

Your Interior Architecture Degree...What Next?

Interior Architecture involves the design of interiors of buildings, their layout and space planning, fitting, technical and structural resolution, furnishing and decoration, and the preparation of all technical drawings and written documentation, necessary for the carrying out of the work

Interior Architecture is specific to a building's interior. It stands at the intersection of Architecture, design of the built environment, sustainability, and conservation. Unlike interior design, it is architecture within the confines of an existing building. As such, the course requires a level of technical competence to compare with that of the architect, as the responsibilities to the client and community are similar.

Interior Architecture involves the design of interiors of buildings, their layout, fitting, furnishing and decoration and the preparation of all technical drawings and written documentation necessary for the carrying out of the work. The design work of the Interior Architect includes domestic, commercial, leisure, retail, educational, and healthcare interior projects. Interior architectural design encompasses many types of interiors and utilises accompanying skills.

What skills will I need?

- **A high level of technical knowledge**, including CAD and model-making skills
- **Good drawing skills**, including perspective drawing and spatial awareness
- **Creativity and imagination**
- **Communication skills**, both written and verbal, to write briefs, promote and explain ideas, and build relationships with clients
- An awareness of **building and safety regulations**
- **Knowledge** of the wider construction and design industries
- **Project management skills**, including the ability to work under pressure and to deadlines
- **Attention to detail**
- **Organisational** and creative problem-solving skills
- **Negotiating and management skills**
- **Team working**, in order to work with a range of other professionals
- **Flexible** attitude
- **Business, finance and marketing skills**
- **Judgment and decision making**, considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one
- **Critical thinking**, using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems
- **Operations analysis**, analysing needs and product requirements to create a design
- **Active learning**, understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making

- **Complex problem solving**, identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions
- **Monitoring**, monitoring/assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organisations to make improvements or take corrective action
- **Resourcefulness** and ability to manage several tasks and projects simultaneously.

What can I do with my Interior Architecture Degree?

This course qualifies graduates to work in architectural practice, interior design firms, and allied disciplines in the capacity of Interior Architect as a designer with a developed area of focus and expertise or in entry management positions.

Some graduates take employment in Interior Design departments in Architectural firms and also Interior Design firms. Kitchen design companies. Furniture design and manufacturing companies. Lighting companies and go into CAD draughting.

One may specialise in residential or commercial interiors or both. Commercial contracts include hotels, restaurants, schools and universities, office buildings, factories and clubs. In addition to planning the interiors of new buildings, they may also redesign existing interiors.

Many graduates go into architectural practice and specialise in areas such as adaptive re-use, energy management, project management, bespoke furniture design or heritage and conservation of historic buildings.

The graduate will be proficient in the master-planning, spatial design and the materiality of complex interior schemes that involve multiple floors and mixed uses.

The graduate may also decide upon self-employment after a suitable period of practical experience.

Potential Areas of Employment

- Private Practice
- Commercial
- Government Organisation
- Local Authority

Typical employers

- Design and architectural firms
- Design management
- Textiles
- Set design.

Responsibilities

Interior and spatial designers plan and organise the design of commercial and domestic interiors.

Projects may take place in a range of settings, including:

- office spaces and industrial premises;
- retail locations, such as shops, cafés, forecourts;
- leisure spaces, such as hotels, cinema foyers, holiday complexes;
- residential developments;
- domestic properties;
- ships and aircraft;
- public buildings, e.g. museums and civic buildings

Work Activities may include:

- Developing initial ideas and acquiring key information about potential projects, discussing requirements in detail with clients (the brief/the budget) and setting project schedules
- Understanding clients' needs and the needs of the people using the building, developing design concepts in consultation with the client and establishing final briefs
- Considering materials and costs according to set budgets and negotiating project fees
- Ensuring all proposals comply with the relevant regulations
- Researching and gathering information and photographs relating to the project
- Preparing detailed working drawings, designs, plans, models and schemes, often using computer-aided design (CAD) software
- Surveying buildings
- Supervising work at the design stage and on site
- Working closely with quantity surveyors to establish costs and work schedules on larger projects, with architects and other design professionals to determine the best use of space, and with manufacturers and contractors
- Keeping up to date with new developments in the industry
- Preparing tender documents where necessary for the construction work
- Visiting the site to check progress and inspect the work
- Analysing architectural plans and drawings, highlighting any possible risks or problems and making amendments using computer-aided design applications (CAD)
- Liaising with the architect, surveyors and other construction professionals to discuss the project brief

- They may be involved in post-construction appraisal stages; handing the project over to the client or making sure the building is complete to client specification

Postgraduate Study:

Opportunities to specialise and up- skill.

