

Your guide to Architecture

0



How to become an *architect?*

The Basics

WHAT IS ARCHITECTURE?



Architecture is the study and practice of designing buildings, communities, structures, and other elements that shape the built environment. It brings together and balances artistic sensibility and scientific methodology. The term “architecture” may also refer to the constructed elements of an environment. Architecture is all around us, and architects have a big impact on our lives!

The Basics

Do you
enjoy
helping
people?



Do you enjoy
solving puzzles
and thinking
about how
things work?

Do you want to
learn something
new almost
every day for the
rest of your life?

Do you want
to put your
creativity to
good use?



**If so, you might want to become an
architect!**



Why architecture?



Architects get to interact with a diverse group of people in order to better understand what they need. Then, they create unique solutions, solve technical problems, and visit job sites to check on construction progress.



One of the most satisfying feelings as an architect is seeing your design built and being used by the people you designed it for. Architects have the power to protect and enrich people's lives by designing the world around us.





Did you know?



Did you know that most Americans spend an average of 87 percent of their daily lives inside a building?*

The home you grow up in, your favorite library, the school you learn in, the space your family members work in, and the museum that took your breath away all have the power to affect our lives in significant ways.

*According to data from the National Human Activity Pattern Survey.



Just like architects, buildings shape our experiences. They may help us live happier, learn better, and heal faster. Buildings also protect against natural hazards such as storms and earthquakes.



Who can be an Architect?

A

You don't need to be a math genius or an exceptional artist to become an architect. While both skills can be helpful, what matters most is curiosity, creativity, and persistence.

Architecture is about solving problems, thinking critically, and bringing ideas to life. As an architecture student and professional, you'll learn the technical and creative skills needed to design spaces that are safe, functional, and beautiful.



If you enjoy learning, tackling challenges, and making a positive impact on the built environment, architecture could be the perfect path for you.



Do any of these characteristics describe you?

1

PROBLEM-SOLVING

I like to solve problems and figure things out.
I love to learn and experiment.



2

PERSISTENCE

I don't give up easily.
I keep trying.



3

SELF-MOTIVATION

If I'm interested in learning or doing something, I'll make my own plans to make it happen.



4

ADAPTABILITY

When life gives me lemons, I make lemonade! It's just a new challenge, not a problem.



5

PRECISION

I like to do my best, not just "good" enough.
Details matter.



6

TEAM PLAYER AND CONTRIBUTOR

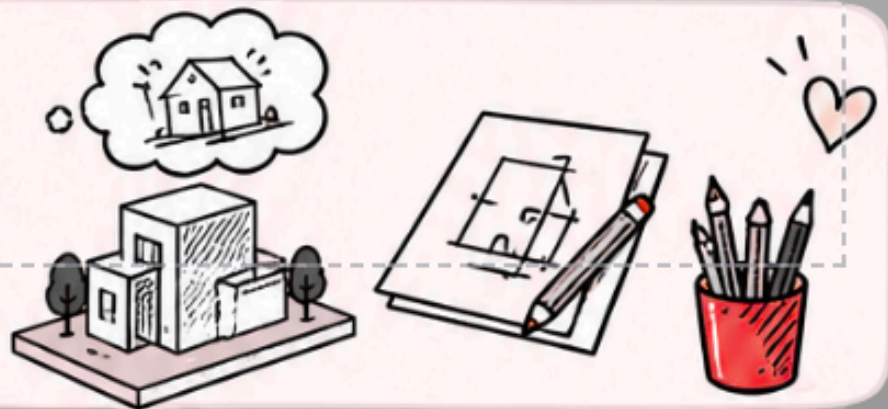
Are you good at collaborating with others? Are you the one who helps lead a group or team to success?



7

CREATIVITY AND DILIGENCE

I like to daydream, build models, create art, or make music, but I can also make an action plan and stick to it to finish a project.



If you see yourself in these traits, **architecture might be your perfect fit!** You have what it takes to shape ideas into places that inspire.

