

Admissions handbook

the London School
of Architecture

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Admissions information

Admissions policy statement

The LSA is committed to ensuring that applicants are recruited, selected and assessed solely on their relevant merits and abilities and in accordance with the LSA entry criteria. The LSA supports equal opportunities and therefore no applicant will be treated less favourably on the grounds of disability, religion, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, sexual orientation, gender, marital status or political beliefs.

Admission requirements

Applicants should have a 2.2 Honours degree in architecture and ARB/RIBA Part 1. An equivalent architectural degree to Part 1 may be acceptable, but applicants must be aware that they cannot progress to ARB/RIBA Part 3 without having completed and passed Parts 1 and 2 in order to register as an architect in the UK, according to current UK government legislation.

In order to be eligible to apply to register as an architect in the UK, you must have completed and passed ARB/RIBA Parts 1 and 2 programmes and have 'recently completed a minimum of 24 months' practical experience under the direct supervision of a professional working in the construction industry. Please note: your experience in practice during the LSA MArch in Designing Architecture (ARB/RIBA Part 2) programme that is undertaken as part of your educational course in the integrated placement for the modules Critical Practice: Placement and Critical Practice: Theory cannot be counted towards your 24 months' practical experience. For further up-to-date information please visit the ARB website, which has full information at the following link [here](#).

Applicants are required to demonstrate talent as a designer as well as ability and motivation to complete the programme successfully. The school is looking for its students to rise to the ambitious challenge set by the programme, and applicants should address the P.R.I.M.E Values and P.R.I.M.E Characteristics (detailed in the 'About' section of the LSA website).

Applicants will be expected to present a portfolio and their responses to the LSA statement of purpose submission, demonstrating their ambition for the subject area and for studying at postgraduate level. Applicants need to be eligible to study in the UK for the full duration of the programme, and to be eligible to work in the UK for the duration of the work placement, subject to current UK legislation.

The LSA does not currently have a Student Route Visa (previously ‘Tier 4’) UKVI licence. EU and International students, who are currently residing in the UK and are already in possession of alternative visas, which do allow for study and work within the UK, are eligible to apply. However, it is the responsibility of the applicant to check with local UK immigration authorities regarding the above. Those doing so must make evidence of this explicit upon their application to the LSA.

English language requirements

Students whose first language is not English must provide evidence of their English language skills demonstrated by:

- If applying to study a course at degree level or above, the applicant must have the equivalent of level B2 of the Common European Framework of References for English language.
- The LSA reserves the right to make conditional offers on the basis of candidates gaining a further English language qualification if deemed necessary.
- English language qualification requirements are subject to frequent change, in line with Home Office/UKVI regulations. Candidates are responsible for keeping up to date with such changes.

To meet both the LSA and the Home Office/UKVI English language requirements, candidates must obtain one of the following language qualifications:

- IELTS (UKVI): A score of 6.0 overall is required, with at least 5.5 in each category. IELTS reports have a two-year validity period. Certificates must therefore have been obtained within two years of the candidate’s visa application date.
- Trinity College SELT Test (ISE II (B2) or ISE III (C1)): A pass is required in each category at minimum. Trinity reports have a two-year validity period.
- Pearson PTE (Academic UKVI): A score with at least 51 in each category.

English language exams vary in terms of how long they remain valid. Candidates should provide the LSA admissions team with a scanned copy of their official test certificate and/or the TRF number from that certificate. The required scores must be achieved during a single sitting of the examination.

In addition to the above, applicants may also choose from one of the following English language test and qualification options:

- GCSE/IGCSE English, IGCSE English (First Language) or English Language: Pass at 5 (or grade C) is required.
- A Level English Language or English Language and Literature or English Literature: Grade C or above is required.
- IB English A (SL) and IB English A (HL): Language and Literature or Literature: Grade 5 or above is required.
- IB English B (for non-native speakers) (SL): Grade 7 or above is required.
- IB English B (for non-native speakers) (HL): Grade 5 or above is required.

Applicants must enter the name and result of their test on their application, and provide an original copy at registration. If an applicant doesn't have one of these qualifications but is currently being taught in English, they may contact the LSA admissions team for advice or email admissions@the-lsa.org.

