')
- homeless or living in a foyer.

You usually will not have to pay this money back.

To apply, get in touch with the student services department at your university. You'll need your letter from Student Finance England showing how much student finance you're getting and documents that explain your personal financial situation, such as bank statements and rent details.

On top of that, you will almost certainly need to pay for five years of accommodation and living expenses, which vary enormously across the country but, in central London for example, can double your outgoings.

Students undertaking professional work experience are required to keep a Professional Experience Development Record (PEDR). The cost for this (including mentoring from a Professional Studies Advisor) is in the range of £200-400.

Even though they are steep, these costs are at least relatively easy to understand and plan for. Much less well advertised is the need to own a reasonably powerful computer and the additional budget in the range of £700 – £1,500 a year³⁹ you will need to pay for modelling materials, printing, and field trips.

You don't have to buy these things – they are theoretically optional. Schools have adequate computing facilities for your use, and you do not have to go on field trips, for example. However, if you don't buy them you will be at a disadvantage compared to others on your course who can afford them.

The sum can stretch your resources beyond affordability, and so you must factor it in upfront.

*"The cost of materials for model-making, high quality printing etc can also be very high, and other more affluent students will be marked higher for 'better presented' work, which is in fact just made with more expensive materials, or printed on higher quality paper etc."*⁴⁰

*"Those that can afford to go home with a large desk, a powerful laptop and a stable family home will excel and others will not."*⁴¹

British students have access to loans or grants from the public purse, and *in extremis* can apply to university bursaries and hardship funds or various charitable scholarships (see **Grants, bursaries, scholarships and hardship funds** box above). Sometimes the cost of materials, printing and field trips is subsidised. Even so, it is not easy to survive on these benefits without family support, especially as the demands of the course leave little spare time to hold down a part-time job.

Unsurprisingly, a lack of money and the unfairness in students' unequal ability to pay are a cause of worry and frustration that, rolled up with the other stresses of the course, can impact mental wellbeing.

*"Money worries are a huge part of the problem, as well as being put under a lot of pressure. Before starting this course I think some lectures on how to manage time and money during the course would be beneficial."*⁴²

The cost of an architectural education has long been recognised as a barrier to fair representation and diversity in the profession, which is widely criticised for being historically dominated by white males.

Indeed, this inequity is one of the driving factors behind the alternative paths to qualification (see **Chapter 3**) which, although they take longer, allow you to earn while you learn and so are more affordable. The most recent such path – the apprenticeship – is delivered at no cost to the student.

5

Preparing for
professional
work experience

5 Preparing for professional work experience

The following chapter gives you some basic information about how to get a job and secure qualifying work experience. However, it cannot hope to cover everything you need to know to do well at work. For more in-depth information, read the companion to this guide – **Practising Architecture Well**.⁴³

Most people study architecture with the objective of becoming an architect. Your lecturers will assume that that is your ultimate ambition.

Certainly, you cannot proceed to professional qualification without having formally documented work experience.

That said, you do not *have* to go on to professional qualification: the skills you learn are to some extent transferable, making you a legitimate candidate for other career paths.

If you *are* aiming to become an architect, you probably need to be preparing the ground while you study. There are three reasons for this.

1. **Time.** Since the path to becoming an architect is long, you will probably want to qualify as quickly as you reasonably can. If so, you will want to progress smoothly from finishing one Part into work experience without any gap, which means applying for jobs before the end of the final year.
2. **Opportunity.** It makes sense to take advantage of the privileged opportunities you have as a student to compile evidence of your employability and build a professional network. Doing this outside of the university environment and without your student status is much harder.
3. **Finance.** After years of living off very little and, probably, building up a large debt, it will be a relief to start earning a wage!

How do you formally document your work experience?

To register as an architect in the UK, you must have completed a minimum of 24 months of professional practical experience as well as gaining the typical Parts 1, 2 and 3 qualifications.

Unsurprisingly, examiners don't just take your word for it that you have this experience: they want corroborated evidence.

In the UK, the main tool used to record all this information is the RIBA Professional Experience and Development Record⁴⁴, or PEDR.⁴⁵

It is a paid-for digital record of your experience, development and competency in the practice of architecture signed off by your employment mentor (see **About mentors** below) and Professional Studies Advisor.

A completed and signed-off PEDR is the heart of your Part 3 documentary submission and demonstrates that you have the competence to discharge the duties and responsibilities of a chartered architect.

The RIBA publishes a guide⁴⁶ to the system.



| What should you be doing now?

The advice for preparing for work from the respondents to the SAW survey fell loosely into two broad categories.

Skills and experience

Some employers complain that architecture students aren't ready for professional practice to the extent that they would like. This was reflected in comments made by many of the SAW Survey respondents:

*"Prepare to be completely unprepared for practice."*⁴⁷

*"Prepare to unlearn and relearn a lot of what you have learnt at uni."*⁴⁸

*"Forget everything you were taught at university. You are no longer the lone wolf artist-type, you have to be a professional practitioner."*⁴⁹

Regardless of whether you see this as a valid criticism of your education – many don't – this does highlight a problem for students.

The respondents advised students to take matters into their own hands.

Top of the list was to learn software packages – Revit/AutoCAD, SketchUp, InDesign and Photoshop were mentioned. As one SAW survey respondent put it,

*"Learn current software: it'll increase your employability dramatically."*⁵⁰

Schools of architecture use a variety of different types of software, and so you cannot know everything. Employers understand this and the fact that you don't know their packages need not be a barrier: they will train you up. However, knowledge of other packages, an understanding of the variety, and a willingness to learn will reassure them that you will learn quickly.

SAW survey respondents also emphasised the importance of industry knowledge, which includes a good understanding of the Building Regulations, various standards, the RIBA Plan of Work, and the ARB Criteria.

Networking

Professional practice is about who you know as well as what you know – especially when it comes to securing employment. Everyone is potentially helpful and valuable to you and your career, so talk to everyone, make friends, and don't burn any bridges.

The respondents recommended you build contacts on social media, especially LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter. More importantly, they emphasised the importance of 'showing your face' by attending events, lectures and social events, joining industry bodies (G4C⁵¹ and Constructing Excellence⁵² were mentioned), and talking to 'everyone': speakers, lecturers, students in other year groups, visiting examiners, and so on.

As one respondent put it,

*"Don't wait for opportunity to find you: make your own by exploring, learning, visiting, reading, googling, asking. Also, be cheeky. 'I'm a student' is a get-into-jail card you only get to use in education, so use it!"*⁵³

A number mentioned the value of RIBA's Mentoring scheme,⁵⁴ which is aimed at second- or third-year Part 1 students and is run through the RIBA's regional offices, and becoming an RIBA Student member.⁵⁵ Both are free. RIBA student membership gives you access to their student network, called RIBA Future Architects,⁵⁶ which hosts numerous useful events. As a consequence of COVID-19, it moved online with strong discussion forums and presentations for students and early-career practitioners.

About mentors⁵⁷

The knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to become professionally competent, which is the point of practical work experience, are easier to acquire with the guidance of someone who has ‘been there and done that’.

Indeed, under the PEDR scheme you *must* have your work supervised and signed off by a suitably experienced ‘employment mentor’ who knows your work in detail.

Although these people need not be architects or even in the same practice as your employer, they usually are.

You usually have a say in who the person is. While it helps that they are someone you think you can get on with, bear in mind that you also want to learn from them and so their knowledge and experience are extremely important deciding factors. You also want them to be generally available, responsive, and to hold you to high standards.

The relationship you build with them has the potential to go beyond merely satisfying the rules of the PEDR by enriching your experience in work. Impressing them can open up opportunities for you down the line if, for example, they recommend you for projects, positions or roles as your career develops.

Note that some employers also run their own mentoring programmes⁵⁸ independently of the PEDR because they see the value to their staff. Again, if you are lucky enough to have access to this kind of programme during your work experience, do not be shy about using it.

| Job-finding strategies

There is no hard and fast rule for finding a job. If you are lucky, employers will visit your end of year show and offer you an interview on the strength of your display.

More likely, you will have to search for a job by yourself.

You can go down the route of looking at adverts in architecture magazines and websites or making use of employment agencies such as RIBA Jobs.⁵⁹ Another good strategy is to follow the practices you admire on social media, especially LinkedIn, to alert you to job opportunities as they arise.

Alternatively, you can write on spec to practices or ask around your network of contacts. Arguably, this latter route is a better strategy because it shows initiative and, more cynically, it saves the employer agency or advertising fees, which is bound to cheer them up!

Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when jobs are thin on the ground, it may pay you to think laterally about where you want to work.

Remember that you do not *have* to work for an architectural practice⁶⁰. So long as you are picking up qualifying experience, you can work for anyone, including but not limited to structural engineers, contractors, specialist subcontractors, urban designers and even, for example, a shopfitter’s.