Gaining a postgraduate qualification brings many benefits. It equips you with more specialised knowledge and skills and can enable you to avail of a wider range of career opportunities.

Some graduates also go on to further study in Architecture or other areas of the Construction Industry such as Construction management, whilst others enjoy Interior Design.

After graduating in interior architecture you will have gained some of the most important skills and knowledge that are necessary for a career in design. This includes the flexibility to work efficiently in different work environments as well as the technical skills to develop your vision into reality.

If you chose to complete further study, your chosen specialisation determines the types of careers and job opportunities available for you.

Architecture (some students have pursued this in the UK/Scotland as a Post Grad)

E.g. ***Masters Architecture Conversion, Glasgow School of Art***, - however always be sure to check regarding Professional Architecture Body Registration requirements)

If you choose to pursue further study in architecture, you could start working either in the residential or commercial sector. Your job would involve designing the architecture and layout for residential spaces, apartment complexes, offices, hotels, theatres, and more. You will be required to understand the dreams and expectations of the client and translate those requirements into a physical structure.

Landscape architecture

A Bachelor's or Master's degree in design/interior architecture can help you make a career as a landscape architect, whose role involves designing the layout of outdoor spaces such as gardens and parks. You would be required to collaborate with architectural firms, contractors, and builders to create an exterior space that visually syncs with the building.

Interior design

If you choose to major in interior designing you could be designing various aspects of the interiors of buildings like houses, offices, hospitals, hotels, and shops. A qualification in this field would qualify you to specify or custom design walls, furniture, flooring, lighting, colour schemes, and more. Your job would also involve organizing the purchases made in regards to the interiors and furnishings of the building.

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Postgrad courses specific to your degree (Ireland) include:

- ***MA Interior Architecture - IT Sligo 2yrs full time***
- ***Design, Interior Architecture – Griffith College Dublin, 1yr full time***
- ***MA Construction Project Management – CIT & WIT, 1yr full time/2yrs part time (subject to eligibility/RPL/Case by Case basis)***

There are many **Masters in Interior Architecture & Design in the UK & Scotland**, such as Nottingham Trent University, University of Lincoln, Middlesex University London, amongst many others.

There are also **Interior Design Masters** programmes such as those in University of Westminster, University of Edinburgh, and University of the Arts, London.

You can search www.qualifax.ie course database for conversion & all post graduate courses should you wish to change direction/add to your current qualification.

Also go to, www.postgradireland.com .

For further information, go to the 'Further/Postgraduate Study' link on the Students page of our website; <http://www.mycit.ie/careers>.

Useful sources of Information

Professional Registration

IA – Interiors Association (Ireland)

The Interiors Association is a multi-faceted support network open to the broad spectrum of professionals working within the Interior Architecture and Interior Design community. Our main objective is to enhance the profile and status of the Irish Interiors Industry on a nationwide basis by facilitating and supporting a body of professional accredited members.

The IA defines an Interior Architect as an individual qualified, either by education or experience to offer the following services: Guidance On Construction Projects, Spatial Planning Of Internal Architectural Elements, Construction Detailing Of Internal Architectural Elements, Furniture, Fittings, Finishes And Equipment Specification, Project Management, Planning Applications, Opinions On Compliance.

Optional Services - Fire Certificate Applications, Preliminary Health & Safety Plans.

The minimum criteria for registering as an interior architect with the IA are a combination of education and experience. The IA has adopted the standards of the European Charter of Interior Architecture Education and all those applying for membership as Interior Architects will be required to meet these standards. Education should be in an accredited school or schools offering courses

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leading to a certificate, diploma or degree in interior architecture. Experience should be with a recognized individual or firm practicing interior design. Any one of the following combinations may be acceptable:

- Five years of professional education plus one year of professional practice in an Interior Architects or Architects office, or as a self-employed Interior Architect, proven by employers recommendation letter or by portfolio, or
- Four years of professional education plus two years of professional practice in an Interior Architects or Architects office, or as a self-employed Interior Architect, proven by employers recommendation letter or by portfolio, or
- In the case of insufficient education, 1.5 years of professional practice is required as a substitute for every year of missed education, proven by employers recommendation letter or by portfolio.

Tips:

- Check the jobs page on CIT's Careers & Employability Service website; <http://www.mycit.ie/careers>.
- Register with gradireland to get email alerts on employment opportunities as well as job search advice; www.gradireland.com
- If you are unsure about what direction to take after your degree, the gradireland Careers Report is a useful tool for matching your personal information and preferences to potential careers. Log on and register at www.gradireland.com to use the report.