

AIA Iowa

A Chapter of
The American Institute of Architects



EDUCATION

For the High School Student: **Preparing for a Degree in Architecture**

Ideally, the beginning architecture student will have a solid background in the physical sciences, including mathematics; be able to "conceptualize" at an above-average level; have a strong proficiency in oral and written communication; demonstrate a breadth of interest in the humanities; and be able to draw and sketch with ease.

Drawing is probably the most easily acquired skill of the above, and math is probably the most difficult. Architecture is a highly diversified, multi-faceted profession, and the opportunities for specialization are many. So even if you do not excel in mathematics (or drawing, or writing), you may still become an outstanding architect.

Potential students should also have an ample background in English and the humanities. A good course in freehand drawing will ultimately prove more valuable than drafting; one semester of drafting (if available) is probably more than adequate. Botany is highly recommended for those interested in landscape architecture. Courses in geography, history, philosophy, and government are useful to everyone.

Foreign languages are seldom required in architecture programs, but most accept a language as an elective. Because many schools have opportunities for study abroad, the appropriate language can have considerable practical use even before graduation; facility with other languages can also be valuable in the study of architectural history and in conducting research.

A course in industrial arts can be helpful, but is not essential. Speech or debate classes are very useful, as architects (and architecture students) must often express or explain complex ideas orally.

Many colleges offer summer programs to introduce young students to the study of architecture. The American Institute of Architects posts these opportunities at: http://www.aia.org/ed_k12programs

Finally, a summer job in building construction is a very useful experience and is usually easier to find than a job in an architect's office. If this or other opportunities in related building trades are not available, highly motivated individuals should avail themselves of books and magazines on architecture from a public or university library.

It is also highly recommended that you get involved in a pre-professional organization while in high school or college. The largest organization is the American Institute of Architecture Students. Visit their website at: <http://www.aias.org>

Membership is open to high school and college students, interns and professionals from any country.

<http://www.archcareers.org/collegeprep.html>