Also, you don’t have to do all your work experience in one place. So long as you are working at least 20 hours per week, it is perfectly acceptable to jump from employer to employer.

| Evidence of employability

Employers get swamped with applications, so you must be able to show evidence of the kind of candidate you are, your interests, skills and attitude. The SAW survey respondents mentioned, in no particular order, the following as useful:

- maintaining your portfolio as you go, and include any competition entries you might have submitted
- relevant holiday work experience and internships, preferably with an architect’s practice. The respondents mentioned working abroad using the ISEP⁶¹ scheme. They also mentioned ERASMUS, which has been replaced by the Turing⁶² scheme
- shadowing architects in practice
- having a good working knowledge of the *Architect’s Legal Handbook* and contracts
- examination certificates for BIM/CAD
- visiting building sites.

Remember that employers are looking for well-rounded people with real life skills and experience, so evidence of outside interests, pastimes, hobbies and volunteering work is also useful.

Don’t just send out blanket applications. Research the kinds of practices you want to work for – there are many different approaches to and styles of design out there – and pay your prospective employers the compliment of tailoring your communications to them.

Your interactions with them should do two things:

1. Reflect your intelligence, passion, grit, honesty, curiosity, friendliness, positivity, and confidence – all important characteristics for employers. As one respondent put it, | “Act confident even if you don’t feel it!”⁶³
2. Reassure that you will communicate politely, professionally and effectively with others. Be appropriately formal, use plain English, and avoid grammatical and spelling errors.

| Your CV

The CV is an essential tool for securing work experience.

Its content and, since you are a designer, how it looks, must grab the busy director or HR manager's attention quickly and seductively.

While you are likely to have a base CV, you should always tailor it to your target job. This is a basic courtesy, demonstrating that you have researched the practice and their work, and actively want to work for them. So, browse their social media stream; explore their website; ask your personal network about them, and reflect your findings in your application.

If the job advert asks for certain skills and attributes, explain how you qualify. Don't be put off if you lack some of the things they are looking for. A little lateral thinking will show that you have some similar experience or, at the very least, the capacity to learn them quickly.

Refer to the roles listed in the PEDR appropriate for your level of education to prompt what you write.

Format

Keep it to no more than two A4 pages.

Put yourself in the employer's shoes. Position whatever is likely to be most important to them first. If you have relevant work experience, put it first, with the most recent top of the list. Otherwise, start with a personal statement followed by your university education.

For Part 1s, the order should probably be as follows:

- **Personal statement:** not strictly necessary but if used, state your skills, accomplishments and ambitions concisely.
- **Education:** be sure to say whether or not you have registered for your PEDR, and where you'll be studying your Part 2, if known.
- **Technical skills:** state your skills and proficiency honestly, emphasising software packages such as Revit, Photoshop, InDesign or Rhino. Practices still love hand-drawing skills, so if you're an accomplished draughtsperson, say so.
- **Work experience:** If you have previous work experience in an architectural office, even just for a short while, say so, and briefly explain your role. Include illustrations of your work, listing the context, the software used, and how long it took.

Other paid or voluntary work experience is also relevant, showing you to be self-motivated and engaged. Highlight any transferable skills from this experience. For example:

- Working in a customer service role shows that you can communicate effectively with others.

- Working a till shows that you are trustworthy.
- Working a paper round shows you have determination.

- **Other skills:** Having other languages, first-aid qualifications, a driving licence, and so on can be helpful, so list them.

- **Extracurricular roles or positions of responsibility, hobbies and interests:** Your extracurricular activities, hobbies and pastimes also yield useful information for potential employers.

Apart from showing that you have energy and are engaged in the world, both of which are important attributes for architectural work, this experience can be revealing in other specific ways. For example:

- Involvement in team sports shows you to be a team-player.
- Being captain of a team shows you to have leadership qualities.
- Being involved in clubs or societies shows intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm.

- **References:** These will usually be your last manager or a member of the teaching staff from your Part 1 course, or a personal acquaintance, ideally a trustworthy person who has known you for five or more years. It is polite to ask permission to use people's names before giving them as references.

Presentation

Avoid grammatical, spelling or typographical errors.

Your creativity will come out in your portfolio, so keep your CV simple, clean, legible, and easy to read. That said, you are applying for a role as a designer, so it is worth making the layout pleasing to the eye.

If including illustrations, be sure that they are suitable for reproduction at the size and scale you intend.

Ask someone you trust to check everything before you send it out.

RIBA Jobs has additional advice and a free template⁶⁴ for you to download.

| Accepting a job

Getting a job offer is always a fist-pump moment that deserves celebration.

However, you should not jump the gun. Before you accept, satisfy yourself that the employer will adequately support you in your learning.

While they are by no means the only kind of architectural practice out there, RIBA Chartered Practices set the gold standard for professionalism, ethical practice and conditions of employment.

For example, the RIBA requires Chartered Practices to pay at least The Living Wage to students on professional work experience, offer written contracts, limit employees' working hours to an average of 48 hours per week, and give you opportunities to train and gain relevant experience.

Protections afforded by the RIBA Code of Professional Conduct⁶⁵

If your boss is a chartered architect (i.e. an architect member of the RIBA), you are to some extent supported in the workplace under the RIBA Code of Professional Conduct, the document that holds members to high standards.

It states:

As an employer of an architectural student undertaking professional experience, a Member must have regard for the student's general training and education in accordance with the objectives of the RIBA professional experience scheme.

Members who employ students must:

- (a) (as with all staff) provide them with a full written contract of employment;
- (b) pay them fairly;
- (c) nominate in writing an employment mentor to supervise the professional development of the student and to complete the quarterly RIBA professional experience records in a timely manner;
- (d) provide a reasonable breadth of work experience and level of responsibility in accordance with any relevant and current RIBA guidance; and
- (e) permit reasonable attendance at courses, study days, examinations and work shadowing in accordance with any relevant and current RIBA guidance.

A guidance note clarifies that members employing a student undertaking practical experience should meet with the student at the beginning of their employment, and regularly thereafter, to discuss and agree arrangements for attending courses, study days, examinations and work shadowing.

How does the practice that has offered you a job compare?

At the very least, your employment contract's terms and conditions should set out how much paid study leave you are entitled to, and in what timeframe.

Some practices will contribute to your course fees, in which case the contract should also spell out exactly how much, and whether there are any conditions attached. For example, they might require you to repay the contribution if you leave before a certain date.

Note that there are many other things to consider before accepting a job offer. See *Practising Architecture Well*⁶⁶ for more in-depth information.

Supporting students in work experience: The Compact

The RIBA recognises that finding Part 1 and Part 2 assistant roles in practice is far from straightforward and once in post, the jobs do not always run smoothly.

In response, the RIBA is currently trialing (summer 2021) an ethical framework with a series of obligations for Chartered Practices and the other parties involved in graduate professional practice experience – the students themselves and their schools of architecture.

Called *The Compact*,⁶⁷ it aims to structure the graduate's transition to the workplace from their school of architecture positively.

The Compact will include agreeing employers' and graduates' expectations over a stated timeline. The agreement will cover:

- defining the type and scope of work, which should facilitate Part 1 graduates returning to education with an enhanced skillset and Part 2 graduates to undertake the Part 3 course/examination
- roles and responsibilities in the practice
- how the graduate, employer and school work together to smooth the transition to practice
- terms and conditions, i.e. pay, hours, overtime, reasonable workload, overview of the practice and its operation, etc.

RIBA visiting boards will review material in relation to all parties meeting the terms of *The Compact*.

6

The university experience

Studying architecture in the UK is immensely fun and rewarding but be warned: it can also be grueling, with stressful lows in amongst the satisfying highs.

6 The university experience

Studying architecture in the UK is immensely fun and rewarding but be warned: it can also be grueling, with stressful lows in amongst the satisfying highs.

The breadth of the subject is wide, and you are expected to be both creative and technical. You will be required to write with eloquence, design with flair, and understand the technical implications of what you do.

This requires hard work and drive and, importantly, resilience, i.e. the ability to absorb impacts and bounce back stronger than before.

| High expectations

Universities want you to enjoy your time with them and fulfil your potential, but not at the expense of high educational standards.

Studying at university is not meant to be easy. Lecturers will push you, putting you under 'good stress' both by challenging you on your ideas, working methods, and design decision-making, and from setting demanding projects and deadlines.

However, there is a risk that 'good stress', which is necessary to develop and progress, can turn into 'bad stress', which is unhealthy and destructive.

More to the point, every student will reach that point at different times. They enjoy different things, respond in different ways to the same situation, and achieve the same goals in lots of different ways.

Courses cannot hope to cater evenly to this difference. Some students will always struggle, not through any academic failing but simply because of a mismatch between what they are used to and can cope with, and the fixed structure, style, and culture of the course and the personalities on it. Inevitably, this mismatch can threaten your mental and even physical wellbeing.

Of course, the university experience is not just about studying. It's also about living independently, managing your own finances, meeting new people, getting used to a new place, and starting a new routine.

