



---

School of  
ARCHITECTURE

## Studio Culture Policy (2019-2020), Revised Spring 2019

### Contents

Values of the School of Architecture  
Studio  
Understanding  
Community  
Collaboration  
Enrichment  
Evaluation  
Diversity  
Students' Workload Expectations and Time Management

### Values of the School of Architecture

Our core values form the basis for this Studio Culture Policy document:

- **Integrity –**  
To make informed decisions and act ethically and with fairness.
- **Respect –**  
To listen and act professionally with courtesy and consideration of others.
- **Collaboration –**  
To work together to advance creativity and innovation across disciplines.
- **Innovation –**  
To be dedicated to discovery and communication of breakthrough and new ideas.
- **Sustainability –**  
To prepare the next generation to lead our society toward a more sustainable future.

### Studio

The success of a design studio hinges on participation. It is essential that students and faculty promote the studio as a group effort where ideas are shared freely, open communication is welcomed and active participation by all is expected.

Studio requires a serious personal commitment that should not be taken lightly. It should be expected that a studio will require a significant amount of time both during and outside scheduled classes. However, faculty and students should strive to create a balance between studio and other academic and personal responsibilities. Faculty or students should not see the studio as having an importance eclipsing all other academic and personal responsibilities.

The student's health is of great importance. Design requires the intense use of all of the student's faculties and students should take very seriously their responsibility to their bodies. A good night's sleep, a healthy diet and exercise help the brain function at peak performance. A healthy student will likely find that they are more creative and productive if their health remains a priority.

The studio environment should be one that fosters creativity and productivity. Students should be provided the flexibility to develop their studio workspace in such a way that they can take advantage of their individual work styles and habits so long as it does not prove a detriment to the other students or the functioning of the building. Students should be encouraged to develop something unique to their work area to lend a sense of individuality and belonging and promote self-confidence.

**Self-directed academic studies:** Students should be aware that their academic studies will increasingly be self-directed. There is a balance of taught and project work, and students progress with an increasing level of independence. In the Master program, students should establish particular academic interests and directions, thereby pursuing a defined route (pathway) for their studies. As students move up through the curriculum, complexity and scale of projects is likely to increase, demanding a greater independence of critical thought. This means that students need to be highly self-motivated and professional.

**Specialization:** The program allows students in the Master program the opportunity to specialize in a choice of different thematic studies offered by a number of faculty within the School. This specialization is not intended to limit the student's breadth of study but to introduce a wide range of concerns with which architecture, landscape and interiors are associated, are influenced and have influence (including urbanism, sustainability, technology, etc). In the final year of the MArch program, faculty will be particularly supportive to allow students flexibility to pursue their chosen specialization.

Students of the School of Architecture will need their own laptop. For laptop and other hardware requirements, please refer to the specifications posted online on the School's website under 'Student Resources'.

### **Understanding**

Students and faculty should understand that diversity of all things is crucial in a studio environment and be respectful of the differences between individuals. Students and faculty shall always treat each other with the utmost respect and professionalism.

School of Architecture students come from a wide range of backgrounds with widely varying personal situations. Many students have jobs and/or families and other social and personal obligations with varying economic circumstances. Students should be free to manage their education with respect to their other personal and economic obligations. Studio requirements should not be made that preclude or alienate a student of any personal, social or financial circumstance.

Students and faculty alike should understand and respect the value and importance of time. Every effort should be made by both students and faculty to effectively manage time during formal instruction and critique allowing everyone the equal opportunity to effectively manage their other obligations.

## **Community**

A successful School of Architecture is required to act as a community. The school should not only work as a community within, but should make every effort to collectively engage the community outside as much as possible. The more the school takes part in the university, the professional and the local community, the more successful it will be.

The safety measures of the School of Architecture should be upheld and maintained on a regular basis, including security over summer and winter breaks.

School of Architecture students must have a balance of experiences in university life beyond the architecture school. In order to foster a presence in community life, School of Architecture students must interact and share their experiences with students of other disciplines. Such activities are beneficial to the architecture student's understanding of the connection between the architectural profession and the community.