Architecture Path



1

EARN A DEGREE

In most jurisdictions, you'll need a degree from a program accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB). But 17 jurisdictions offer additional pathways to initial licensure for applicants with other (or no) college degrees.



2

GAIN EXPERIENCE

The Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®) provides a framework to guide students through building competency in a broad range of areas and documenting their work. You can start reporting experience as soon as you graduate from high school.



3

PASS THE EXAM

The Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) 5.0 is a multi-part test required by all licensing boards. You can take the tests in any order, at any time throughout the year.



4

GET LICENSED

Once you've met all of the requirements established by the licensing board where you would like to practice, you can apply for a license and officially call yourself an architect.

Your Architecture Journey Starts Here

Interested in architecture? Start exploring now. Every sketch, model, science project, and creative challenge helps you build skills for the future. Architecture blends creativity, problem-solving, technology, and teamwork to shape the places where people live, work, and connect.

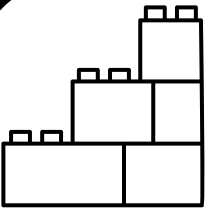


**Build today.
Design tomorrow.**



Activities

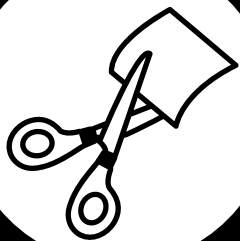
Elementary School



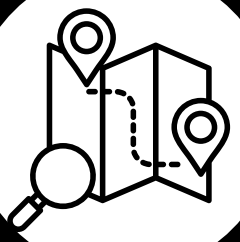
Create structures with LEGO®, Minecraft, cardboard, or anything you can find.



Sketch houses, buildings, or dream up your own city.



Make a **collage** of buildings and places you love.



Visit museums, architecture camps, art centers, or STEM programs.

Build These Skills

- ☒ Creativity
- ☒ Curiosity
- ☒ Problem-Solving
- ☒ Teamwork

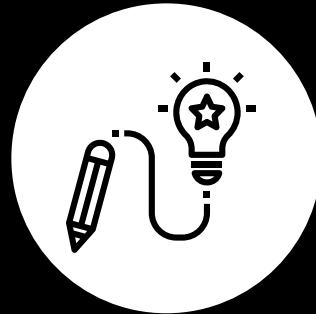


Activities

Middle School



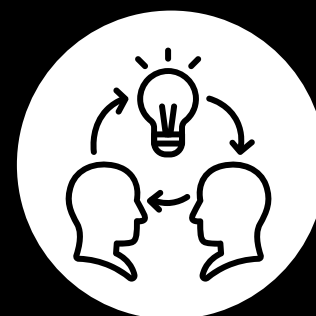
Research Programs, look for architecture camps, workshops, and summer programs at www.StudyArchitecture.com.



Try Design Projects, create models, redesign your room, or imagine a better playground.



Join clubs, participate in STEM, robotics, art, or design activities.



Practice Sharing Ideas, present your projects and learn to explain your thinking.

Build These Skills

- ☒ Critical thinking
- ☒ Communication
- ☒ Collaboration



Activities

High School



Build a Portfolio, Save your sketches, drawings, models, and creative projects.



Experience the Profession, Shadow an architect, or visit architecture firms.



Get Involved, join architecture organizations, attend college fairs, and explore scholarships.



Research architecture schools, summer programs, and nationwide college fairs at www.StudyArchitecture.com.

Recommended courses

- ☒ **Design & Creativity:** Studio Art • Drawing • Photography • Graphic Design • 3D Modeling
- ☒ **STEM Foundations:** Geometry • Algebra II • Physics • Environmental Science
- ☒ **Digital Skills:** Computer Science • Coding • CAD • AI & Machine Learning



Choosing your architecture degree

There isn't just **one path** to become an architect



**CHOOSE
A DEGREE**



**BUILD
YOUR
SKILLS**



**GAIN
EXPERIENCE**



**BECOME AN
ARCHITECT**

Whether you're planning for college or exploring your options, understanding the different architecture degrees can help you choose the path that's right for you.