As well as being fun, varied, exciting and interesting, these events are also stressors which, especially if you are young, make you more susceptible to negative mental health impacts.⁶⁸

What do we know about students' mental wellbeing in general?

The 2017 UPP Annual Student Experience Survey⁶⁹ found that:

- Almost 90% first year students find it difficult to cope with social or academic aspects of university life.
- 60% said that the stress of studying made it difficult to cope.
- Other difficulties included isolation (44%), balancing work and study (37%), financial difficulties (36%), and living independently (22%).
- Women find it harder than men, with 91% having struggled with one or more of the issues above compared to 82% of men.

Having difficulties or struggling are regular, normal parts of everyday life, and the vast majority of us recover from them quickly, building resilience as we go.

"There is literally no way you can be 100% efficient. You're going to struggle, be confused, and have doubts. What is most important is that you are aware of this and you are ready to face them. Once you overcome those, you'll be a super strong-minded person in life."⁷⁰

Between 2007 and 2017, there was a fivefold increase in the numbers of students who disclosed a mental health condition to their university, according to the Institute for Public Policy Research.

This is a good thing. It suggests that students are more aware of mental health issues and are much more prepared to acknowledge them, which is the first step to dealing with them.

Preparing mentally to study architecture

If you are just thinking about or have recently moved to university to study architecture, the SAW survey respondents repeatedly mentioned the steep learning curve needed to acclimatise to the apparently vague, opinion-based architecture studio marking system after the clarity of the school curriculum.⁷¹

In sharp contrast to your schoolteachers, particularly in the design studio, university tutors and lecturers aren't there to teach so much as to encourage you to pursue your own creative and intellectual ideas in a way that is appropriate to the brief that has been set.

They want you to develop your ideas by testing, probing, and experimenting until your design matures into a good solution. Within a broad brief, you can pretty much do what you want, and, particularly in the first few years, it can be difficult to fully understand how marks are awarded. As in any creative discipline, the focus is not on right or wrong answers but on successful and less successful processes.

*"Your tutors and lecturers are not there to teach you but to guide you while you teach yourself."*⁷²

*"I would have liked to have been told that there is no right or wrong answer to a brief, that failure is good, that I won't learn everything in uni so there will be gaps in the knowledge when starting work in practice for the first time."*⁷³

*"Be content with your work based on the journey you took to get there and the things you learned ... not the mark you get back."*⁷⁴

*"It's OK to have completely missed the mark for a project. It's part of the learning process."*⁷⁵

In other words, the skills and mindset you developed to do well at school, while useful, are not the only skills that you need to do well in the studio.

Many students struggle with this. You may find that you are no longer one of the smartest in the class, leaving you under-confident and uncertain.

The stress that accompanies this, particularly as deadlines approach, can be amplified by the knowledge that you will have to present and defend your work in front of your classmates and tutors during the review – see **The review process** box on page 25.

Working long hours

Almost all students react by working long hours, especially when they see everyone around them doing so.

While fine in small doses, working long hours can quickly turn bad. It is at this point that you need to set good working practices in place in order to protect your wellbeing.

The all-nighter myth

In many schools of architecture there is a myth that you must occasionally work all night to do well. Indeed, enduring 'all-nighters' is worn as a badge of honour by architecture students, bonding them through adversity and thus perpetuating the tradition.

Inevitably, the all-nighter culture has carried forward into professional life, infecting some workplaces with its toxic consequences.

It has to stop. Working hard is good, but doing it at night when you are exhausted is unproductive. It leads to bad decisions and is grossly inefficient.

*"Don't buy into the expectation that you need to work 24/7 to succeed. Studio culture can be toxic, and people hold pulling all-nighters and not sleeping as a badge of honour."*⁷⁶

If you do it on the eve of your review, it will damage your ability to present your project coherently and leave you less resilient in the face of criticism.

What's more, the cumulative effect of a lack of sleep has severe negative impacts on your mental and physical wellbeing.

Remember: projects are not judged on the basis of how many hours you put in but on the quality of the ideas that underpin them.

Most tutors actively discourage all-nighters. Resist the few mavericks that still condone the practice. Ignore fellow students who think it is a good idea.

*"A good night's sleep will work wonders. It can fix a bad day, and even prepare you for one. Don't sacrifice your sleep, just balance your time better."*⁷⁷

Instead, develop healthy day-time work routines. Treat studying as a job with times of focus, sensible breaks and a definitive cut-off time in the afternoon or early evening after which you will relax and recharge your batteries.

Make no mistake: working long hours under stress is increasingly unproductive the longer it goes on, and is detrimental to your wellbeing.

As well as losing sleep, you cease eating properly, forget to take breaks and exercise, and enter a downward spiral that can lead to anxiety, depression and other unhealthy mental and physical impacts. (See **Chapter 8** for more on the negative impacts.)

While the damage inherent in this cycle is self-evident, common sense sometimes goes missing in action even among architecture students, who are some of the brightest in the country.

It is all too easy to get caught up in the flow, partly through peer pressure and the weight of expectation, and partly because the impacts creep up on you imperceptibly.

That was the experience of many of the respondents to the SAW survey, who repeatedly mentioned mental health impacts that ranged from mild to severe arising from long hours of work in the studio, lack of sleep, pressure to perform and be creative, fear of the review, and the dangers of continually and unrealistically comparing yourself to others.

What do we know about architecture students' mental wellbeing?

Although the data is less than robust, studying architecture appears to be more risky to mental health than studying other subjects.⁷⁸

As a Part II architecture student at the University of Sheffield, Melissa Kirkpatrick undertook an investigation into student mental health in 2018 in partnership with the RIBA.

She found that 86% of architecture student respondents experienced 'anxiety' (i.e. feeling or showing worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome) during the time they spent in architectural education, compared to just 55% in a baseline NUS survey of students in general. For 'feelings of panic', it was 81% compared to 38%. For 'hypersensitivity to others', it was 78% compared to 40%. For feelings of mental distress caused by lecturer/teacher insensitivity, it was 42% compared to 15%.

The Study Architecture Well survey, conducted in the winter of 2020, attempted to measure the severity and longevity of mental health impacts at different stages of the architectural education.

It found that:

- about a third of impacts (35% for women; 27% for men) were both 'serious' and 'lasting';
- 18% of women and just 8% of men's symptoms were 'mild' and 'short-lived';
- only 8% reported surviving unscathed.

Across the board and consistently, regardless of educational stage, gender or ethnic background, the *significant*⁷⁹ causes were:

- 'keeping up with the curriculum'
- 'coping with long hours of study'
- 'pressure to perform'
- 'poor work/life balance'
- 'fear of failure'.

Women felt the 'pressure to perform' and 'fear of failure' noticeably more severely than men.

Interestingly, 'receiving criticism', another of the possible causes, only seemed to be significant for students from 'other ethnicities' – although the sample size was too small to say for certain.

Note that these causes are all specifically related to studying and not any of the more general impacts such as 'homesickness' or 'relationship troubles'.

While 'money worries' definitely had an impact across the board, it only seemed to feature as a significant cause among 'black, African, Caribbean, and black British' students and those from 'other ethnicities', although, once again, the sample size was too small to say for certain.



| Forewarned is forearmed

The reason for emphasising these points so heavily is to paint a true picture of the potential difficulties that you may face during your architectural studies.

Acknowledging their possibility allows you to guard against them more effectively and so to flourish as you pursue your architectural education.

The respondents to the SAW survey were very vocal and unabashed in their advice, offering the following tips for good mental wellbeing, in no particular order:

- work smart, not hard
- learn effective time management techniques
- speak up for yourself unhesitatingly and ask for help when you need it
- sleep regular hours at night
- eat and drink healthily
- take regular breaks from work – especially when you think you can least afford the time
- exercise to stay fit
- pursue interests outside of architecture
- stay social by forming and maintaining friendships or by joining clubs or doing voluntary work
- pre-emptively identify your support network so that you know what to do if student life overwhelms you.

| Cognitive behavioural therapy

If you do suffer from negative mental health impacts, identifying and acknowledging them allows you to confront and better prevent them.

This is a basic tenet of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), the most widely used and effective non-pharmaceutical treatment for many mental disorders, including anxiety and depression.

Naming and confronting fears clearly and rationally is the first step to actively learning to reinterpret facts with more accurate emotional labels (see **Common Cognitive distortions** box), a skill that sets you up for better mental health as you go through life and that anyone can acquire.

