



Architecture

Written by:

Arisa Chowdhury (ajc357)

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Example Timetable

Monday	Studio day from 10am
Tuesday	Technical and/or history and theory lectures
Wednesday	Technical and/or history and theory lectures
Thursday	Studio day from 10am
Friday	Technical and/or history and theory lectures

It is likely that there will be 1-3 supervisions per week discussing lecture courses, each being one hour long. The dates and times are decided by your

supervisors.

During studio days students meet in the studio and are set design briefs by their design tutors. You have an individual 20-minute tutorial with a design tutor to discuss and develop your design proposal, drawings and models, or you will have an hour-long group tutorial which is more common in first year. Generally, students are expected to be in the studio from 10am to spend the day working on their design.

History and theory of architecture lectures span from as far back as is recorded, discussing the key developments in architecture from the first known civilisation to the present day. Technical lectures discuss structures, construction methods and environmental design. A breakdown of the lecture courses and further detail can be found on the University of Cambridge website.

What are Supervisions Like?

Supervisions are small group discussion-based teaching which is very useful in architecture. This is an opportunity to discuss broader ideas mentioned in lectures in much more detail with your lecturers, and an opportunity to discuss any areas that you do not yet understand. History and theory supervisions are often based on readings completed before the session related to the lectures, whilst structures supervisions may be based on a question or worksheet.

What is unique about the Cambridge course?

The Cambridge course is very unique as we have some of the best academics and practicing architects teaching us about architecture. It is a very hands-on course which means we are always applying the new knowledge we have learnt into our studio projects which is really beneficial. We have the opportunity to be really creative in studio and there are no rules to design, only that we need to have designed something by the end of each term.

What did you wish you knew when applying?

Applying will take up quite a bit of time so be prepared to put that time into your application as well as your school subjects. A lot of advice can be found on the Cambridge architecture website and online.

Favourite and worst thing about your subject?

My favourite part about architecture at Cambridge is that you are able to steer your design project into something that you really like and enjoy doing – this can be a lot of fun.

Although, one thing that is really important as an architecture student is time management, as we are required to do a lot of different drawings in a short space of time, therefore it is really important to be on top of our work, prioritise and manage our time well.

Application Timeline

Summer is the perfect time to develop your passion for architecture, whether that is by doing wider reading, listening to podcasts, watching documentaries, visiting buildings or places that you like, or even doing some work experience or an internship. All of these things are really important to show that you are engaged with the subject you want to apply for and are passionate about studying the course at university.

September is when you should be writing up your personal statement, collating all the things that you have done in relation to your subject and structuring this into a personal statement which really emphasises your best qualities and strengths.

By the start of October, you should be ready to submit your final draft of the personal statement, as the UCAS application deadline is roughly in mid-October. You are likely to then receive the SAQ (Supplementary Application Questionnaire) which will give you an opportunity to say a bit more in addition to your personal statement about why you want to study architecture. This is about two paragraphs long and it is really important to make the most of this.

In November you will be told whether or not you will be interviewed. This is a good time to start preparing for interviews by looking over your personal statement and doing some wider reading and research around your subject, particularly in areas that you are most interested in. Also, practice talking out

loud about each piece in the sample portfolio that you will need to submit., such as the purpose and intention behind each piece, how you made each piece, the deeper meaning or concept, and how they relate back to architecture. This will be really beneficial in developing your confidence when speaking about your work in full structured responses. Additionally, it would be useful to also practice quick observational sketching skills too.

Personal Statement Tips

This is an opportunity to really sell yourself whilst writing an academic essay, so use this opportunity to show why you would be an amazing architecture student.

Include why you have chosen to apply for architecture and what you are looking forward to studying in particular. Include something you have researched independently in further depth that relates to architecture to show your passion for the subject, and things you have done outside of school relating to architecture such as work experience. Include at least one example of a book that you have read, including the author, and a short paragraph about extracurriculars that may not relate to architecture that much, but shows you can time manage.

Avoid cliches like “ever since I was born”, and do not say anything that is not true, such as saying you have read a book that you have not read.

Most importantly, show your passion through engagement with your subject and further research, and show your insightful thoughts about architecture.

At-Interview Test Tips

The at-interview assessment includes a short essay writing task and a drawing task, with half-an-hour assigned to each task.

Practice quick observational drawing and sketching to prepare for the drawing task. They are not looking for something beautiful or perfect, but they want to see that you are able to describe 3-dimensional space using 2-dimensional drawing methods.

For the essay task, they are looking for students that can directly respond to an essay question and can structure a well-written essay. There are example questions on the Cambridge architecture website that you can have a look at.

This is only a half-an-hour task, so do not write too much – just keep the essay to about a page long.

Interview Tips

Interviews should feel like you are having a discussion with experts in the field you are applying for, so take this as an opportunity to discuss your passion for architecture that you all have in common and enjoy it.

Make sure to smile and engage well. They are not trying to trick you, even though this is a common myth about Oxbridge interviews, but they want to push you further in your thinking and discussion skills. If you need a minute to think before giving an answer, it is okay and even encouraged to say out loud “can I have a minute to think about this”. Try your best to give developed, well-rounded answers, showing analytical and critical thinking skills. Thinking out loud during your interview really helps with this.

Recommended reading/activities

There are a lot of architecture books out there, so read books that you are actually interested in. Reading articles such as Dezeen, ArchDaily and the Architecture Journal is really useful as you can find short articles which discuss current developments in architecture. Listening to podcasts and watching YouTube videos about architecture are really useful too. Visit places where you live and do some observational drawing to develop your skill. If you can, try to find some work experience or an internship as this will help you understand what architecture is really like further.