Which degree fits your goals?



**BACHELOR OF
ARCHITECTURE
(B.Arch.)**



5 Years



Professional Degree



Ready to pursue licensure after graduation

Perfect if you know architecture is your career



**MASTER OF
ARCHITECTURE
(M.Arch.)**



2 - 3 Years



After earning a bachelor's degree



Most common graduate path to licensure

Great if you discover architecture later



**DOCTOR OF
ARCHITECTURE
(D.Arch.)**



3 - 4 Years



Advance Professional Degree



Offered by a few schools

Perfect if you know architecture is your career

All three degrees are accredited by **NAAB**

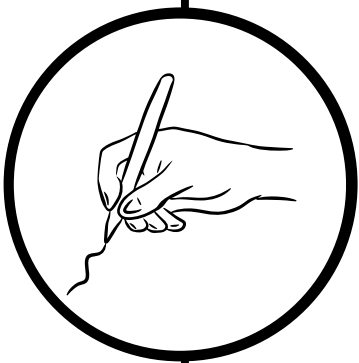
More ways to start

BACHELOR OF ARCHITECTURE (2 YEARS)



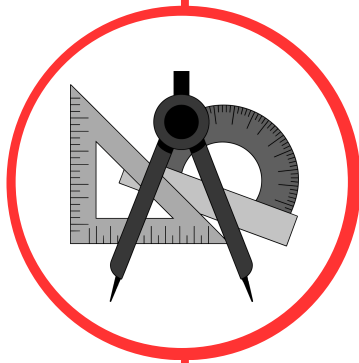
- ✓ Learn drafting and design basics
- ✓ Transfer to a Bachelor of Architecture program
- ✓ Start working sooner

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ARCHITECTURE (B.A.)



- ✓ Strong design foundation
- ✓ Explore architecture before graduate school
- ✓ Often leads to a Master of Architecture

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ARCHITECTURE (B.S.)



- ✓ Great if you enjoy math and science
- ✓ Advance Professional Degree
- ✓ Offered leads to a Master of Architecture

**Different degrees lead to different opportunities,
and more than one path can lead to licensure.**

Before you apply

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN RESEARCHING



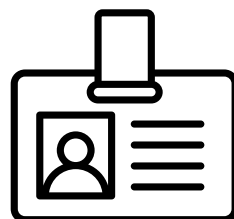
Is it NAAB accredited?



Does it offer IPAL?



What degree is offered?



What internships are available?



Is the program NAAB accredited?

Think of accreditation as a quality check

A NAAB-accredited degree is required for licensure in most U.S. states.

IPAL PROGRAM



Some schools let you:



Earn your degree



Gain work experience



Complete licensing exams

Applying to Architecture School

Applying to architecture school is about more than filling out an application. From building your portfolio to understanding costs and career opportunities, here's what you need to know before you apply.

Your roadmap to college starts here.



EXPLORE



PREPARE



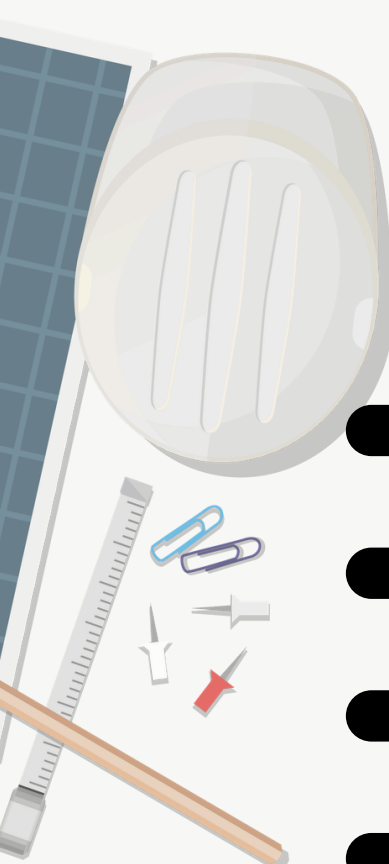
APPLY



DESIGN
YOUR FUTURE



Application checklist

- 
- ☐ Application
 - ☐ High School Transcript
 - ☐ Personal Essay
 - ☐ Letters of Recommendation
 - ☐ SAT/ACT (if required)
 - ☐ Portfolio (some programs)

Is it the right fit?

