

Study plan

Master's degree programme in Architecture

(Master of Science in Architecture – MSc Arch)

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Content

	Page
1. Profile of the degree programme	4
1.1. Study objective and study content	4
1.2. Learning outcomes	4
1.3. Professional image and sphere of activity	5
2. Programme structure and regular study plan	6
3. Formal aspects	8
4. Detailed module descriptions	9

1. Profile of the degree programme

1.1. Study objective and study content

Building on the fundamental teachings of the Bachelor programme, the Master's degree programme in Architecture focuses on the differences in design and building in response to varying environmental, social and cultural contexts. It integrates the urgent pursuits of sustainable environmental, social and economic agendas through cultural engagement. The programme's curriculum reflects therefore both the diverse and complex challenges facing architecture as a responsible, globally connected yet locally enacted profession today – but also seeks to resolve these through a unified agenda in shaping the built environment.

Above all, students successfully completing the Master's degree programme in Architecture are enabled to:

- a) execute their future profession according to important and fresh insights gained from academic research and practice;
- b) assume leadership roles while committed to responsibility in action;
- c) think and act in a sustainable, holistic, global and interdisciplinary way;
- d) carry responsibility for our future and cultural heritage;
- e) independently conduct in-depth academic work that is required for admission to a doctoral degree programme.

The design studios give students the opportunity to engage with the broad field of architecture on a variety of scales applying a multitude of design and research methods, preparing them for the demands of the broad field of sustainable architecture and spatial planning and seeking to shape not only the leaders of a design process, but an architectural culture itself that can lead our society forward. Compulsory classes provide the necessary theoretical knowledge and tools to successfully implement culturally sustainable strategies in architecture and urban design. Together with a series of elective classes, they enable students develop and strengthen their personal fields of interests. The programme aims to nurture talented students who are committed to pushing the boundaries of their knowledge in the broad field of architectural design towards sustainability and critical thinking.

Small classes and one-to-one teaching in design studios provide a personal, creative and productive learning and research environment focussing on the cultivation of strong individual profiles. An exchange semester at one of the Institute's high-profile international partner-universities helps students to test their acquired knowledge in a different cultural and academic environment. Alternatively, a research project provides valuable insight into academic research and offers new perspectives and opportunities.

1.2. Learning outcomes

The Master of Science is awarded to students that have the ability to:

Knowledge and Understanding

- demonstrate knowledge that covers and integrates the main features, boundaries, terminology and conventions of the discipline of architecture.
- prove a critical understanding of the intellectual and aesthetic content of selected buildings to substantiate architectural judgments.
- express coherently a critical approach to making architecture and an ability to pursue an independent line of enquiry.

Applied Knowledge and Understanding

- formulate architectural judgments that have been explored critically and brought to a conclusion.
- execute a complex project of sustained research, development or investigation and identify and implement relevant outcomes.
- integrate technical skill to support the qualitative and expressive content of the architecture exemplifying the architectural challenge of the self-directed design project.
- research and critically evaluate selected topics of art, science, architecture and urban design as well as social, economic, political and cultural factors that contribute to the development of the self-directed design project.

Generic Cognitive Skills

- apply critical analysis, evaluation, and synthesis to issues, which are at the forefront of architecture.
- deal with complex issues and make informed judgements in situations in the absence of complete or consistent information.

Communication

- communicate on an expert level in a variety of roles and contexts.
- use appropriate methods to communicate to a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge and expertise.

Learning Strategies

- exercise independence and initiative in carrying out the self-directed programme of study.
- demonstrate ability to manage time and physical resources as an individual and a group member and to collaborate with peers and others in sharing knowledge and research.
- deal with complex ethical and professional issues and make judgements on issues not addressed by current professional ethical codes and practices.

1.3. Professional image and sphere of activity

Graduates will have at their disposal in-depth, up-to-date knowledge and critical command of core areas, theories and concepts of contemporary architecture and urban design. The programme specifically develops progressive design approaches and integrative thinking as well as teamwork capacity, analytical, social and communication skills among its students. Design studio projects challenge and prepare students for the global demands of the broad field of architecture and spatial development.

The Master's degree programme in Architecture is highly international, a result of the international student body, the team of instructors with international experience in practice, research and education, the continued collaboration with international academic partner institutions as well as international guest reviewers for mid-term and final reviews. Furthermore, intercultural exchange is promoted by excursion projects and design seminars conducted by internationally renowned experts.

Graduates of the Master's degree programme in Architecture are well prepared for a career in architecture and its associated fields, and thanks to the sound academic education, promising perspectives may also arise in various research fields and academia. Upon successful completion of the programme, the University of Liechtenstein grants the academic degree of: Master of Science in Architecture (MSc Arch). The degree is a prerequisite to enter a doctoral programme.

2. Programme structure and regular study plan

The general study plan of the programme is structured into four semesters. The programme can be commenced both in the winter- and the summer semester. In the first semester students generally attend a design studio (12 ECTS), a design seminar (2 ECTS), three compulsory courses (totalling 6 ECTS) and a selection of elective courses and cross faculty elective courses (ECTS vary according to student's selection). Semester 2 is identical in structure to semester 1. The third semester is dedicated to an exchange semester at one of our partner universities (28 ECTS) or to an intensive research project (28 ECTS). During the third semester the module "Thesis preparation" (2 ECTS) will have to be passed to advance to the Master's thesis (26 ECTS) in the fourth semester. A third design seminar (2 ECTS) and the remaining elective classes complement the thesis.