Admissions process

- Step 1 check that you meet all admissions requirements
- Step 2 check all details of the portfolio and statement of purpose submission (the statement of purpose is required instead of a personal statement)
- Step 3 complete the two-stage admissions form (contact details + portfolio and statement of purpose submission, including any required supporting documents) by clicking on the "APPLY NOW" link located at the bottom of this page

Upon receipt of a completed online application form, LSA staff will select applicants for interview, which will usually take place in London, but may be conducted by video call if the applicant is currently living abroad or there are restrictions on movement due to the current pandemic. Each interview panel will contain at least one senior member of staff and a current student.

The school will afford applicants the opportunity to present evidence of their qualifications, experience and commitment to the demands of the profession, including a portfolio presentation. The panel will assess aptitude for the course, with reference to the LSA's P.R.I.M.E Characteristics and Values, evidenced in a presented portfolio of academic and professional work, and through discussion. Conditional academic places will be offered to successful applicants in writing, and these will be only confirmed once a practice placement position has been secured. Applicants will be asked to provide evidence of eligibility prior to registration.

Portfolio

A maximum 14-page edited portfolio to include:

- Undergraduate/BA architectural project work: show process and synthesis of design proposal(s) [8 pages]
- Evidence of work experience and any independent project work highlighting your specific contribution [3 pages]
- LSA application exercise:

Statement of purpose

We want to find out what kind of designer you are, what your methods are and how you think through design.

What is a statement of purpose?

You might be more familiar with providing a personal statement for other schools and universities i.e. a personal summary in the form of an essay, however, the LSA asks for a statement of purpose, i.e. what, why and how you do what you do.

Remember: we ask for this instead of a personal statement.

How should I prepare my statement of purpose?

We give clear guidance below for how to prepare your statement of purpose. It is in two parts: a text piece (in answer to the 3 questions) and a design piece (in response to the mini brief).

Remember: there is no right answer.

How much time should I spend on my statement of purpose?

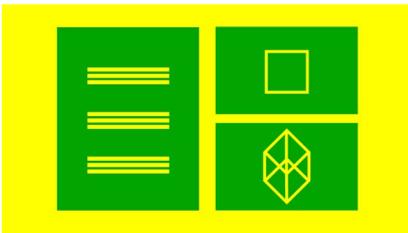
Expect to spend no more than approximately 8 hours over 2 days (or the equivalent time available to you) – we will not test you on this, it is simply our best advice on how to make time to think about what you want to write/design, do it and then edit and present that work.

Remember: Check your file sizes before uploading.

What do I need to be able to fulfil the design piece?

There is no need or expectation from the LSA for you to purchase additional materials in order to complete the design piece of the statement of purpose. You may use any medium or format available to you, e.g. model, drawing, photograph, animation...just make sure that if it is 3-D work you submit clear 2-D documentation, or if digital you submit as a single click hyperlink.

Remember: Enjoy it - we love to see how you can be resourceful!



Text piece [1 page]

Please respond to the following three questions – we recommend no more than 200 words per question. You are encouraged to illustrate your answers with one or two diagrams or sketches and we encourage you to be creative in your responses.

- What is your first design move, and what do you require to make that move?
- What kind of spatial thinker are you?
- How do your preferred design tools help you to problem-solve?

Design piece [2 pages]

Please undertake the following two-page design piece (one page to show your process and one page for a concise set of design drawings) in response to the following provocation:

Design one space that will make your immediate environment better. You should aim to:

- be imaginative in designing a space that can be of benefit to both you and those around you
- be resourceful in how you design the most with the least
- be critical about how and where your design is located

The portfolio and required documents should be submitted via the LSA online application form which can be found at the 'Apply' button on the LSA website.

NOTE: The file sizes of uploaded materials are limited and made clear on the online application form so please check before submitting to ensure we receive your complete portfolio.

References

Both academic and employment references are required to be presented on official headed paper with original signature (not a jpeg signature) and contain the referee's contact details.

For mature students who have been out of education for more than three years, references should be from your employer or a professional (doctor, lawyer etc) who can give you a personal reference.

References must be sent directly by the Referee to the LSA admissions team via email to admissions@the-lsa.org

Academic transcripts / certificates

Academic transcripts and degree certificates must be supplied to account for ARB/RIBA Part 1 or equivalent years of degree studies. If you have not completed your studies, please include transcripts to date. If you have also completed postgraduate study, please upload these documents as well. Overseas applicants must supply transcripts and certificates that have been officially translated into English bearing the stamp and signature of the translator.