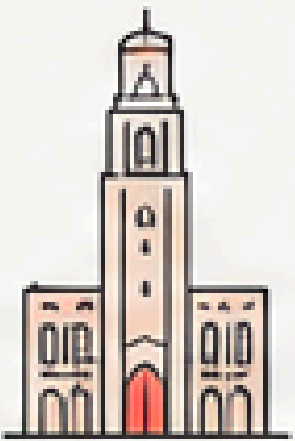
- Is a **portfolio** required?
- What **software** will I learn?
- Are **internships** required?
- What **student support** is available?
- What **scholarships** are offered?



Los Angeles Architecture Schools

Estimated Annual Tuition

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

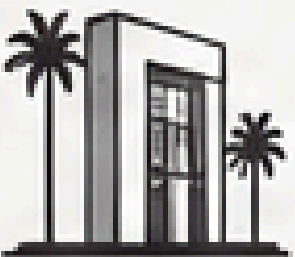


UCLA

Pre-Architecture (B.A.)

~\$15,000

CA RESIDENT



Cal Poly Pomona

B.Arch

~\$8,000 – \$10,000

CA RESIDENT

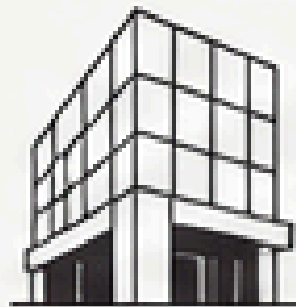
PRIVATE SCHOOLS



USC

B.Arch

~\$75,000 – \$80,000



SCI-Arc

B.Arch / M.Arch

~\$55,000 – \$60,000

Tuition changes every year.
Housing, books, supplies, and studio
expenses are additional.



Other costs to plan for



TUITION

The largest investment in your education.



TECH & SOFTWARE

Laptop (\$1,500 - \$3,000). Many schools provide software licenses.



STUDIO & MATERIALS

Models, prints, supplies, etc. (\$500 - \$1,500/yr)



