

Te Pae  
by Crosson Architects  
Photo: Sam Hartnett



# Why study architecture?

# What is architecture?

The practice of architecture sits at the crossroads of art, science, technology and environmental awareness. Architects can influence the look and feel of the built environment to enrich lives physically, psychologically and spiritually.

Living or working in a well-designed building can change the way we think and feel – it can inspire, uplift, bring us together in new ways and promote wellbeing. Great architecture does more than simply meet its brief. It works in relationship with the landscape, enhancing our appreciation of the physical environment.

Catalysed by new technology and innovation, and with social awareness and a strong sense of conviction, architects are ideally placed to improve the way we live, now and in the future.



Te Taumata o Kupe Nuku  
by TOA Architects  
Photo: David Straight

# Architect stories

Sally Ogle,  
Patchwork Architecture



“I grew up on a farm in rural Taranaki where there was always something being built or fixed. An interest in the way things go together started there.

I first heard about architecture at high school – I was taking arts and science subjects, and it was suggested to me that architecture school might be a natural extension of that.

The practice of architecture can vary wildly from day to day – from designing and presenting work to clients, to writing reports, to problem solving onsite with builders.

To be a good architect, empathy and a sense of humour are useful, along with perseverance and flexibility. You need an ability to design something, critique it and possibly throw it in the bin and start over, repeatedly, until you find the right solution to the problem.

One of the things I like most about being an architect is that it's project based. This might sound obvious, but it's great to always have new challenges, and ones that allow you to keep refining ideas and approaches over time. It's also very satisfying to see projects turn into real, built things.”

Right: Gonville Pool House by Patchwork Architecture. Photo: Simon Wilson.



# Is architecture right for me?

An architect's role is diverse, and so are the skills and personal qualities required. There are many different types of architects and architecture, but useful attributes include:

An ability to analyse and critically assess problems

An ability to see the big picture as well as give attention to the smallest detail

An ability to communicate effectively

Imaginative and creative thinking skills

An understanding of human behaviours

An understanding of history, culture and environmental concerns

Through education and professional experience, architects will develop:

A practical and technical understanding of building materials and elements, structures, construction and services

Skills to manage a team of project consultants

Lateral thinking skills to solve complex problems

Negotiation skills to resolve complex building issues

An ability to mediate and administer a building contract fairly

# What subjects do I need to take at school?



Photo: David St George

Ben Tunui (Ngāti Awa, Te Ātiawa) of Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington School of Architecture, winner of the 2020 Student Design Awards with his project 'Utu'.

Secondary-school subjects that provide a good background to the study of architecture include art, design, graphics, computer studies, environmental studies, history, geography, physics, mathematics, communications and technology.

Before selecting Year 11 subjects, we suggest contacting Aotearoa's five accredited architecture schools to check if they have any subject prerequisites. The first step towards a career in architecture is the completion of Year 12, which enables entry into a degree programme in architecture.

# Where can I study architecture?

Aotearoa's certified architecture schools:

- Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington – Te Kura Waihangā Wellington School of Architecture
- Te Kura Matatini ki Otago – Otago Polytechnic
- Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau, Auckland University of Technology – Huri Te Ao School of Future Environments
- Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka, Unitec – School of Architecture
- Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland – Te Pare School of Architecture and Planning

Isabella Muirhead from Waipapa Taumata Rau, The University of Auckland, Te Pare School of Architecture and Planning, winner of the 2023 Student Design Awards for her project 'Common Ground'.

Architectural education differs between schools. Some provide more hands-on learning, while others offer more specialist areas of study. Do your research and find a school that suits you and your qualifications before applying.

Typically, the route to becoming an architect starts with the completion of a three-year Bachelor of Architectural Studies. To become an architect, you also need to complete a Master of Architecture (Professional), which takes two years full time.



Photo: David St George

## What's a registered architect?

By law, a person may call themselves an architect only if they are registered by the New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB).

The NZRAB sets and supervises professional standards and determines whether graduates, architects who have been trained and might be registered overseas, and people with other relevant qualifications and experience, are entitled to call themselves 'architects' in Aotearoa.

The website [nzrab.nz](http://nzrab.nz) lists all registered architects in this country.

## What comes after architecture school?

Graduates must complete two to three years of on-the-job work experience before they can apply to become a registered architect.

Graduates will learn how to undertake an architectural project competently through all its phases and have a sound knowledge of legal and contractual issues related to the practice of architecture.

Without registration, you won't be able to call yourself an architect. Registration also gives you the opportunity to start your own practice or work overseas.



Kiwa Pools by Architecture HDT. Photo: Jason Mann

## Do I have to become an architect if I study architecture?

No! Architecture offers huge scope and can lead to a wide variety of careers. While some architects focus on residential or commercial architecture, many other pathways are available. For example, architects involved in urban design play a pivotal role in shaping our cities and helping develop communities. Other opportunities include specialised projects such as schools and hospitals or the preservation of heritage buildings.

Graduates pursue careers in related fields, including:

- Urban planning /Urban design
- Property development
- Asset management
- Project management
- Interior design
- Environmental design
- Construction management
- Arbitration/mediation
- Furniture design
- Industrial design
- Teaching
- Research
- Construction law
- Building conservation
- International aid
- Landscape architecture

**“An architectural education is a robust base from which one can springboard into many facets of design. I’ve always felt it was a degree in problem solving, a skill that is invaluable in any profession.”**

**—Frances Cooper, Athfield Architects**

## **Want to know more?**

Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects exists to promote the interests of our members, build a sense of community in the architecture profession, and tell the world why architecture matters in the evolution of our cities and towns. We provide assistance to our members at every stage of their professional lives — and that includes architecture students with long careers ahead of them.

Institute membership for students of architecture in Aotearoa New Zealand is free, so if you decide to study architecture, get in touch to join us.



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