

NEW ARCHITECTURE STUDENT ESSENTIALS



From FIRST IN ARCHITECTURE

Your guide to being a new architecture student, with equipment suggestions and free downloads getting you ready for your architecture studies.

Advice for new architecture students

So, you have decided to study architecture? Excellent choice! Get ready for an amazing journey.

I'm sure you've already heard, but studying architecture is hard work! But with a little preparation, a bit of hustle and a whole lot of dedication, it can also be great!

I put a call out to the First In Architecture community and asked them what advice they would give to new architecture students. The community is a great place, offering support and guidance on all things architecture to anyone who asks no matter what stage you are at in your career. So between us, from well seasoned professionals to existing students, here are some of the most important pieces of advice we would give to new architecture students. Hopefully some of these will help you with the transition into your architecture course, and achieve great success.

Read, Research and Learn

Forget Netflix, forget the latest box set, start reading, start researching. Try and fill **some** of your free time with architectural books, journals, websites and anything that will start to immerse you into the world of architecture. Start paying attention to everything around you, and question everything. Your architecture curriculum cannot teach you everything you need or want to know about architecture. Teach yourself as much as you can to expand your knowledge beyond what you are learning in the lecture theatre and design studio. We are lucky that now we have a wealth of information and tutorials available to us online - make use of it!

Keep up to date

This follows on from the previous point, but try and keep up to date with industry news wherever possible. Whether you follow some of the well known journals and news blogs online, or go to the library regularly to check out the latest journals. Try and know what is current, so that your mind is fresh with architectural information.

Be organised

Start making a collection of libraries on your laptop that you can refer back to. Whether it is boards on Pinterest or folders on your computer, start collecting your inspiration, whether it is buildings, presentation techniques, resources and so on. Start to build your knowledge library and make sure you can call on it easily when you need it. Generally be organised with your time, your stuff, your assignments - it will go a long way to helping you get where you need to be.

Learn to manage your time

For me, time management is one of the most important aspects of any working life. Being able to manage your time and get things done is a great skill to work on. When you approach your assignments, dissect the project – look at the end date and work backwards and figure out what you need to do and when, in order to successfully complete your project on time. Break it down and work on small sections of the assignment in order to reach the end goal.

Every project has a structure, along with a selection of tasks, required output, perhaps intermediate submissions or presentations. All of this information you are provided with will give you the ability to structure your tasks and do what is necessary to complete each task. Start your projects immediately, don't put things off. Part of managing your time, is making sure you use your time efficiently. If you have a project due in two weeks, start it as soon as it is issued to you. Maximise the time available to you to complete the task.

If you struggle with procrastination or time management, I would recommend this book - its a short read but very useful. [Eat that Frog](#)

Find a good support network

Hang around students that have the same work ethics as you, that is, people that want to work, do well and succeed. Unfortunately, if you spend your time with people that skip lectures, and leave everything until the last minute, you will get dragged down with them. Try to find a group of supportive people that are effectively on the same page as you.

Be present

Get involved in every aspect of your course that you can. If something is optional, make it compulsory. Rarely do we have the opportunity to learn and get involved that when we are at university, so make the most of what is available to you, get yourself there and immerse yourself in it.

Sleep

I have always stayed firm that all nighters are not the way to go. We don't create our best work after hours and hours of sleep deprivation, we just don't. So get your work done first, have fun after, and sleep. I really cannot labour this point enough. Treat the course like a job, work office hours, maybe more if you need, but go to bed at a civilised hour - please!

Step away from architecture

Make sure you give yourself a break from architecture sometimes, otherwise it is pretty easy to burn out. Whether you want to socialise with friends, join a society or sport, just do something that doesn't involve you hunching over a drawing board or computer screen.

Go to the library

Kind of obvious but.... google is great, but not for everything! You need to spend some time in some books, go to your library, check out the resources that are available to you, I would be pretty sure there is more there than you realise.