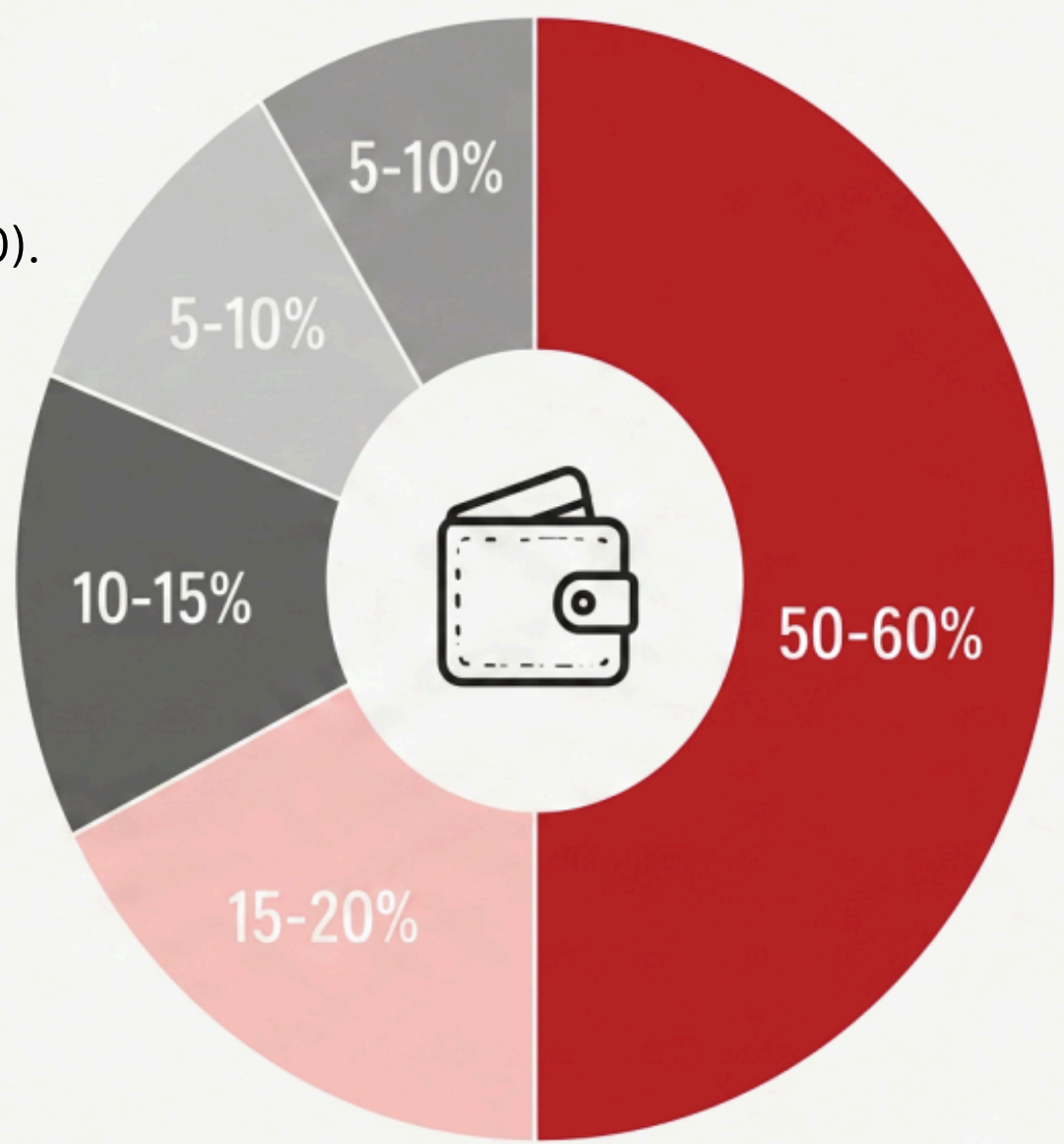
HOUSING & FOOD

On or off campus.



BOOKS & OTHER

Books, fees, travel, field trips, etc.

