



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Master of Studies (MSt) in Architecture (Degree Apprenticeship)



Institute of Continuing Education

Frequently Asked Questions



www.ice.cam.ac.uk/apprenticeships

General Questions

Master of Studies (MSt) in Architecture (Degree Apprenticeship) and its associated End Point Assessment (EPA) will provide an exciting new way of completing Part II and Part III of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and Architect's Registration Board (ARB) professional qualifications in architecture, taking advantage of co-funding from the Government and while continuing to work and gaining experience in practice throughout.

Will I be a member of the University of Cambridge?

Students become lifelong full members of the University of Cambridge and a college. During the 3-year MSt (ARB Part 2) element of their Apprenticeship they have full access to all the University facilities. Not only can they use the libraries in Cambridge, they will also enjoy access to the online resources available to Cambridge students. They can eat in college at any time and will be invited to college dinners and events and as well as alumni events for the course. College membership fees are included in the overall fees of the programme. Once the *MSt* element is successfully completed, students continue to the *Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice in Architecture* qualification (ARB Part 3). This is the 'End Point Assessment' (EPA) for this Apprenticeship qualification. Students remain lifelong full members of the University and continue to access many of these same services which are supplemented by services offered through the Institute of Continuing Education until the assessment for Part 3 EPA in the following year. The duration of the Apprenticeship qualification is 3 years and 9 months. **Applicants are expected to complete both qualifications in order to be successful.**

How many students will there be on the course?

There will usually be no fewer than ten and no more than 50 students in any taught class. Cohorts so far have typically 15-30 students.

How will the classes be taught?

The programme is over three two-week long residential courses each year (September, December/January and March/April), spread over three years as well as through regular meetings with students and their practice mentors and their course tutor to check progress. Additional study is also expected between residential. There will be three additional taught days in the summer of the third year. The studio work will be carried out within the residential periods.

There is a strong emphasis on working in teams and understanding team dynamics. The first residential focuses on presentation skills, working in teams and research methods. The rest of the first two years is arranged around a series of Master Classes led by experts in their respective fields. In the final year students develop their own individual design project.

What assessment must I complete to get this qualification?

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- **Written Essay** - All students are required to submit an essay in the first year on the history or theory of architecture (max. length 3000 words)
- **Group Studio Projects** - All students are required to present electronic portfolios of studio work (both individual and group work) done in the Master Classes at the end of each of the five Master Class residential sessions
- **Written Exam** - All students are required to sit a written exam on the subject of Management Practice and Law following the residential sessions on these subjects in the third year
- **Electronic Portfolio** - All students at the end of their final year must submit an electronic portfolio of design work on an individual project of their choice approved by the Degree Committee

Is the MSt Architecture Apprenticeship program verified with ARB/RIBA?

The course is ARB prescribed RIBA validated for Part 2 and 3.

Admissions

When can I apply?

Applications typically open in the Autumn. Please see our website.

What are the entry requirements?

Candidates who are interested in applying are expected to already have the support from their employer before doing so. The employer completes the onboarding process at the same time as the candidate submits their application. Both processes are required to apply for the course.

- The employer must be based in England and all students must be UK or EEA citizens, or have lived in the UK or EEA for the past 3 consecutive years, to qualify for an apprenticeship under the Government's rules
- The employer should be an Apprenticeship levy payer or apply for co-funding from the government if a non-levy payer (see our [Factsheet](#) for non-levy paying employers).
- The employer must provide the 3-4 years of experience for Part 3 and provide regular mentorship and on-the-job training. The University will provide the relevant training to provide the knowledge, skills and behavioural requirements to complete the course.
- Applicants for this course will normally be expected to have achieved a UK 2.i honours degree or overseas equivalent.*
- Level 2 Maths and English - GCSE grade C (5) or above (or equivalent) must be evidenced in the form of a certificate during the admissions process. For applicants who don't currently hold these certificates, additional training and assessment is provided to complete these during the programme.
- Students must have achieved ARB/RIBA Part 1, either through an apprenticeship or through a recognised degree course.

All candidates will be interviewed where they will present a portfolio. Evidence of very strong ability in studio work is essential.

*There is provision to accept non-standard applicants who do not satisfy the standard academic criteria, but such applicants must produce evidence of relevant and equivalent experience and their suitability for the course.

I hold an undergraduate degree, but it is a 2.2 or lower. Can I still apply?

Applicants are expected to have completed an undergraduate degree recognised by the University of Cambridge as equivalent to an upper second class (2.i) degree or higher. Applicants who have completed a Part I Apprenticeship can apply, even without a degree, and in this case we would expect a high standard of portfolio equivalent to a First or 2.1 degree standard.