Interview outcome

Upon completion of the interview and assessment of the applicant's aptitude for the course, the applicant will receive one of the following responses in writing:

- Conditional Offer Letter – to be confirmed once the applicant has secured a practice placement position.
- Waiting List Offer email – to be confirmed once all applicant interviews have taken place throughout the admissions cycle. Please note this does not guarantee an interview.
- Unsuccessful Application email – unsuccessful applicants can be provided with feedback upon request.

The LSA aims to process applications in a timely way by ensuring that the application process is regularly reviewed with members of academic and administrative staff. The assessment of applicants will be transparent and the reasons for a decision will be recorded.

Accepting your place

To accept your offer of a conditional place on the taught programme please notify the school by the date specified on your offer letter.

You should indicate whether you are seeking a placement within the Practice Network, or through one of the other routes (as outlined in this handbook). At this stage you will need to provide a deposit of £400. Please note that the deposit is non-refundable after completing the application procedure.

The London School of Architecture banks with HSBC and our deposits account number is 50024716 and sort code 40-11-60. As your reference, please use your initial of your first name and your surname, e.g. the reference for Joan Smith would be JSMITH.

Once you have satisfied the condition of gaining a suitable work placement, you can accept the offer of a place on the taught programme, at which stage an additional £500 deposit is due. Again, please note the deposit is non-refundable after completing the work placement interview.

All offers are subject to you providing original certificates of the qualifications upon which your offer has been based, prior to

registration. If you do not have these documents you must bring certified replacements to your registration. Failure to provide this documentation or production of fraudulent qualifications will result in your offer being revoked.

Please note that deposits will be reimbursed after completing your first year at the LSA. For those students in receipt of a student finance loan and for students who are self funded, deposits are deducted from the advanced fee or Term 1 fees.

Deferring

Should an applicant wish to defer (one year only) entry to the programme for the current academic year, they may be able to request a deferral. All deferral requests must be sent to the Programme Coordinator, george@the-lsa.org. Please note that if you decide to defer, when you return to study you will be charged the tuition fees relevant to the year of re-entry.

Complaints and appeals

If an applicant wishes to submit a complaint* regarding the processing of their application or appeal** a decision, the applicant should contact the Operations Director, sophie@the-lsa.org stating the nature of the complaint/appeal*.

*A complaint would constitute a procedural error occurred during the admissions process.

**An appeal is defined as a request for reconsideration of a reject decision. The LSA will not normally, after a reject decision, reverse the decision unless the candidate's performance demonstrates a vast improvement on the original assessment/interview. Applicants may be requested to do an additional piece of work to demonstrate required attributes that were under represented at the first interview.

Key dates

The application deadline will be published on the LSA website. Applications received after the deadline will be considered if there is availability on the course. Up to date information on open days and term dates will be published on the LSA website.

Key contacts

Admissions - admissions@the-lsa.org
Operations Director - sophie@the-lsa.org
Programme Coordinator - george@the-lsa.org
Studio Coordinator - gloria@the-lsa.org

Placement process

The LSA has established a Practice Network in London to help to facilitate work placements for students. The LSA follows a fair and transparent procedure to suggest matches between students and practices. If a student has been offered a conditional place on the taught programme and seeks to be placed in the Practice Network, the placement process is as follows:

- Students make a first, second and third choice from our current Practice Network list of placement contacts.
- The LSA will suggest practice placement options that the school thinks would suit both the student and the practice. Where possible, the LSA seeks to ensure a student has two interviews - but it is the student's responsibility to arrange interviews and secure a placement.
- The practice is asked to inform the school about the outcome of the interview. Following this, practices will then send out offers direct to students on a set date at the same agreed time. From the first two interviews, the School hopes that the majority of students will receive the offer of at least one suitable work placement. The LSA will ensure the student is provided with the LSA Student Contract and practice is provided with the LSA Practice Agreement.
- In the event that a student receives two placement offers, they are free to decide which one to accept.
- In the event that the first two interviews do not yield an offer of a placement, the LSA will seek to help identify further potential opportunities within the Practice Network.
- The LSA will do everything within its power to help secure a placement for a student, but we cannot guarantee a student will receive one, as ultimately the decision resides with the practice.
- Students cannot register on the course unless a suitable placement is arranged in advance of the start of the academic year.
- Practices make the offer of employment directly to the student. Students are advised to carefully consider offers of employment that are made to them. Students must satisfy themselves that they wish to enter into the employment contract with the practice.
- Once a student has accepted the offer of employment from a practice, they can then formalise their conditional offer from the LSA.