As part of a community, students should be encouraged to take pride in their work and share their successes with the rest of the school. Every studio class should be given a dedicated space within the common area where they are encouraged to exhibit the work of their studio providing influence and inspiration to the entire school.

## **Collaboration**

Collaboration is essential to the success of an architecture school. Students are responsible to continually collaborate with each other, the faculty, the university and the local community to encourage a diversity of ideas and influences.

Collaboration between faculty members is also essential to a cohesive education. Faculty should make every effort to structure curriculum so that it is coordinated with the other classes students are likely to be taking; major deadlines should be staggered where possible. Most students learn best by applying knowledge. Where plausible, class assignments should be written so that students have the freedom to apply the concept to their current studio project.

As collaboration in several different forms is essential to the practice of architecture, studios should consider ways to formally integrate certain learning objectives into collaborative exercises.

## **Enrichment**

Students and faculty should continually strive for personal enrichment. While individuality is encouraged, students should also be encouraged to take risks and innovate. Therefore students should endeavor to always look for new influences and techniques that will add to their repertoire rather than settling for the few they are comfortable with. Sometimes the best lessons come from failures, and students should be encouraged to take risks so that they learn to temper the fear of failure and begin to develop confidence.

The School of Architecture should also collectively strive for enrichment of its program as well as having the goal of enriching the university and local community. Students and faculty

should be encouraged to take part in university and local events such as lectures and exhibits as well as innovating ways that the curriculum can be executed to provide a community service thereby enriching the university or surrounding community.

The School of Architecture has a wealth of resources to support the learning of students across multiple disciplines and in all classes. Studio should facilitate the constructive use of such resources as the Architecture Studies Library, the Fabrication Lab, the smart screens in the gallery, the software in the computer labs, and the countless other labs, tools, special collections, and personnel available in the School.

## **Evaluation**

The Critique is an important part of education in professional design programs. Faculty, students and guests should always be respectful and the tone of the critiques should always be constructive and invite discussion. Students should strive to accept criticism in as dignified and constructive a manner in which it is offered.

Critiques ('Crits') will vary in number, degree of formality and the number of experts involved. Interim reviews will gauge the progress and direction of the students' work. Critiques and reviews will require students to present their work graphically and verbally. In some instances, studios will arrange for informal 'impromptu' reviews within the studio; these are at the studio leaders' discretion when it is thought to be a good way to assist the design process. In order to present the students' work to others, debate a viewpoint and learn from peers, the openness of the critique is essential. Students' will be asked to present analogue and digital (including physical and computer models), and listen to other students' presentations. Faculty should be challenging and at the same time encouraging students with constructive criticism outlining high expectations.

Formal juries should be encouraged of all major studio projects covering a variety of perspectives including the academic and professional. Juries should be executed efficiently including the effective preparation of the jurors and proper management of time. Diversity of jurors as well as student participation should be encouraged.

Ongoing and informal critiques during the studio process such as desk critiques and pin-ups are an integral part of design and are important to assessment and promotion of effective time management. Desk critiques and pin-ups will serve as constructive critiques for growth and self-improvement.

Students should be aware of exactly what the high standards are and guided on how to meet them. Students are here to learn.

**Accountability:** students and faculty should be periodically assessed in their ability and commitment to uphold the tenets of this document. Students and faculty found to consistently and blatantly disregard or violate the spirit of this document should be held accountable.

**Plagiarism** is taken very seriously and students should ensure that all work submitted for assessment is correctly attributed in accordance with recognized academic procedures. Please refer to the University's comprehensive policy on plagiarism.

**Attendance:** At University, students are expected to organize their own time. In particular, students are expected to attend lectures, seminars and the studio as is required. Poor attendance is monitored and students should be advised that it is the School's experience that poor attendance inevitably leads to poor achievement. Studio and lecture attendance is therefore considered as a priority for assessment.