An equivalent standard qualification from an overseas university will be accepted. Applicants can confirm whether the equivalent qualification is accepted by visiting <https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/international/international-qualifications>

Language requirement

For those candidates who are not native speakers, the following levels of English are required:

IELTS Academic: Overall score of 7.5 (a minimum of 7.0 in each individual component)

TOEFL Internet: Overall score of 110 (a minimum of 25 in each individual component)

CAE: Grade A or B (with at least 193 in each individual element) plus a Language Centre assessment

CPE: Grade A, B, or C (with at least 200 in each individual element)

Do my references need to be academic references?

You will need a total of two references. One reference should be from your current employer and the other can be academic or an employment reference.

What is the admission decision based on?

We will assess your eligibility against the given criteria for levy funding and take into account your application submissions (transcripts, English language evidence, studio portfolio, CV or resume, references and personal statement) and interview. Please contact us to discuss your eligibility if your situation is unusual.

When can I expect a decision?

The shortlisting process will commence shortly after the application deadlines. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to schedule an online interview. The process should complete in the July for places commencing in September.

What should I expect in an interview?

Candidates should be prepared to discuss their portfolio of studio work, academic and professional experience and goals for the future.

Can I expect feedback if my application is unsuccessful?

We regret that we are unable to offer feedback, due to the high volume of applications received.

I have received my offer. How do I accept it?

You will receive a formal offer of admission by email from the Admissions Office. You will be able to print a summary certificate of your offer of admission and view your offer conditions via an online self-service account. Once you have met all of your offer conditions, your admission will be confirmed, and you will see this reflected in your self-service account. You will be able to accept or decline your offer via your account. Further details will be provided along with your offer.

Can I defer my offer?

If you wish to be considered for the next academic year, you will be required to make a fresh application. It is not possible to defer your existing application for a start date in a subsequent academic year. See www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/deferring-application

Do I need to make accommodation arrangements? What are the options?

As part of the application process, accommodation will be arranged for you at the college or other University facility in Cambridge for the residentials each year. Costs are room only and are included in the tuition fees.

Finance

Can a small firm apply if they were recipients of transferred unused levy funds from a larger England-based Apprenticeship Levy paying employer?

This may be possible. The small practice will need to arrange the transfer of funds with the levy paying employer: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transferring-apprenticeship-service-funds>

What funding is available for non-Levy paying firms (SMEs)?

SMEs can apply for government support through the Co-funding route. See our [factsheet](#) for further information.

How much does the course cost?

The fees are £39,000. Cambridge University is offering more than some other Universities in terms of residential accommodation and access to excellent facilities. The government contribution via the

apprenticeship levy is £21,000 and practices will be required to top-up the fees at the amount of £6,000 a year. The Department of Architecture will provide students with all the materials used on their courses. Although the residential model brings added costs, there are significant advantages to both student and employer of containing all the work within the two-week residential sessions. Along with the strong Cambridge reputation we believe the MSt programme therefore represents good value for money.

What is the apprenticeship levy?

If you are a large company (over £3 million in staff salaries) you will be paying into a levy-pot which can only be used for apprenticeships. This course is one way for you to draw on that money. Over the three years, the levy pot will pay for £21,000 worth of the fees while you as a firm will pay the remaining £6000 a year. Travel and meal costs will need to be agreed between apprentices and their employers prior to the start of the course but apprentices are not permitted to contribute towards fees. Employers are asked to support their Apprentice with these matters.

Employers are not expected to pass on any of the tuition costs to the Apprentice via any other arrangements.

What happens if I am made redundant before I have completed my Apprenticeship?

Apprentices who have been made redundant, with more than six months but less than 12 months of their apprenticeship remaining may seek a further contract of service with a duration of less than 12 months, funding will continue for up to 12 weeks while they do so. Apprentices who are made redundant up to six months before the final day of their apprenticeship do not need to be employed under an apprenticeship agreement.

Can I apply for a scholarship or bursary to assist with financial costs?

Students hoping to study on the MSt Architecture Apprenticeship will not be eligible for financial assistance from the University as all costs are to be met by the Government's apprenticeship levy and by the employer.

Is there a reduced fee if I already live in Cambridge?

Unfortunately, not. The residential accommodation is only one part of the extra cost, there are significant benefits from the use of the University's facilities between residential courses.

What is the refund policy?

This programme follows the Institute's refund policy. The refund policy is available via the ICE website ice.cam.ac.uk/info/cancellations-and-refunds-policy