“Recognise when imposter syndrome is kicking in, acknowledge it and then remind yourself you are good enough for this opportunity – it wouldn’t be happening if that wasn’t the case!”⁸⁰

Common cognitive distortions

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is effective. One of the things it helps you to do is to confront negative thought patterns typical of anxiety and depression by identifying their irrationality or the way they distort reality. Common examples of such distortions include⁸¹:

1. **Mind reading.** You assume that you know what people think without having sufficient evidence of their thoughts.
2. **Fortune-telling.** You predict the future negatively: things will get worse, or there is danger ahead.
3. **Catastrophising.** You believe that what has happened or will happen will be so awful and unbearable that you won’t be able to stand it.
4. **Labeling.** You assign global negative traits to yourself and others. “I’m no good at design.”
5. **Discounting positives.** You claim that the positive things you or others do are trivial. “Doing well in that project was easy, so it doesn’t count.” (It *all* counts!)
6. **Negative filtering.** You focus almost exclusively on the negatives and seldom notice the positives.
7. **Overgeneralising.** You perceive a global pattern of negatives on the basis of a single incident.
9. **Blaming.** You focus on the other person as the source of your negative feelings, and you refuse to take responsibility for changing yourself.
10. **What if?** You keep asking a series of questions about “what if” something happens, and you fail to be satisfied with any of the answers.
11. **Emotional reasoning.** You let your feelings guide your interpretation of reality. “I feel anxious, therefore I’ll never qualify as an architect.” (If that were true, no one would ever qualify since everyone feels anxious!)

🔍 CASE STUDY

Connie, post-Part 1 year out student

Connie started working as a Part 1 student with a medium-sized architectural practice in Winchester after completing her degree during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although she enjoyed her time at the University of Sheffield, she struggled with the style of learning, which is about testing ideas, not getting them right first time. “At school you’re told to make revision plans, what to learn and how to get marks. When you suddenly find yourself with no instructions, you can really start to flounder.”

Also, she found that having a conscientious personality type did not help during reviews. “If you face critique, you just take it as criticism and it can be really damaging to mental health.”

Even though she got through the work, she realised that it was always under stress, compelling her to seek help. “I spoke to my head of year about being worried. She started to use words like ‘anxiety’ and it helped me to recognise that that might be the problem.”

After an unsatisfactory encounter with the University’s counselling service, she turned to her GP, who referred her instantly for CBT.

Despite a long waiting list and her sessions being curtailed because of the pandemic, the CBT helped. Having had time to reflect, she’s aware of the distorted thinking that comes with anxiety. “Although I may be thinking or feeling something, doesn’t really mean that it’s true.”

Her advice to other students is to stick to working hours – something she got really good at – and not to compare the hours you work to what others do. Even if you know them well, you never really know what else they have going on in their lives.

Her top tips are to rest regularly, do something enjoyable rather than fighting on through a tough patch, and set yourself goals that you can tick off at the end of the day.

| Possible impacts

The SAW survey generated lots of insights into exactly how these negative impacts were expressed, and gave respondents the opportunity to impart advice based on their experiences.

The impacts they suffered are set out below; respondents' advice follows in the next chapter.

Impacts from studying and interactions with teaching staff:

- Stress and anxiety through overwork and the quest for perfection and creative originality.
- Stress, anxiety, and humiliation in anticipating, enduring, and coping with the aftermath of reviews.
- Depressed mood because there is so little social life, home life, leisure time, and downtime.
- Stress and loss of self-esteem from self-comparison with others.
- Confusion, humiliation, and distrust as a result of poor or unprofessional guidance and behaviour by teaching staff.

Impacts from sources not directly related to studying or interactions with staff:

- Depressed mood because of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Stress and anxiety because of money worries.
- Disillusionment at future prospects.
- Exacerbation of pre-existing mental health conditions.

Any one of these impacts would be unwelcome but the respondents reported suffering multiple impacts, which of course tends to worsen their effect.

Note that some of these have knock-on impacts, including leading to poor eating and drinking habits, exhaustion through disrupted sleep, and physical health effects such as palpitations and panic attacks. These knock-on consequences set up negative feedback loops that tend to exacerbate the situation.



How to flourish at university

The vast majority of respondents to the SAW survey who developed coping strategies in response to mental health impacts said they were either successful or at least partially so.

7 How to flourish at university

The vast majority of respondents to the SAW survey who developed coping strategies in response to mental health impacts said they were either successful or at least partially so.

This is great news. It shows that you can improve the problems you encounter and possibly even fix them entirely.

The coping strategies they employed varied in detail to suit the person but all fitted into the evidence-based *Five Ways to Wellbeing*³² model developed by the New Economics Foundation in 2008.

As the title suggests, this boils good wellbeing down to five simple actions:

1. **Connect:** interact with people to build social connections. It can be with friends, of course, but just as effective is engagement with others in, for example, paid or voluntary work and clubs or teams.
2. **Be active:** exercise your body to feel good and stay fit. There is a well-established link between doing exercise and good mental health.
3. **Be curious:** appreciate what you have, savour the moment, and be 'mindful'.
4. **Keep learning:** university students are already doing this but it includes trying something new, such as a craft, musical instrument, or other skill that not only uses your mind but is fun, too.
5. **Give:** volunteer, help a friend or stranger, and show appreciation of others so that you feel part of a community.



🔍 CASE STUDY

Victoria, Part 3 student working small practice – healthy coping strategies through Part 1

Victoria has completed her Parts 1 and 2 and is currently studying towards her Part 3 while working in a small practice of six people.

Although she has now learnt effective coping strategies, she struggled during her first year. The hours were long and she was beset by indecision and loneliness.

As she says, “I was really homesick and found it extremely tiring and alien. I’d gone from being one of the smartest in school to one of the strugglers at university, and found that I wasn’t very good at telling myself when to stop.”

Having survived the first year, she was determined to improve her experience thereafter, promising herself that she would make time to do exercise and sport.

Things improved on two fronts. First, she realised that she enjoyed the process of design and not just the outcome. “I became interested in collaboration and thinking about the end-users from the start, and I found that that was my motivation.”

Second, she started to develop effective coping strategies to deal with the long hours. “I consciously separated my work time from my enjoyment time, allowing myself more rest and not working back in my room at all.”

The strategy paid off, and by the end of the third year she had an enviably healthy routine. “I was using exercise as a way of taking a break, with all the health and psychological benefits that comes with it. I was eating really well. What’s more, I had mastered the idea of if I don’t finish this today, then there’s always tomorrow, and if I don’t finish it tomorrow, well, I’ve done my best!”

Her advice to architecture students is to do uni as if it were a job: “Have a start time, a lunch time, an afternoon break, and an end time.”

In particular, she encourages you to do something you enjoy every single day. “The degree is about learning, not being the best. Life is so much more than a piece of paper!”

Of course, this is easier said than done. You need a clear head and schedule to adopt this model fully, both of which you might think are likely impossible when the workload is so heavy.

Not so. The majority of SAW survey respondents said that, while not easy, it was possible. Their strategy, which can be learnt by anyone, predominantly involved combining the following tactics:

- work smart, not hard
- learn effective time management techniques
- speak up for yourself unhesitatingly and ask for help as soon as you need it
- Focus on what you can control.

As well as efficiency, productivity, rationality, and effectiveness, the thing that will make the difference between success and failure is to be *realistic*. Thus:

- Thoroughly understand what is required of you and make sure that everything you do subsequently serves that end.
- Set a realistic plan for getting through the work that builds in breaks, a social life, sleeping, eating and drinking, and other studying commitments and takes account of when facilities or equipment such as printers are likely to be available. The key tip here is to treat university study like a nine-to-five job (with some weekend working!).

*“Do something other than architecture ... don't let it consume you. If you're finding a project hard, go bake a cake or call your mum.”*⁸³

*“Adopt the rule of 8, 8, and 8: 8 hours of work, 8 hours of sleep, and 8 hours of whatever you want to do.”*⁸⁴

*“Do things that aren't architecture, talk about books, go to museums, engage with politics. Live in the real world, design in the studio.”*⁸⁵

- Set yourself a series of daily targets and manage your progress against your plan (see **Time management** tips on page 46). If you notice a variation, adjust the plan so that you do more or (more likely!) you lower your sights a bit. Among other things, the charity MIND recommends⁸⁶ varying your activities, not biting off more than you can chew, and taking things steadily. One respondent recommended the Pomodoro technique:

*“Set 20 minute timers and put 100% focus into your work for those 20 minutes. It's a short enough amount of time that you can really focus and often you are on a roll and continue past the timer anyway. It's also a great way of knowing exactly how long it takes you to complete a task so you can manage time better.”*⁸⁷

- Carefully monitor and manage distractions. Curtail time spent on addictive video games and especially on your smart phone, with its seductive pinging of messages and likes, its access to amusing videos and news stories, and its stranglehold on your sense of self-worth. Honestly appraise how much time you spend on distractions, and figure out ways to control it.

If it helps, think about the cost of your education and whether wasting the opportunity on distractions is worth it. Also, when working, turn off the Wi-Fi and data on your smart phone.

