

# Frequently asked questions

**Q: Why are some degree course called 'Interior Design' and others 'Interior Architecture'? Is there any difference?**

**A:** This was the first course in the UK to take the title 'Interior Architecture'. That was in 1989. Many have tried to copy without understanding what it stands for. Some have remained with the title 'Interior Design' but teach a similar curriculum to us. You have to do your homework I am afraid, by reading, asking questions and going to Open Days.

There are many precise reasons for its definitions as 'Interior Architecture', both positive ( see our pdf leaflet on UWIC website and as further attachment) and negative, i.e. what we are not - we need to differentiate ourselves quite clearly from 'Changing Rooms' interior decoration, 'make-over', and of course full-on architecture. If you come for an interview or an Open Day we can spell out quite precisely what is so distinctive and engaging about this discipline involving the complete remodelling of existing buildings.

**Q: Do first year students tend to get a place in residential halls?**

**A:** There is a trend where more do each year, but if you can go for the tower Ty Pont Hearn on Adam Street near the college (visible from the first year studio) that would be more convenient for you. Some of the other halls are on the other side of town and need buses or a bike ride. There are ones opening up in the centre of town but none are as close as Ty Pont Hearn which is five minutes walk away, and is run by UNITE, but you should access it through UWIC accommodation services not through UNITE. They will charge you more.

Rooms in flats run by UWIC registered landlords tend to be cheaper than halls of residence. Most 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years live in shared flats/houses near the college. There is a map of Cardiff at the end of our first year studio which shows where most of the students currently live.

**Q: What extra costs should I allow for?**

**A:** These are all set out in the Welcome letter which you would get if you accepted the offer of a place, but basically there is a £70.00 studio fee each year to cover CAD printer cartridges, subsidising foreign travel, funding special degree show events and the London show, and making purchases for the programme of hardware which the University will not provide, because it is specialist to the course. There is also an £80.00 charge for a portable A1 drawing board which will then be yours for the duration of the course

One year licences for Autocad can be downloaded for free and Form Z (the other visualisation package we use) can be purchased through the course for £70.00 each + VAT and transport charge per year. (It is worth £2500.00!)

For Foreign trips you should allow £250.00 maximum for travel and accommodation. Living expenses will be in addition.

Materials in any one year could cost you from £50 – 200 depending on your aspirations and purse.

**Q: How many days do I have to attend college in any one week?**

**A:** This a “full-time” course and because there is such a steep learning curve where in most cases you are starting with virtually no knowledge of the discipline, then we all need every minute we can grab. So in first year, Mondays are virtually all lectures and seminars, and the rest of the week we are intensively in the studio all week undertaking a very carefully structured programme of challenges. However in the first term of first year we tend to start on Monday at 11.00am and finish the week at 1.00pm on Friday, and we do not expect you to do work over the weekend, but then we expect everyone to go like a steam train during the week from mid-Monday to mid-Friday. This arrangement gives you a long weekend. This pattern of work allows you also to more easily make the transition from School, or college, to this fast moving and busy industry.

**Q: If I have to earn money to pay for things, how much and when can I get work**

**A:** If you have to get paid jobs, as most do, we would suggest evenings and weekends but do not do more than 2 evenings in the week Monday to Friday, working late, as you will not keep up. Many work long evening sessions at the weekend.

**Q: What is a standard working day ?**

**A:** 9.30 to 5.30 just like you would be in a working design studio.

**Q: Are staff in regularly?**

**A:** We are utterly committed to ‘studio culture’. The first and second year tutors are full-time and in every day. For the first project in third year, it is tutored by someone in 3 days a week and supplemented by a further person, in one day a week. For the final major project the main tutor is full-time also supplemented by that same one day a week person. We also have a few part-time specialist staff for all three years to help at various points in the programme and we have a Technical demonstrator full-time plus a Theory tutor who you see every week. That’s why the studio is always busy and vibrant. We like it that way. We have secretarial help two days a week. She is called Judit Jurus. Our staff rooms are right in the middle of all the studios in the Art School at the Howard Gardens Campus right in the middle of town. Our number is 029 2041 6642.

**Q: Should I have done technical drawing or CAD before I join.**

**A:** You can learn the “art” of technical drawing from scratch on the course over an intensive two- week period early in the winter term of first year. If you have some CAD experience it would be helpful, but it is not essential at all.

**Q: What’s the gender breakdown on the course**

**A:** Tends to be between 60-70% women but we would like it to be 50-50% men/women, but also we are quite happy whatever the balance.

**Q: Can you go on to do architecture at post-grad level after this course?**

**A:** Yes, but we recommend you aim to do at least one year in practice after the degree and then apply to the Architects Registration Board (ARB) to have

exemption from what is known as RIBA Part 1. There will be an ARB fee (Architects Registration Board - sizeable) for that exemption and a tough test. Many have gone this route. However we are now contemplating going for ARB validation for this degree course, should a few of you be interested in developing in that direction.

**Q: Is it necessary to do an Art and Design foundation year to get on the course?**

**A:** No. about 50%-60% do, but they do not always come out with any better degrees at the end, but we find Foundation offers maturity and different, more imaginative, and analytical way of thinking. A level and BTech national Diplomas tend to be about application of 'technique' only. Foundation is about creative lateral thinking, exploration, and good editing focussing skills and driving *your own ideas* through many different media. You should certainly give it serious consideration. But there may not be a good one near you.

**Q: How many students are there in first year, and what's the retention rate?**

**A:** Absolute maximum 40/45. Of those about 33/8 will go through to second year and apart from reasons of a personal or family nature those should go through to third year. The reasons for withdrawal in first year tend to be personal/family or some find it either requires too much commitment, for which they are not prepared, or they simply made the wrong choice (that is usually those who couldn't come for an Open Day or interview for some reason). Some find they cannot handle their finances or the pace of the course.

**Q: What's the employment prospects?**

**A:** If you want work you can get it (although of course building is hit hardest in any recession or downturn as is currently the case). Your prospects are better than architects because there is a much wider range of employment opportunities open to you. (See leaflet on course for further details on this). We calculate about 85% of each cohort tend to end up in the industry. That is their own choice. There is usually plenty of work for those that want it, either here or in Europe or in the rest of the world. Design skills travel. Inevitably the construction world is heavily influenced by the state of the economy, but you can always move country, if there is a downturn locally.

Any further questions do contact us at 029 2041 6642 or [phannay@uwic.ac.uk](mailto:phannay@uwic.ac.uk)

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