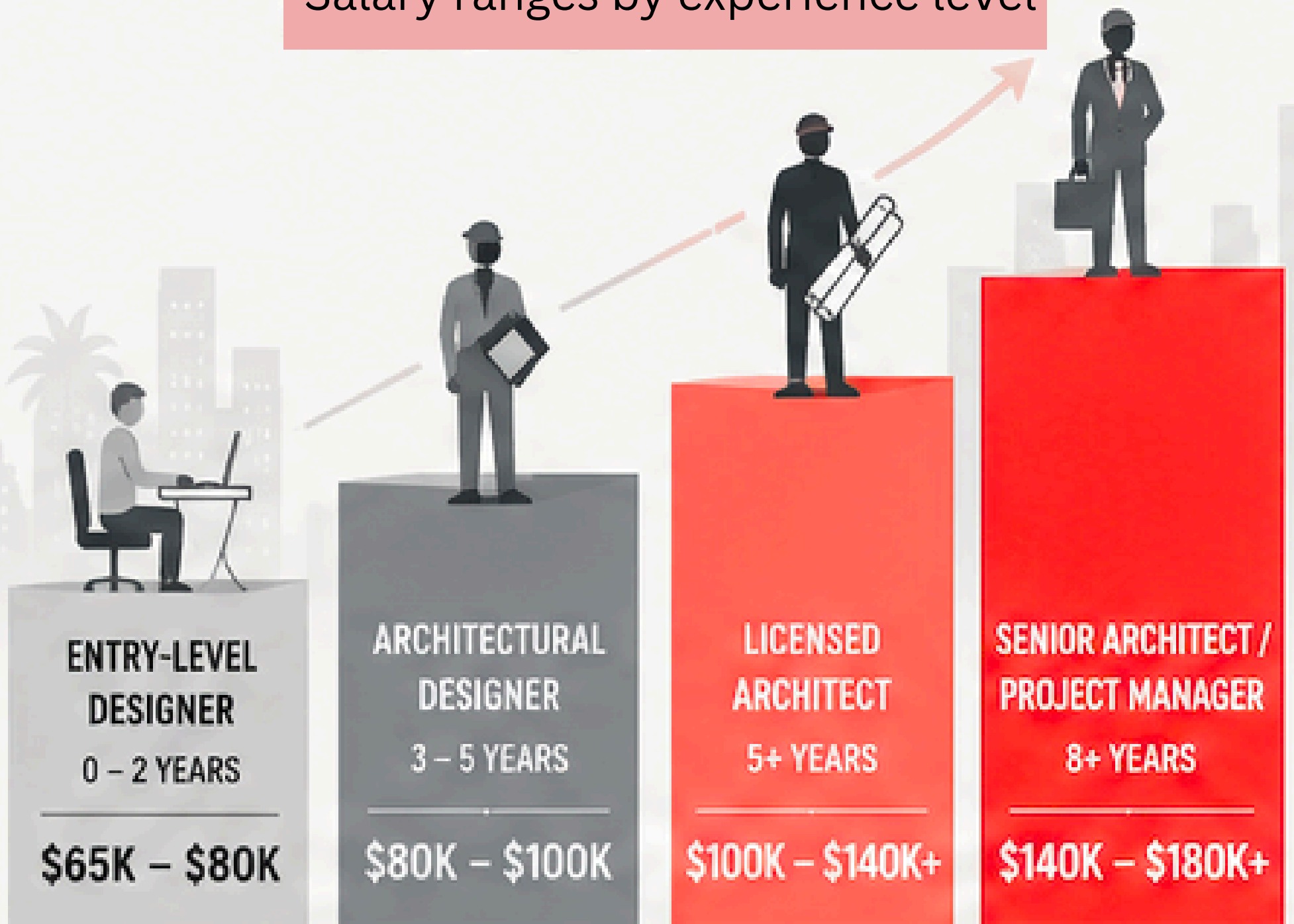


Every school is different-research financial aid and scholarships early!



Other costs to plan for

Salary ranges by experience level



Salaries vary based on firm size, project type, location, education, licensure, and experience.



A career that builds more than buildings



MAKE AN IMPACT

Design spaces that improve communities and people's lives.