- Past a certain point, the effort you put in ceases to yield a worthwhile return. Learn to consciously recognise when you've reached that point and only do more if you have the time and energy. Redrawing a detail at 3 am on the morning of your review is never worth it!
- Honestly appraise your good and bad habits, the work you do and don't enjoy doing, and how long each takes. It will take you some time to get a feel for this accurately. Until then, the rule of thumb is to carefully think through how much time you think something will take and then double it!
- You will get things wrong, especially when faced with unfamiliar tasks. Minimise the chances by asking for help from teaching staff, your tutor, and/or your peers without hesitation, as early as possible. Importantly, learn from the answer so that you never have to ask again.
- Unless you are working with them as a team, have the integrity and wisdom to ignore what your peers are doing. If they want to work late or all night, get knackered, rush, stress, live on coffee, and waste time, that's their business. You're smarter than that.
- If your fellow students appear to be doing better than you – however you define that – bear in mind two things. First, appearances can be misleading and second, you don't have to do as well as them: you only need to pass the course to the satisfaction of the examiners. This is a critical distinction that allows you to relax and feel good about your peers' successes, alleviating stress all round.

*“Give yourself permission to not always be amazing.”*⁸⁸

*“Comparison is the thief of joy. Don't compare your work to your peers, everyone has different skills and strengths and ways of working, go at your own pace and have fun with what you do.”*⁸⁹

- Finally, split your life into things you can't control and those you can, and only worry about the latter.

Time management tips

Good time management is a rare and highly desirable skill. Learning it takes time, ironically, but it will radically improve your experience of university and set you up as a valuable employee when it comes to joining the workforce. Success depends crucially on three factors:

- **Formulating a time-bound plan:** the first step is to understand your project and sub-divide it into discrete tasks with targets for when they should be completed. Note that a 'project' can be a piece of university work or any other personal goal.
- **Accurate self-awareness:** your plan needs to be tailored to you and how you work on average. If you tend to only draw five details a day, make sure your plan doesn't rely on your drawing twice that amount.
- **Ability to monitor and adapt:** if you keep missing deadlines, don't stick your head in the sand: revisit your plan to understand the consequences and adjust it accordingly.

Erich C. Dierdorff⁹⁰ has these tips for becoming an expert time manager:

Formulating a plan:

- Use a calendar.
- Divide up tasks into manageable chunks.
- Don't just list tasks – prioritise them and identify 'pinch points'.
- Important tasks deserve your attention more than urgent ones.
- Beware of over-optimism about how much you can get done.
- Your plan should explain the importance of each task fully so that you don't miss a step.

Boosting self-awareness:

- Work out when during the day or week you are most productive and account for that in your plan.
- To learn your realistic pace for various jobs, record how long you take against how long you had planned.
- As much as possible, fit your time management plan around your existing habits.
- Budget time as you would money; try not to overspend!

Learning to adapt:

- Have contingency plans in the event that things go wrong.
- Always appraise the future value of what you are currently doing for the project as a whole and be ready to move on. If you've spent ages on a feature that you now realise no longer works, don't hesitate to ditch it.
- Experiment with project tracker apps, remembering that the benefit of using them must outweigh the cost.
- Work in short concentrated bursts of effort, with breaks in between; this will help you to avoid procrastination.

With the foundations in place, you can start to develop routines and habits that will keep you healthy in body and mind. For the respondents to the SAW survey, this included:

- sleeping regular hours at night
- eating and drinking healthily
- taking regular breaks from work – especially when you think you can least afford the time
- exercising to stay fit
- pursuing interests outside of studying
- staying social by forming and maintaining friendships or by joining clubs or doing voluntary work
- pre-emptively identifying your support network so that you know what to do if student life overwhelms you.



🔍 CASE STUDY

Laura, Part 2 apprentice – alternative routes

Laura had started to do her Part 2 by the conventional full-time route but decided to stop mid-way through the first year.

The trouble was that, despite graduating from her Part 1 with flying colours, she had become increasingly jaded and exhausted by the long hours.

As she says, “I was over the moon with everything that I achieved but the amount of work was definitely to the detriment of my personal health at the time.”

Rather than drop out of studying altogether, she switched to a Masters in International Business, which she loved.

She tried a few things other than architecture, allowing her to secure a mortgage, and that seemed to put an end to any further study.

However, a nagging voice in the back of her mind kept calling her back, and so she decided to investigate her options. That’s when she heard about the newly instituted apprenticeship scheme for architects at Northumbria University.

The course was flexible, and earning while you learn in a commercial business environment suited her circumstances and preferred way of working. What’s more, a local employer, FaulknerBrown Architects, would support her, and so she took the plunge.

Although no easy option – the workload is still heavy – Laura feels better equipped to cope this time. “There are definitely days when I regress and spend too much time stressing rather than working, but now I know that whenever I need to stop, I will.”

Her advice to other students is about time-management and setting realistic goals. “Make yourself a timetable for the week and stick to it, and don’t work every hour of the day: the culture of working ridiculous hours is not worth it.”

She recommends taking breaks – having a dog to walk is a good excuse – and rewarding yourself with nice things.

| Sleeping well

Good sleep starts with good routines or 'sleep hygiene'. The NHS recommends⁹¹ that you work out a system that works for you and stick to it. While the detail is down to you, there are certain factors that seem to matter across the board.

- Limit your alcohol and caffeine intake.
- Eat healthily, and nothing too heavy close to bedtime.
- Exercise, even if it's just a daily walk.
- Get more exposure to sunlight.
- Keep regular hours. In other words, wake up and go to sleep at the same time every day. Even if you've had a particularly poor night's sleep, stick to the same routine for the next night. This sets your body clock and gets you into a natural rhythm.
- Give yourself enough time. Most of us need between 6 and 9 hours every night.
- Wind down an hour or so before going to bed in a way that suits you best. Take a bath, write a to-do list (so that you don't fret about it in bed), do gentle stretches, listen to music designed to relax, read a book.
- Avoid smartphone/tablet/computer screens for an hour or so before bed.
- Make your bedroom sleep-friendly. This means a comfortable bed and mattress and a room that is dark, quiet, tidy, and with the temperature set between 18°C and 24°C. Keep electronic equipment out of it.

There are apps to help: give them a try. The NHS recommends Pzizz, Sleepio, and Sleepstation. The Sleepstation website in particular has a library of helpful articles.⁹²

The idea is that good sleep will follow the introduction of a good routine. If your sleep continues to be disrupted despite your routine, keep a sleep diary and take your observations along to your GP, who will use it to help diagnose your sleep problem.

You can download a free diary template⁹³ from the National Sleep Foundation's website.

Asking for help

There is sometimes a stigma attached to asking for help, especially if it is about personal or emotional issues that you worry might reflect badly on you.

The truth is, everyone, and especially students, gets overwhelmed from time to time.

Seeking help is always the straightforward, smart thing to do. You do not need permission: just do it, as early as possible.

Universities are set up for this so they will not think you weird or annoying; on the contrary, they will be pleased that you approached them.

You will have been assigned a tutor to look after your pastoral care. Make use of them. If needed, they can point you to university counsellors and therapists.

Note that unforeseen and severe cases could mean that you have 'extenuating circumstances' that persuade the university to grant you additional time to complete work or allow you to take an examination at a later date. (See **What happens if you don't pass the year?** box on page 26.)

This is often precisely the right remedy to get you over a temporary bump, although note that you may need to catch up later, which brings its own stresses.

If you do not fancy talking to members of staff, your peers on the course will know what pressures you are under and so can be very empathetic. Otherwise, talk to other friends, family or trusted people.

Whatever you do, don't bottle it up: a problem shared is a problem halved.

Several respondents to the SAW survey recommended identifying and familiarising yourself with the mental wellbeing support services *as soon as you can* so that you know exactly what to do if anything goes wrong.

This is a great strategy: knowing there is a safety net to catch us if we should fall makes us braver and more confident.

"Getting a solid understanding of different support options – extended deadlines, dedicated university staff – can help to ease distress, uncertainty and panic if someone ends up requiring any or all of these."⁹⁴

There are many sources of help outside the university. You can talk to your GP, or approach charities such as MIND for information and advice. The Architects' Benevolent Society (ABS) has a partnership⁹⁵ with Anxiety UK that gives you access to various resources including a helpline and email support.

🔍 CASE STUDY

Omar, post-Part 2 – overcoming challenges by asking for help

Omar took an Architecture Foundation course before completing his Part 1 and completed his Part 2 while working full-time. He struggled with his mental health during both degrees but particularly during his Part 1, where his undeclared dyslexia and lack of support were factors in his depression. He currently works in Building Control for his local authority.

His academic achievements, which are impressive by themselves, are all the more astonishing given his circumstances. First, he wasn't predicted to pass his GCSEs, let alone pass his MArch. Second, he was caring for his poorly grandmother during his Part 1. Third, money was very tight; he worked full-time doing youth work during his MArch, attending University by using up annual leave. And finally, he bought a house and started a family during his MArch.

Despite all of this, he still questions whether he is good enough to complete his Part 3. "I had really low self-esteem growing up, which came through at University, and suffered from a level of imposter syndrome. Put me in an academic setting and I just seem to go quiet and can't get my ideas across, which then affects how people perceive me."