Alternative placement routes

There are two other routes to the establishment of a practice placement within the framework of the LSA programme:

- An applicant who is employed by a practice operating within the LSA Practice Network is offered a conditional place on the taught programme and the practice declares its willingness for that employee to go part-time within the terms set out in the LSA Practice Agreement.
- An applicant who is currently employed by a practice operating outside the LSA Practice Network is offered a conditional place on the taught programme and the practice declares (i) that it wishes to join the Practice Network and (ii) its willingness for the applicant to be employed part-time within the terms set out in the LSA Practice Agreement.
- Similarly, applicants with a conditional place offer may target suitable practices outside the LSA Practice Network, seeking employment within the terms set out in the LSA Practice Agreement.

Practices that seek to join the Practice Network through the three routes above must apply through the same process as the existing network. Practices looking to begin this process should email john.n@the-lsa.org The school will assess the practice's aptitude to join the Practice Network based on its completed Expression of Interest form and, potentially, at interview. The practice must be based in Greater London. The LSA reserves the right to decline at its absolute discretion an application by a practice to join the Practice Network.

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Financial information

Tuition Fees

For Home students registering for 2022/23 the tuition fees are £9,000 per year for both the First and Second Year. The LSA believes in fair fees for all students, regardless of where in the world they come from. Tuition fees are due and payable at registration for each year, and you have two payment options:

1. Self-financing students to pay in full. You are entitled to a five per cent discount if full payment of that year's fees is made prior to or at registration.
2. By three installments. The annual fee can be split evenly between the three terms. The LSA must receive the term's first tuition fee instalment no later than the start date of that term. The terms will ordinarily start in September, January and April.

You are required to ensure that you have secured funds to pay your tuition fees at the point of enrolment. Students who anticipate difficulty in making tuition fee payments as outlined above should contact the school as soon as possible to discuss their financial position and options.

International tuition fees 2022-23

- EU/EEA students who have been living in the UK for 3 years or more and have pre-settled or settled status: Tuition fees will be £9,000 and students are eligible for the home student fee rate and able to apply for the full amount from the Student Loan Company.
- EU/EEA students who have been living in the UK for less than 3 years and have a pre-settled status: Tuition fees will be £15,000 - these students will not be eligible for SLC funding.
- International students who have lived in the UK for more than 3 years, have a visa (allowing you to live and study in the UK) or the duration of the course: Tuition fees will be £9,000 - these students will not be eligible for SLC funding.
- International students who have lived in the UK for less than 3 years, have a visa (allowing you to live and study in the UK) for the duration of the course: Tuition fees will be £15,000.

Additional Costs

Items such as laptops, accommodation and living costs are extra to tuition fees. You may also incur additional costs for: study trips,

materials, photocopying, printing, library annual subscription/s, additional lecture admission fees, conference fees, specialist workshops if required.

Student Finance

Home Students at the LSA are eligible to apply for student finance for tuition fee loans and for a maintenance loan.

Please note you must apply for an undergraduate loan as the MArch in Designing Architecture is considered a continuation of your architectural studies. Part 1 and Part 2 architecture courses are considered a single course and therefore a designated course for undergraduate student support under the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011. Check [here](#) for criteria and eligibility.

The LSA is also registered for eligible students to apply for post-graduate loans. For any questions regarding this please contact our Finance Director at melanie@the-lsa.org

Students whose domicile is Wales and Northern Ireland are required to apply directly to the Wales and Northern Ireland educational authorities. The LSA does not have Scottish approval for Student Finance at the present time.

Arranging a salary sacrifice

Please read this very carefully:

You may consider entering into a salary sacrifice with your practice in regard to your placement provider covering part of your tuition fees to the London School of Architecture. If this is correctly structured it will save you and the practice money but it is important that this is carefully structured to avoid any tax problems.

