

# SAUL

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

[www.saulstudio.ie](http://www.saulstudio.ie)

frequently asked questions

# f r e q u e n t l y   a s k e d   q u e s t i o n s

## *...about the course*

### **Is the course accredited by the RIAI?**

Yes. The programme at SAUL has full accreditation by the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI).

### **How does the course at UL compare with other Irish courses in architecture?**

It is the same. The BArch course at UL is a five-year undergraduate course, with successful students achieving a Bachelor (Honours) Degree at Level 8 in the National Framework of Qualifications. Thus the UL course is exactly the same as other RIAI accredited undergraduate Architecture degrees in Ireland.

### **What is ‘Design Studio’?**

Design Studio is at the heart of architecture education at UL. As well as the physical place where all subjects are taught, ‘Design Studio’ is a creative laboratory where learning is developed through experimentation and reflection. Woven into the design studio are courses in structures and construction, history and theory, environmental science, cultural studies and professional practice. Training as an architect engages the student in a process of ‘learning by doing’ and problem-based learning. All of this work in design studio is further supported by site visits, field trips, visiting lecturers study trips abroad.

### **Do students spend much time in the architecture school?**

The teaching day in Design Studio runs continuously from 9 to 6, five days a week. Architecture is a challenging and very rewarding endeavour, it requires a student to be creative as well as achieving a high academic standing. The study of architecture is demanding and very exciting. Students report high levels of engagement with a compelling and broad course. Live projects, community engagement, international lecturers and much more are on offer at SAUL.

### **Do I have to stay the whole five years?**

Yes. To achieve a Bachelor (Honours) Level 8 degree in architecture the student must stay and successfully complete the full five years of study. However, after the third year of study, taking a ‘year-out’ from formal study is encouraged, where the student has an opportunity to gain professional experience and to travel, but mostly simply to grow. At this juncture at the end of third year, studying abroad in a linked recommended university is also possible, as is transferring into another comparable architecture programme to complete the degree.

### **Are there many exams at the end of each semester?**

Design Studio work is reviewed on a periodical basis throughout the semester. Students are expected to synthesise all material produced over the course of the semester into a portfolio for formal assessment at the end of that semester. All other classes are graded through coursework (presentations, essays, tests, drawings, study assignments etc.). Thus, instead of having one exam at the end of the semester, continuous feedback on module work throughout the semester is the norm.

## How many students are in one class?

Class sizes average 25-40 students

## Does SAUL offer placements in architectural practices?

We encourage students to work in the profession – with architects, engineers, builders – and with many faculty members well rooted in the profession in Ireland we offer help and advice in finding suitable employment. The academic schedule allows for extended periods of work experience over the summer. A year-out after third year is another option to gain the desired professional exposure, possibly through a combination of work and travel abroad.

### *...about admission*

## What are the minimum entry requirements for the course?

Applicants are required to hold at the time of enrolment the established Leaving Certificate (or an approved equivalent) with a minimum of six subjects which must include: Two H5 (Higher Level) grades and Four O6 (Ordinary Level) grades or four H7 (Higher Level) grades. Subjects must include Mathematics, Irish or another language, and English.

- **Special Mathematics Entrance Examination**

Foundation Maths is acceptable to meet the Minimum Maths requirements.

The University holds a special mathematics entrance examination in August each year for students who achieve sufficient CAO entry points and satisfy all other entrance requirements, but who do not achieve the requisite grade in Mathematics in the Leaving Certificate for Faculty of Science and Engineering undergraduate degrees. Candidates who pass this special examination are deemed to have satisfied the Mathematics entry requirement for all programmes run by the Faculty of Science & Engineering. Further information is available on the Faculty of Science and Engineering website:

[http://scieng.ul.ie/students/prospective\\_students/special-mathematics-entrance-examination](http://scieng.ul.ie/students/prospective_students/special-mathematics-entrance-examination) or contact Admissions for information and an application form <http://ulsites.ul.ie/admissions/>

## What are the required CAO points? Are they likely to change?

In 2021 the points for LM099 were 520. Architecture remains an attractive subject for study. The points in a given year are to be used as a guideline only, due to various factors these can go up or down each year. Applicants who meet the minimum entry requirements, and have the required number of points, are eligible applicants and will be admitted to the programme.

## Can you transfer into the course?

Yes. For further details, please see <https://saulstudio.ie/admissions/transfer-students/>

## What is required for mature applicants?

Applications are particularly welcome from mature candidates (at least 23 years of age on or before 1st January of the year of enrolment). Each mature application is considered on an individual basis. Academic qualifications, work and life experience, motivation and overall potential for the programme of study are evaluated. All mature candidates must apply through

the CAO. Mature applicants are required to attend for interview and to bring material to support their application to that interview.

For details please refer to the [www.ul.ie/admissions](http://www.ul.ie/admissions) website and the separate SAUL application guidelines.

### **Do I need to take Art in secondary school?**

No, Art is not a required subject.

### **Do I need to take Maths or Physics in secondary school?**

Apart from the minimum Maths requirement there is no additional specific requirement for Maths, and Physics is not a required subject. An intuitive understanding of Art, Maths and some science subjects is undeniably helpful and are a valuable preparation in logical reasoning and clarity of thought. Structures classes as taught to architecture students at UL but do not include extensive calculations, rather require a clear understanding of the structural logic in a building.

### **Do I need CAD or Tech Drawing?**

Sketching, architectural drawing and technical drafting is taught immediately in first year, and CAD will be introduced later in the course. Architectural drawing is a specific skill, and is neither 'tech drawing' nor CAD.

## *...about career and profession*

### **Are you a fully qualified architect after five years?**

The Building Control Act 2007 introduced registration for architects in the Republic of Ireland, The RIAI maintains the professional register - "The best way to qualify as an architect eligible for RIAI Membership and admission to the Register for Architects is to

- get a degree from a recognized school of architecture, followed by
- two years of approved practical experience, and
- an examination in professional practice.

Recognised degree courses in architecture take five years of full-time study. Many students take a year out for practical experience between the third and fourth years. So the whole process, from start to full professional qualification, generally takes seven to nine years." - Refer to [www.riai.ie](http://www.riai.ie) for further details.

Architecture is more than an industry-driven profession. The architectural education at SAUL equips students with knowledge and abilities widely recognised. This enables students to practice in the profession of architecture or even in related fields nationally and internationally as many architects have done successfully in the past. SAUL graduates are currently employed nationally and internationally (in Limerick, Dublin, Cork, UK, Berlin, New York, London, Canada, France).

### **What jobs can students get after completing the course?**

A SAUL graduate will of course will be in a position to start working in an architect's office. This is

the path followed by most graduates. An architect's office in private practice can vary in size from a sole practitioner to an office of over 100 employees. Equally, an architect's office in a local authority context can mean that a young graduate is exposed to working across many local authority departments such as planning, transport or policy. A number of recent SAUL graduates have sought out alternate paths to practice, i.e. some have chosen to work solely on self-generated projects and design-build projects. Others have chosen to work directly with communities. Others have been employed as teaching assistants at SAUL. There is a growing and healthy architectural culture of SAUL graduates choosing to stay and find work in both Limerick City and in the Limerick Region. SAUL's FabLab in Limerick City is such a case in point.

Architecture studies are broad, encompassing technical skills, design, art, history and presentation skills and some graduates move into other areas including teaching, mentoring at university, policymaking or public administration, business or urban design, history, journalism, photography or other arts, furniture or model making, research and writing, or pursue further studies.