Like many first-year students, he felt like he didn't know what he was doing. The stress of this uncertainty was compounded by feeling like the odd one out. "I didn't seem to have much in common with the others. I don't want to say that it was because of my colour but I certainly felt alienated."

A communication failure in his part 1 studies meant that teaching staff made no allowance for his dyslexia, souring his relationships with them. "At one point a tutor told me I could be good but was just lazy. To be honest, I just needed an arm around my shoulder instead of that old-fashioned approach where we'll chastise him until he does better."

In fact, it was only after failing the first year of his MArch that his dyslexia came up in discussions with his tutor and he was, finally, offered appropriate support and allowances. Although the workload was still stressful, it was the key to his subsequent success.

"It's really true that there's no weakness in seeking support. That whole perception that if I need help then I must be weak is wrong. There's no such thing as a stupid question."

| Mindfulness

Many people swear by mindfulness to help with stress, anxiety and depression, and to maintain good mental wellbeing. The concept seems to mean different things to different people but at heart is about 'being present in the moment': noticing things in and outside of your body as they happen so that you do not take them for granted.

People are 'mindful' in a variety of ways. For example, for some it is merely being more observant as they go about their daily lives. For others it can involve a walk in the countryside, yoga, tai-chi, meditation, or breathing exercises.

If these options are impossible or do not appeal, try mindfulness apps. The NHS lists *Bluelce*, *Catch It*, *Chill Panda*, *Feeling Good: positive mindset*, and *Thrive*.⁹⁶

After suffering a difficult period with his own mental health in his twenties, architect Ben Channon, founder and chair of the Architects' Mental Wellbeing Forum, is a strong advocate for mindfulness. He recommends⁹⁷ two additional apps: *Calm* and *Headspace*.

Interestingly, mindfulness complements CBT by encouraging you to identify and name feelings and emotions inside as you experience them, allowing you to know them for what they are.

Note that if you currently suffer from anxiety or depression, mindfulness is not a substitute for proven therapies such as CBT.⁹⁸ However, it can help you to maintain good mental health and is unlikely to do any harm.

| Exercise

Taking regular exercise is proven to protect you against a huge range of health problems, including stress and depression. What's more, it boosts your self-esteem, mood, energy and quality of sleep.

Any physical activity is better than none, but the more you do, the better the effects. Aim for 150 minutes (two and a half hours) of exercise a week.

To reap long-term health dividends, this activity should at the very least raise your heart rate, make you breathe faster and make you warmer. For a better result, try vigorous intensity activity that makes you lose your breath and makes your heart pump hard.⁹⁹

Everything counts. For example, you can incorporate a fast walk, run or cycle to and from university and always use the stairs instead of the lift. Better still, take up a sport or active hobby. Not only will this fulfil your exercise quota, it will also broaden your horizons, allow you to meet people, and give you a break from studying.

*"I played sport throughout university, and this was an excellent way to force me out of the department and see friends who weren't on my course and escape from architects for a while!"*¹⁰⁰

8

About mental wellbeing

This chapter briefly spells out the most common mental health impacts, putting them into context so that you can more easily confront their reality in the event that you should be affected.

8 About mental wellbeing

Chapter 6 showed that students, especially first years, can be affected mentally by the experience of going to university.

Chapter 7 showed that there are effective coping strategies.

This chapter briefly spells out the most common mental health impacts, putting them into context so that you can more easily confront their reality in the event that you should be affected.

| What are mental health disorders?

There are many mental health disorders, often rather ill-defined and with many overlapping symptoms. The World Health Organization¹⁰¹ classifies them into several groups. The ones that are most relevant to students are likely to be:

- Neurotic, stress-related and somatoform disorders such as anxiety, panic attacks, racing heart, and so on.
- Affective disorders such as depression.
- Behavioural syndromes such as sleep disorders.

These disorders are fairly prevalent in the population as a whole. Mixed anxiety and depression, for example, is the most common mental disorder in Britain, with almost 8% of people affected.¹⁰²

Women are more affected than men, and are almost twice as likely to be diagnosed with anxiety disorders.¹⁰³

Other than gender, your vulnerability depends on the interaction between individual attributes (genetic factors or personality traits), social circumstances, and environmental factors. You are more likely to be protected¹⁰⁴ if you have:

- Individual attributes of:
 - good self-esteem and confidence
 - the ability to solve problems and manage stress or adversity
 - good communication skills
 - good physical health and fitness.
- Social circumstances that include:
 - the social support of family and friends
 - good parenting and family interaction
 - physical security and safety from violence and abuse
 - economic security
 - scholastic achievement
 - satisfaction and success at work.
- Environmental factors that include:
 - equality of access to basic services
 - social justice, tolerance, integration
 - social and gender equality
 - physical security and safety from war or disaster.

Individual attributes are more readily controlled than social circumstances, while environmental factors are almost entirely out of your hands. The good news is that the protective individual attributes can all be learned, managed and maintained by you.



| Stress

Stress is the main gateway to mental ill-health, especially anxiety or depression, which themselves cause stress, setting up a self-reinforcing pattern of feelings that can affect your academic performance and other areas of your life.

One of the problems with stress and mental health issues generally is that we find it difficult to identify them in ourselves and are reluctant to admit to them.

The list of possible red flags is quite long, with physical symptoms accompanying the emotional ones.

The NHS¹⁰⁵ and mental health charity MIND¹⁰⁶ say stress can make you feel:

- irritable
- anxious
- restless
- tearful
- like you cannot enjoy yourself
- worried a lot of the time
- it is hard to make decisions
- like avoiding situations that are troubling you
- like eating too much or too little
- smoking or drinking alcohol more than usual.

You may start to:

- have sleep problems
- find it hard to concentrate
- bite your nails, pick your skin, or grind your teeth
- feel short of breath or breathe very fast
- have panic attacks, i.e. sudden events that leave you sweating, dizzy, and gasping for air.
- have muscle tension
- have blurred eyesight or sore eyes
- lose interest in sex or be unable to enjoy sex
- feel tired all the time
- grind your teeth or clench your jaw
- have headaches
- have chest pains
- develop high blood pressure
- have indigestion or heartburn
- develop constipation or diarrhoea
- feel sick.

These symptoms are not diagnostic – they might have other causes – but if you suffer from any of them, allow the possibility that you might be suffering from stress.

| Anxiety

Stress turns into anxiety when persistent, excessive or irrational feelings and behaviours stay with you even in the absence of a cause. The dominant symptoms are insomnia, difficulty concentrating, fatigue, muscle tension, and irritability¹⁰⁷, and ‘autonomic overactivity’¹⁰⁸, including panic attacks.

If you think you suffer from it, you are not alone: in 2017, an estimated 284 million people globally suffered an anxiety disorder.¹⁰⁹

| Depression

Depression affects your mood, leading to feelings of guilt or low self-worth, diminished self-confidence, loss of interest or pleasure, pessimism, disturbed sleep and appetite, low energy, and poor concentration.

Again, the incidence around the world is comparatively high, with an estimated 264 m sufferers in 2017, although it should be noted that the lowest prevalence is among those with a tertiary (i.e. university) education, especially if they are in work.¹¹⁰

In 2014, nearly a fifth of people in the UK aged 16 and over showed symptoms of anxiety or depression. This means that it is a common, everyday challenge and, while unpleasant and potentially serious, there is a good chance that you will recover.

What’s more, with small changes to your daily habits and mindset, you have the potential to emerge stronger and more mentally resilient, ready to take on the next stages of your life.

| Sleep disorders

Getting enough sleep is critical to our wellbeing, specifically for improving learning, recollection and emotional stability, which makes insomnia a particularly cruel aspect of anxiety and depression as we worry about things obsessively or irrationally.¹¹¹

Too little sleep for too long also increases your risk of serious medical conditions including obesity, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure and depression.¹¹²

There are several sleep disorders but by far the most common is insomnia, where you have persistent, long-lasting difficulty in getting to sleep and staying there. According to Sleepstation, it affects about one in three adults in the UK and has been declared an 'epidemic'.

The problem is a very considerable risk for architecture students and should be taken seriously. Resist the temptation to be swayed by the culture of working 'all-nighters'.

| Loneliness

Going to university uproots us from the places we know and, especially, our friends, loved ones and family. Unsurprisingly, the experience can lead to loneliness, which is a significant contributor to anxiety and depression. It also increases the risks of obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, and early death.

According to the Campaign to End Loneliness,¹¹³ almost half of adults in England feel lonely occasionally, sometimes or often.

The extent to which loneliness is a risk for architecture students is unclear. It was alluded to in the SAW survey answers without featuring as a major issue, but its prevalence generally in society is enough to highlight it as important to guard against.

| Other risks

Clearly, students are at risk from other impacts but there is nothing in the data to suggest that architecture students are any more at risk than any other student groups.

We are all familiar with and even joke about students' predilection for getting drunk and experimenting with recreational drugs (many of which are illegal), but this risk should not be taken lightly. Abusing drugs and drink or developing a dependency are serious issues that usually require specialist help.