If you enter into a salary sacrifice your practice will meet part of the tuition fees to the London School of Architecture on your behalf. Your salary will be reduced by the agreed amount that your practice has met on your behalf. On this basis the tuition fees are paid out of gross salary so this creates a tax saving for you, but in addition you and they save National Insurance on the agreed sacrificed amount. This will only work if your contract of employment is revised to reflect that your earnings have been reduced by the amount of the salary sacrifice. In doing this it is imperative to ensure that this leaves you with earnings (after salary sacrifice) above the National Minimum Wage. It is also important that your payroll record reflects the salary sacrifice so the earnings are shown to be the revised sum (salary after salary sacrifice).

Once you enter into this arrangement it cannot be terminated for the 12-month period unless you experience a 'lifestyle change'. While the tax legislation does not define a 'lifestyle event', this is considered by HMRC to include marriage, divorce, or an employee's spouse or partner becoming redundant or pregnancy. It is sensible before accepting an event is a 'lifestyle event' that you get HMRC written acceptance.

If you would like to pursue a salary sacrifice arrangement, you should discuss it directly with your practice as soon as possible, as the practice would need to seek approval from HMRC. We can supply your practice with extensive guidance on salary sacrifice, and sample letters and FAQs for each to amend to their needs.

The practice is under no obligation to enter a salary sacrifice arrangement with you. The above is subject to current UK legislation.

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School and student commitments

Attendance

The school will require students to be punctual and to attend where timetabled. The Course Handbook identifies circumstances (such as certificated illness or bereavement) which the school will treat as exceptions; where this is the case efforts will be made to assist the student with access to make good missed learning opportunities.

A register of attendance will be recorded and analysed. Where necessary the school will draw the consequences of lateness or absence to the attention of a student. The Course Handbook specifies circumstances in which a student who fails to comply with attendance requirements will be excluded from the programme. All students are expected to attend regularly throughout the academic year inclusive of the last day of the academic year.

Pastoral care

The Operations Director, Academic Director and Programme Coordinator are responsible for the pastoral care of the students, which includes developing and maintaining a safe and confidential relationship with their tutees; providing advice and support to tutees in matters related to academic work and personal development; and working with tutees to find appropriate pathways to resolve difficulties.

There are clear additional lines of dialogue for students who need to discuss any academic or pastoral issues: with the Practice Mentor, Module Leader, Tutor and Student Reps. Students are encouraged to make a judgement about the appropriate level for the help they need, and will be made aware that the LSA welcomes them to connect with this network of support at any point of access. The LSA will make counselling available to its students as appropriate and is supported by its academic partner the University of Liverpool.

The LSA also seeks to institute a web of social / professional relationships. After the first cohort, we will pair First Year students with 'buddies' in the Second Year, who can be called upon to provide guidance and advice.

Disabilities

The LSA is committed to supporting applicants with disabilities. In order to support applicants and their studies it is important that the LSA is made aware of any disabilities during the application stages and at interview. The relevant information must be indicated on the online application form.

Intellectual Property and Data Protection

All intellectual property rights created by you in connection with work on the Practice's projects belong to the Practice; all other intellectual property rights created by you in connection with work on the LSA's projects shall belong to you and the LSA jointly.

You agree that we can use work you have created on the course for any publication or publicity relating to the LSA.

You consent to:

- the LSA and the University of Liverpool processing your personal data for the purposes of administering the programme;
- your personal data being disclosed by the LSA and/or the University to the Higher Education Statistics Agency or equivalent body or to third parties (for example, progression information required by sponsors, references to potential employers, the Home Office and external bodies such as Edexcel and CGLI) where necessary. The LSA is GDPR compliant and adheres to the new Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018).

Resources

You accept that you must provide your own computer and software for your course. This will not be provided by the LSA or the University of Liverpool.

Plagiarism

Upon signing the application form candidates certify that the work submitted is entirely their own. If submitting collaborative work, specify this and clearly indicate your role and responsibility. Plagiarism is unacceptable in the academic setting. The LSA takes academic misconduct very seriously and seeks at all times to rigorously protect its academic standards.

Course award outcome

Upon the successful completion of your two-year course, you will receive the Masters in Designing Architecture ARB/RIBA Part 2, awarded by the University of Liverpool. If you successfully complete the first year of your course but do not complete the second year, you may be entitled to a Graduate Certificate in Designing Architecture.