Master of Science in Architecture (MSc Arch)

		1st semester	2nd semester	3rd semester	4th semester Thesis	Total ECTS
Design Studio	Design Studio	12	12			24
	Design Seminar	2	2		2	6
	Thesis Preparation			2		2
	Semester Abroad/ Research Project			28		28
	Master's Thesis				26	26
Compulsory Courses		2	2			12
		2	2			
		2	2			
Elective Courses		2				10-13
		2				
		2				
		2				
		2				
		(3)				
Cross Faculty Elective Courses		(9-12)				9-12
						120

Design Studio (2x12 ECTS)

The project studios give students the opportunity to engage with architecture as a socially responsible practice on a variety of scales applying a multitude of design- and research methods, preparing them for the demands of the broad field of architecture and planning. The interdisciplinary architectural design studio is the primary vehicle of education with intensive one-to-one instruction in small groups. Architectural and urban design is practiced in the context of projects of varying complexity, ranging from constructive building details and structures, to devising groups of structures and entire settlements and habitats.

Instruction methods build upon intrinsic motivation and promote self-study. Design projects are represented in drawings, models, images, and by using all other available media. Teamwork is conducted with particular attention to the internal organization and workings of the teams. The instructors specify scope, characteristics, and requirements of the projects. They are responsible for team formation, structuring and organization of the studio design projects.

An integral part of the design studio is the "Design Studio Integration", which is conducted by a specialist from an associated field of work to architecture. It enables the in-depth understanding of a specific theoretical topic to be directly applied in the design studio project.

Design Seminar (3x2 ECTS)

The design studios and the Master's thesis are complemented by the module "Design Seminar". During an

intensive weekly workshop it enables students to further deepen their knowledge of an issue addressed in the project studios and/ or conduct excursions to places and sites addressed in their project.

Compulsory Courses (6x2 ECTS)

The compulsory courses provide the necessary theoretical knowledge and tools to successfully implement culturally sustainable strategies in architecture and urban design. The following compulsory courses, together with the design studios, form the core of the Master's degree programme:

- Building Cultures (2 ECTS, during winter semester)
- Community Design (2 ECTS, during winter semester)
- Mediating Architecture (2 ECTS, during summer semester)
- Philosophy of Architecture (2 ECTS, during winter semester)
- Regenerative Environments (2 ECTS, during summer semester)
- Sustainable Construction Processes (2 ECTS, during summer semester)

Elective courses (10-13 ECTS)

Elective courses allow students to deepen their knowledge in areas addressed in the compulsory courses. They combine relevant topics, knowledge and skills in order to support theoretical and practical professional work in architecture and planning. Elective courses equivalent to 10-13 ECTS from the list below are to be selected:

- Architecture, Globalisation and Heritage (2 ECTS, during summer semester)
- Building Life Cycles (2 ECTS, during summer semester)
- Climate Change and the Built Environment (3 ECTS, during winter semester)
- Digital Image-Making and Visualisation (2 ECTS, during summer semester)
- Economy and the Built Environment (3 ECTS, during summer semester)
- Emerging Technologies in Architecture (2 ECTS, during summer semester)
- Territory and Settlement (2 ECTS, during winter semester)
- Theory of the Built Environment (2 ECTS, during winter semester)
- Urban Quality Assessment (2 ECTS, during winter semester)
- Visual Communication for Architects (2 ECTS, during winter semester)

Cross Faculty Elective Courses (9-12 ECTS)

In addition to the elective courses cross faculty elective courses must be selected, totalling 9-12 ECTS. They consist of a variety of courses from a list published at the beginning of each academic year (courses are equivalent to 3 or 6 ECTS, taught during winter- and summer semester).

Semester abroad (28 ECTS)

The third semester is reserved for continuing the master's degree programme at one of our partner universities across the globe. The courses selected in the learning agreement must be the equivalent of 28 ECTS (minimum). In case of less than 28 ECTS are achieved up to 24 ECTS can be compensated by successfully completing additional "Elective Courses" from the Master's degree programme in architecture at the University of Liechtenstein (up to 12 ECTS) and by passing an additional "Design Studio" (12 ECTS).

Research project (28 ECTS)

As an alternative to the Semester abroad, students can select to pursue a research project at the University of Liechtenstein. In this module, students develop and conduct an intensive research project providing them with insights into academic research methodologies. The scope and topic need to be agreed with the Academic Director prior to an application.

Thesis preparation (2 ECTS)

The thesis preparation is designed to prepare students for their Master's thesis. The scope and specific topic of the thesis are determined in an elaborate disposition, to be developed in this module during semester 3 in coordination with a thesis supervisor.

Master's Thesis (26 ECTS)

The fourth semester is dedicated to work on the master's thesis. The master's thesis needs to be completed at University of Liechtenstein and is reviewed before a public panel of experts.

3. Formal aspects

The curriculum conforms to international standards. The programme corresponds to Qualification Level 2 of the Bologna Programme and to Qualification Level 7 of the “European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning” developed by the European Union.

Duration and Workload:

4 semesters

120 ECTS credits / 3,600 hours

Language:

All courses are taught in English.

Credits

Courses are assigned a certain number of hours in class and a number of hours for individual coursework; the sum of both yields the actual workload. 30 work hours are equivalent to 1 ECTS credit point. Each semester is assigned 15 course weeks. 30 ECTS credit points correspond to the average coursework of a semester at the University of Liechtenstein.

Academic Degree:

Master of Science in Architecture

Abbreviation:

MSc Arch

Admission Requirements:

Admission requirements are specified in the Admission Guidelines for the Master’s degree programme in Architecture.

Further Educational Options:

The degree signifies eligibility for a doctoral degree programme.

4. Detailed module descriptions

Module descriptions are available via the university's intranet.