Group work and team work is sometimes promoted and encouraged, in both taught and design units. Many of the assignments undertaken by students will be in association with other students. It is the student's responsibility to demonstrate their individual contributions to

the group work.

## Diversity

Diversity is encouraged in a studio setting. Students should feel comfortable presenting their individual perspectives, cultivating a diversity of personalities, opinions, culture, and influence. Studio classes invite all students to interact and exchange thoughts and ideas on a group level. It is important that in such settings, each participant maintains a respectful relationship with their peers and faculty.

School of Architecture graduates are generally expected to be well-rounded individuals with a wide range of life experiences and influences from varied and sometimes unexpected directions. This diversity should be encouraged and students should seek to open themselves to influence and interaction with the world outside the architecture studio. While the studio is an important part of the architect's education, varied life experiences, travel and other influences are just as important.

Diversity in students means diversity in ideas, techniques and methods. This diversity should be cultivated in a studio setting. Students should be encouraged by faculty and their peers to exercise their individuality in their design methods and presentation techniques. Students should always be encouraged to innovate in the communication of their designs and should not be limited to standard convention in their presentations.

## Students' Workload Expectations and Time Management

The School of Architecture provides a safe and healthy working environment for all its Students, faculty, employees and members of the public who use its premises.

Architecture school is a lot of work, because it is such a broad and complex subject that the workload needs to be quite dense to get through all the thinking and information in the time available. It is very important that you look after your health during studies.

The intensity of architectural studies can sometimes be daunting and even overwhelming at times. There are set courses you need to take; and there are 'studio' design classes, with studio time each week and probably 8 to 16 week long projects. Each of these courses will have different requirements. The work on design projects (design studio assignments) constitute in general 50% of the years' marks. The other 50% are the marks for taught courses. The workload varies for everyone and for every course.

Effective time management is crucial in studio and learning it is essential to developing good work habits that translate in a professional environment. Faculty should recognize that this is a skill that is learned and develop curriculum in such a way that encourages students to learn proper time management techniques. Faculty should structure projects with reasonable deadlines and students should endeavor to be responsible in their execution of those deadlines. This encourages a healthy balance between studio and the student's other academic and personal obligations.

It is very common that design work will not feel complete or finished, and there will always be a way to make it better. You will find yourself compelled to work on it in the middle of the night, or while on holiday. As the due dates get closer, your studies will reach a level of intensity with everyone in the studio working hard. However, architecture school is not about doing the most hours, appearing to work the hardest. It is about finding the confidence in your capabilities and skills, and learning how to learn most effectively.

At architecture school, you are responsible for yourself, for your project, and for your time. It is called self-directed learning.

The course outlines suggest that you should spend around 150 hours on each course over the

semester. If you were taking a number of courses in one semester, this could easily amount to be around 450 hours or more. Over 16 weeks, this would equate to around 40 hours or more per week (not different to the hours you would work in a 40-hour week, on a 9-to-5 job in practice). However, unlike the workplace, at architecture school, time management is up to you, to ensure yourself that you are on track. If you do not manage your time well, you will quickly find that the work builds up and you have several deadlines in one week.

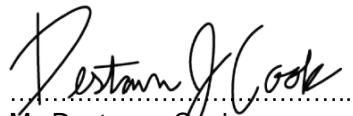
### This Studio Culture Policy

This Policy is a living document and will be continually updated. Call for proposed revisions for the 2019-2020 edition will be coordinated in the spring of 2020, and will be led by student representatives with faculty.

Accountability is important to the implementation of a studio culture policy.

**GO REBELS!**

Date: March 1st, 2019



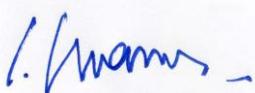
Ms Destanee Cook,  
AIAS UNLV President



Mr Michael Antonio Hernandez,  
ASLA UNLV President



Ms Dafne Odette,  
IADS UNLV President



Dr Steffen Lehmann,  
Director, UNLV School of Architecture