If you suspect that you might be addicted, that's a sure sign that you have a problem. Either discuss your habits with your GP or student counselling service, or go to specialist charitable services.

Student Mind¹¹⁴ recommends using the Drinkaware website¹¹⁵ for problems with alcohol and the Frank website¹¹⁶ for problems with drugs.

9

Keep on going

No matter where you are in your journey of studying architecture, we urge you not just to read this guide but to immerse yourself in it and, critically, put its advice into practice.

9 Keep on going

No matter where you are in your journey of studying architecture, we urge you not just to read this guide but to immerse yourself in it and, critically, put its advice into practice.

Doing so will help you to put your best foot forward, freeing you up to make the most of this precious experience and turbo-charge your future career prospects.

The learning you pick up along the way will serve you well no matter what life throws at you. As well as building core knowledge, the experience exercises creative muscles, builds mental resilience, and sparks off the insatiable curiosity and perseverance essential for the pursuit of excellence – in architecture or any other walk of life.

And as the world faces unparalleled challenges from climate change, urbanisation, resource depletion, post-pandemic recovery, and many other threats, the things you learn at university are precisely the qualities society needs.

But studying well is not just about learning the knowledge, skills and behaviours that lead to professional competence. It is also about staying healthy in body and mind.

The route to qualification is demanding. At the beginning, the step-up from school can catch you out as you move from the comfortable world of right and wrong answers and finite scopes of learning to the ambiguous and much less certain world of design and self-directed study.

On top of the ordinary stresses of being away from home – perhaps for the first time – and taking on an enormous financial commitment, studying architecture throws you extra curveballs in the form of semi-public criticism, full workloads and constant pressure to perform.

To get through it all and flourish, you must develop ways of coping. Based on in-depth responses from the battle-hardened SAW survey respondents, **Chapter 7** is full of proven strategies that will allow you to do just that.

Don't expect results overnight. Rather, gradually implement the advice as you go. Give it time and try different approaches to find a system that works for you. Have faith that a solution tailored to your needs will eventually click into place.

As we said in **Chapter 1**, a career in architecture is a journey of life-long learning that never ends. Passing the Part 3 and registering as an architect – if that is the route you choose – does not signal the end of your education.

On the contrary, it ushers in a whole new phase as you negotiate the commercial realities of employment and professional practice, which itself is constantly evolving in the light of new thinking, fresh technology and changing needs. The core knowledge you acquire with such difficulty at university is just the foundation for yet more learning.

However, if you've implemented the good coping strategies and habits recommended in this guide, getting the hang of yet more newness will come more easily. You are more likely to handle the stress well, turning it into an energising and deeply motivating challenge.

Of course, people's experiences depend on their character, personal circumstances, and how they react to the management style and culture of their places of work, which vary considerably.

*Practise Architecture Well*¹⁷ – a companion to this guide – sets out the basics of doing well in practice and gives advice on all these points. If you are currently in work as a newly registered or early-career architect, or, indeed, as a Part 1 or 2 assistant, apprentice, or any other role while you learn, we thoroughly recommend that you refer to it.

Finally, it is all too easy to get snarled up in the day-to-day struggles of getting through the coursework and lose sight of your achievements in getting this far.

Remember that the bar to entry at every stage in the journey to becoming an architect is high, and yet here you are, doing it.

Whether you are a school-leaver just contemplating architecture or a Part 2-qualified student studying for your Part 3, we salute and honour your commitment, ambition, and accomplishments. Keep going and stay well!

10

Further help
and resources

10 Further help and resources

The following list is not definitive but should point you in the right direction if you need further help.

| Applying to study architecture

RIBA advice:

- <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/how-to-become-an-architect>
- <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture>
- <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/files/Education/Think-Architecture-PDF.pdf>

UCAS information: <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/after-gcses/find-career-ideas/explore-jobs/job-profile/architect#:~:text=To%20become%20an%20architect%2C%20you,maths%20or%20a%20science%20subject>

Prospects graduate career guidance experts: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors/property-and-construction/how-to-become-an-architect>

| Continuous professional development

A vision for **CPD** for RIBA Chartered Members: <https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/resources-landing-page/the-way-ahead>

| Developing your skills

Archisoup – a blog packed with useful resources for students: www.archisoup.com

First in Architecture – a blog that includes many helpful student resources: www.firstinarchitecture.co.uk

| Financial support

RIBA information about sources of funding: <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/advice-on-funding-your-architectural-studies/funding-opportunities-for-students-of-architecture/riba-student-support-fund>

<https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/advice-on-funding-your-architectural-studies/funding-opportunities-for-students-of-architecture>

| Mental health support

Able Futures delivers the **Access to Work Mental Health Support Service** on behalf of the **Department for Work and Pensions**. <https://able-futures.co.uk/individuals>

Architects Benevolent Society offers confidential advice, help with physical and psychological difficulties, and financial assistance for architects: <https://www.absnet.org.uk/>

Big White Wall online mental health support community offering anonymous peer support, monitored by professionally trained ‘wall guides’. Free for 6 months in some NHS areas – check for availability: <https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>

CALM is the Campaign Against Living Miserably, a charity providing a mental health helpline and webchat. <http://www.thecalmzone.net/>

Feeling Good, a ‘positive mental training’ app approved by NHS digital and available for university students at UK HEIs that have subscribed to the service: <http://www.foundationforpositivementalhealth.com/listen-now/download-our-app-feeling-good/>

The **Samaritans**: <http://www.samaritans.org/>

| Mental wellbeing

The **Architects Mental Wellbeing Forum** (<https://www.amwf.co.uk>) was set up to improve Mental Wellbeing throughout architecture. They have produced a toolkit for practices: https://4efa479e-a68f-4327-a38f-07f6761a62ea.filesusr.com/ugd/fb91f8_33c556b0fe9b4855824da571826586d6.pdf

Be Mindful, a mindfulness guide from the Mental Health Foundation: bemindful.co.uk

Calm, a meditation app: www.calm.com

Ben Channon, Happy by Design: A Guide to Architecture and Mental Wellbeing, RIBA Publishing, 2018

Headspace, a meditation app: www.headspace.com

Mental Health Foundation about the connection between diet and mental health: www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/d/diet-and-mental-health

Mindful – a website full of useful tips on mindfulness: www.mindful.org

NHS guide to mindfulness: www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness

TED Talk – All it takes is 10 mindful minutes, a talk by mindfulness expert Andy Puddicombe about the transformative power of doing nothing: www.ted.com/talks/andy_puddicombe_all_it_takes_is_10_mindful_minutes?referrer=playlist-talks_to_help_you_manage_stress

TED Talk – the brain changing benefits of exercise, a talk by neuroscientist Wendy Suzuki about the power of exercise to boost your mood and memory and protect against neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's: https://www.ted.com/talks/wendy_suzuki_the_brain_changing_benefits_of_exercise

Think Positive, Scotland's student mental health project, hosted by NUS Scotland aiming to support students experiencing mental ill health and tackle stigma and discrimination: <https://www.thinkpositive.scot/>

| RIBA

RIBA Student Membership (RIBA Student Membership is **free** and available to those studying RIBA Parts 1 or 2 (or are in their year out between Part 1 and Part 2) at RIBA validated school of architecture anywhere in the world: <https://www.architecture.com/join-riba/free-student-membership>

| Supporting Diversity

Architecture for All, **Black Females in Architecture**, and **The Paradigm Network** are networks of related professionals who champion diversity in the Construction Industry:

- <https://architectureforall.org.uk>
- <https://www.blackfemarc.com/why-bfa>
- <https://www.paradigmnetwork.co.uk>

The **FLUID Diversity Mentoring Programme** is a built-environment leadership programme addressing barriers to diversity and inclusion: www.builtbyus.org.uk/fluid

| Supporting your studies

Arch Daily online magazine:

- <https://www.archdaily.com/777265/the-architecture-school-survival-guide>
- <https://www.archdaily.com/772277/back-to-school-archdailys-tips-for-incoming-architecture-students>

Iain Borden and **Katerina Ruedi Ray**, *The Dissertation: a guide for architecture students*, 2014, Routledge

Stephen Brookhouse, *Part 3 Handbook*, 4th Edition, 2020, RIBA Publishing

Adrian Dobson, *21 Things You Won't Learn in Architecture School*, 2014, RIBA Publishing

Matthew Frederick, *101 Things I Learned in Architecture School*, 2007, MIT Press

RIBA Future Architects – <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/future-architects>

Iain Jackson, *The Architecture School Survival Guide*, 2015, Laurence King Publishing

Life of an Architect blog: <https://www.lifeofanarchitect.com/surviving-architecture-school/>

National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), an American nonprofit organisation: <https://www.ncarb.org/blog/how-survive-and-thrive-architecture-school>

RIBA Mentoring Guidance: <https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/resources-landing-page/%20mentoring-guidance>