Treat it like a job

So many people in the First In Architecture Community made this point - treat your studies like a job. Turn up, 9-5, 8-6 whatever you need to do, but be there. No excuses, don't skip lectures, don't skip studio, get into good habits for the future and give yourself a head start. It really will make a difference to your studies.

Learn to draw

Drawing is a skill. Some of us are better than others – but we can all improve. Take the time to practice, practice, practice. The satisfaction of being able to confidently sketch out an idea in 3d will be well worth the hours it has taken you to get there! Develop your skill, and your style.

Keep a sketchbook with you and practice your sketching skills as much as you can. This is so important. When ever you have a spare moment, whether it is a 1 minute sketch or a half an hour, keep on practicing. Use pencils, use pens, try different mediums, experiment. You will never regret spending too much time in your sketch book.

Ask Questions

You are here to learn - please don't be afraid to ask questions. This is a rare opportunity to gain from the experience and knowledge of so many experienced intellectuals around you - make the most of it, make conversation, listen and learn. If you are struggling, seek out help, ask for assistance and guidance to get you on the right track - we all go through moments of feeling completely lost in a project or assignment, someone will be there to help you.

Learn how to speak in public

During your studies, and onward into your career, you will have to stand up and present your work to people. There is generally no avoiding it. So, get used to it. Practice putting together presentations, and practice talking confidently in front of people. Some of us are naturals, and many of us are not. It comes in time, practice makes perfect!

Respect

Respect your tutors, professors and anyone taking the time to try and help you learn and gain new skills. Also, respect your fellow colleagues, especially when they are in the middle of a crit or presentation! Everyone is entitled to an opinion, listen, be kind and show respect.

Embrace criticism

Working in a creative industry is bound to come with its critics. This, of course, is the case with architecture. During your studies there will be plenty of times when your ideas may be criticised or your entire project could be slammed – don't take it personally. Don't forget that architecture is subjective, and everyone will have a different opinion on your project. Learn from what people are saying and move on. Constructive criticism will allow you to improve and become a better architect. Embrace it!

Don't give up

Architecture is not going to be easy – but you knew that already. Keep on keeping on, work hard, do your best, and don't give up. You'll get there.

The essentials every architecture student needs

Be aware that while you are often asked to buy a multitude of items for your course, just go steady. Architecture is an expensive course, don't buy what you don't need. In the Amazon age, you can easily pick up what you need, so why not wait until you actually need it, before wasting your money.

Throughout your course you will pick up all sorts of tools and supplies that you will need to help you get by. I am not going to give you a massive list of things you need to go out and buy

right now, and make you bankrupt before you even start, but I will give you a couple of essentials that I think you should make sure you have, ready for your first day.

Pens

Make sure you have a good selection of drawing and sketching pens. Without a shadow of a doubt you will be doing some sketching and drawing. Get some pens that you feel comfortable with and get practicing!

PIN Drawing Pens

Stabilo Point 88 Fineliners

Sketch book

My favourite sketchbook would be of the moleskin range, they are great little books, good quality paper and easy to slip into your bag.

Moleskine Sketchbook

With that, I would also suggest some layout paper, or trace, which ever you prefer, but these are good for developing ideas and working up designs.

Layout Paper

Scale Ruler

A scale ruler is a must have.

Scale Ruler

Books

I have a couple of books that I think are a good reference point, and make some good introductory reading for new students. I referred to these very regularly, enough to warrant having my own copies.

Architects Pocket book - Baden Powell

Architecture Form Space and Order - Francis Ching

Downloads for the new architecture student

I have put together a few things here that are free for you to download, that will help you get started in your studies.

Some printable grid worksheets, helping you to sketch out ideas, floor plans or elevations, using the lines is a great help. I have also included a lecture notes printable worksheet too.

You will need to head back to the original post to download these worksheets.

<https://www.firstinarchitecture.co.uk/new-architecture-student-essentials>