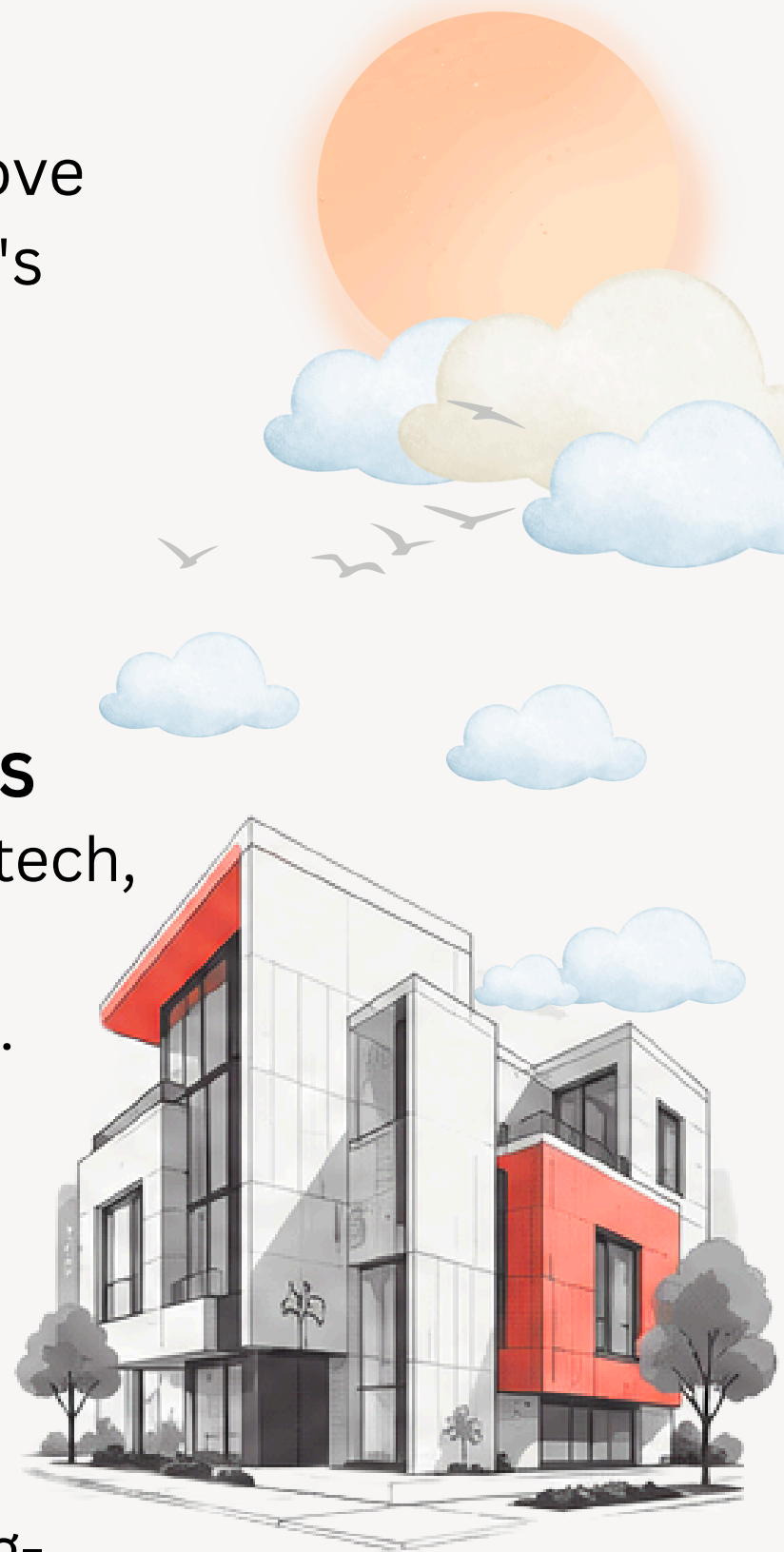
ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

Work in design, research, tech, and sustainability, urban planning, and more.



GROW YOUR CAREER

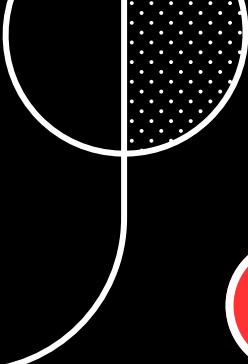
Architecture offers long-term growth, leadership, and creative freedom.



YOUR FUTURE. YOUR CITY. YOUR DESIGN.

Los Angeles needs the next generation of architects.

Could that be you?



Helpful resources

Architecture Studies

- [Study architecture](#)
- [The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards \(NCARB\)](#)

Architecture schools & NAAB-accredited programs

- [The National Architectural Accrediting Board \(NAAB\)](#)

Architecture scholarship info

- [The American Institute of Architecture Students \(AIAS\)](#)
- [Architects Foundation](#)

Impact of architecture and K-12 programs

- [Architecture for Communities Los Angeles \(ACLA\)](#)

Summer camp for K-12 students

- [The National Organization of Minority Architects \(NOMA\)](#)

Connect with local architects

- [The American Institute of Architects \(AIA\)](#)