Yasmin Shariff and **Jane Tankard**, *Towards a New Architect*, 2010, Architectural Press

Neil Spiller, *How to Thrive at Architecture School*, 2020, RIBA Publishing

Study.com, a personalised study platform: http://study.com/articles/How_to_Survive_Architecture_School.html

Young Architect – a blog aimed at helping young architects: <https://youngarchitect.com/>

| Working in practices

Practise Architecture Well – the companion to this guide: <https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/resources-landing-page/support-guides-for-students-and-early-career-architects>

Endnotes

- ¹ https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/the_future_of_skills_employment_in_2030_0.pdf
- ² In a programme validated by the Royal Institute of British Architects and/or prescribed by the ARB
- ³ <https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/resources-landing-page/support-guides-for-students-and-early-career-architects>
- ⁴ <https://www.hawkinsbrown.com>
- ⁵ <https://www.reddeer.co.uk/assets/EthicsinArchitecturalPracticeCaseStudiespdf.pdf>
- ⁶ <https://arb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Architects-Code-2017.pdf>
- ⁷ <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/GatherContent/Social-Value-Toolkit-for-Architecture/Additional-Documents/The-Way-Ahead-PDF.pdf>
- ⁸ Part 2 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- ⁹ <https://jobs.architecture.com/staticpages/10290/salary-guide-architects-and-architecture/>
- ¹⁰ Liz Diller, principal at Diller Scofidio + Renfro <https://www.washingtonpost.com/magazine/2020/07/13/pandemic-has-shown-us-what-future-architecture-could-be/?arc404=true>
- ¹¹ Although the data is hard to come by, a 2017 discussion paper by Architects for Change found evidence that non-white and female students leave architectural education at a disproportionately high rate.
- ¹² <https://arb.org.uk/architect-information/applying-for-registration-for-the-first-time/>
- ¹³ <https://jobs.architecture.com/>
- ¹⁴ <https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/apprenticeships/universities-offering-architecture-apprenticeship-training>
- ¹⁶ Part 1 student quotation from research by Alan Jones
- ¹⁷ <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/files/Education/Former-bursary-winners/David-McClean-Peter-Holgate-Mental-Health-in-UK-architecture-education>
- ¹⁸ <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.studyinternational.com/news/step-step-get-uk-university-international-student/>
- ²⁰ <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/qualifying-with-riba-overseas/preparatory-course-for-arb-exams>
- ²¹ <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/architecture/riba-studio/riba-foundation/>
- ²² These are current at the time of writing but subject to change.
- ²³ Part 1 student quotation from research by Alan Jones
- ²⁴ Part 1 student quotation from research by Alan Jones
- ²⁵ Part 1 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- ²⁶ Part 1 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- ²⁷ Part 2 student quotation from research by Alan Jones
- ²⁸ <https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/resources-landing-page/support-guides-for-students-and-early-career-architects>
- ²⁹ https://www.ribabooks.com/the-dissertation-a-guide-for-architecture-students_9780415725361
- ³⁰ <https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/resources-landing-page/validation-procedures-and-criteria>
- ³¹ Having Parts 1 and 2 qualifications (and their UK equivalents) is not the only way to progress to Part 3. Some foreign qualifications also count, particularly those listed under the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive. The ARB governs which other international qualifications will be accepted.
- ³² <https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/resources-landing-page/support-guides-for-students-and-early-career-architects>
- ³³ <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/riba-part-3>
- ³⁴ <https://arb.org.uk/student-information/schools-institutions-architecture/>
- ³⁵ Note that British students are entitled to apply for student loans. For more information, see <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>
- ³⁶ See <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/advice-on-funding-your-architectural-studies/funding-opportunities-for-students-of-architecture/riba-student-support-fund> and <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/advice-on-funding-your-architectural-studies/funding-opportunities-for-students-of-architecture>

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- 37 <https://www.savesthestudent.org/student-finance/student-bursary-scholarship-sources.html>
- 38 <https://www.gov.uk/extra-money-pay-university/university-and-college-hardship-funds>
- 39 As reported here <https://www.studyinternational.com/news/costs-of-your-architecture-degree-you-may-not-have-factored-in/>
- 40 Part 2 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 41 Part 1 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 42 Part 2 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
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- 44 <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/riba-pedr>
- 45 The other possible route is by using Certificates of Professional Experience. These are for people who already have more than six years of qualifying practical experience.
- 46 <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/files/Education/PEDR-guidance-docs-2020/RIBA-PEDR-Student-guidance-FAQs.pdf?la=en>
- 47 Part 2 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 48 Part 2 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 49 Part 2 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 50 Part 2 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 51 <https://www.g4c.org.uk/>
- 52 <https://constructingexcellence.org.uk/>
- 53 Year Out student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 54 <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/student-mentoring>; for more information, see also: <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/studying-architecture/student-mentoring>
- 55 <https://www.architecture.com/join-riba/free-student-membership>
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- 57 <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/files/Education/PEDR-guidance-docs-2020/RIBA-PEDR-Student-guidance-FAQs.pdf?la=en>
- 58 <https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/resources-landing-page/%20mentoring-guidance>
- 59 <https://jobs.architecture.com/>
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- 61 <https://www.isepstudyabroad.org/programs/program-types-and-deadlines/isep-exchange>
- 62 <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/studying-overseas/what-turing-scheme>
- 63 Part 1 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
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- 67 <https://www.architecture.com/education-cpd-and-careers/the-compact>
- 68 <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/student-life/about-student-mental-health/>
- 69 <https://upp-ltd.com/student-survey/>
- 70 Part 2 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 71 Staff are experienced and follow criteria to mark each project. In marking 'creative ideas' and how those ideas have been developed, there will always be some difference of opinion and this is repeatedly one of the most difficult things for students to get their heads around.
- 72 Part 1 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 73 Part 2 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent

- 74 Part 1 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 75 Year Out student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 76 Part 1 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 77 Part 1 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 78 A 2020 paper reviewed all the evidence and concluded that the prevalence of mental health disorders among architecture students almost certainly is worse than among the student population as a whole. Mental health in UK architecture education: An analysis of contemporary student wellbeing An Initial Study by David McClean, Peter Holgate & Lyndsay Bloice (2020) RIBA <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/files/Education/Former-bursary-winners/David-McClean-Peter-Holgate-Mental-Health-in-UK-architecture-education>
- 79 'Significant' is defined as the number reported by more than half of those who said they'd suffered negative mental health impacts.
- 80 Year Out student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 81 Extracted from Robert L. Leahy, Stephen J. F. Holland, and Lata K. McGinn's *Treatment Plans and Interventions for Depression and Anxiety Disorders (2012)*, reproduced in an article by Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/the-coddling-of-the-american-mind/399356/>
- 82 <https://neweconomics.org/2008/10/five-ways-to-wellbeing>
- 83 Part 2 student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
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- 90 Erich C. Dierdorff is a professor of management and entrepreneurship at DePaul University and an associate editor at *Personnel Psychology*. This information is adapted from his article for the Harvard Business Review: <https://hbr.org/2020/01/time-management-is-about-more-than-life-hacks>
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- 92 <https://www.sleepstation.org.uk/articles/>
- 93 <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/nsf-official-sleep-diary>
- 94 Year Out student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
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- 96 <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health/>
- 97 <https://www.absnet.org.uk/news/mindfulness-architects#overlay-context=news/architects-mental-wellbeing-forum>
- 98 Van Dam, N. T., van Vugt, M. K., Vago, D. R., Schmalzl, L., Saron, C. D., Olendzki, A., ... Meyer, D. E. (2017). *Mind the Hype: A Critical Evaluation and Prescriptive Agenda for Research on Mindfulness and Meditation. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 13(1), 36–61.* doi:10.1177/1745691617709589
- 99 <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-health-benefits/>
- 100 Year Out student, Study Architecture Well Survey respondent
- 101 <https://www.who.int/classifications/icd/en/bluebook.pdf>
- 102 <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics/mental-health-statistics-most-common-mental-health-problems>
- 103 *ibid.*
- 104 <https://ourworldindata.org/mental-health#risk-factors-for-mental-health>
- 105 <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/student-stress/>
- 106 <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/stress/signs-of-stress/>
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- ¹¹⁰ <https://ourworldindata.org/mental-health#prevalence-of-mental-health-and-substance-use-disorders>
- ¹¹¹ <https://absnet.org.uk/news/effect-good-nights-sleep>
- ¹¹² <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/why-lack-of-sleep-is-bad-for-your-health/>
- ¹¹³ <https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/the-facts-on-loneliness/>
- ¹¹⁴ <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/student-life/student-lifestyle/#CopingInAnAlcoholOrDrugsCulture>
- ¹¹⁵ <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice/support-services/alcohol-support-services>
- ¹¹⁶ <https://www.talktofrank.com/>
- ¹¹⁷ <https://www.architecture.com/knowledge-and-resources/resources-landing-page/support-guides-for-students-and-early-career-architects>

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