



Architect and Landscape Architect

Job Description

Architects plan and design the exterior and interior of buildings of all kinds – from houses to offices and from airport terminals to churches. They also create master plans for new communities or the redevelopment of sections of a city. In addition, some architects design renovations of old buildings.

Architecture is an art and a science because it involves both creating the overall look of a structure — its aesthetic — and developing the detailed plans that will guide the construction of a building. Architects usually are involved in every phase of building a project, from its initial conception to its completion. When designing a building, architects must consider its function, safety, the needs of people using the building, and budget limitations.

Landscape architecture is its own profession. Although architects and landscape architects use many of the same skills, landscape architects primarily focus on the landscape surrounding a building or group of buildings. They design parks, college campuses, parkways, and the grounds around a house, among many other settings. Their designs must reflect function, beauty, and compatibility with the natural environment.

Architects and landscape architects must be licensed by the state where they practice. To be licensed, they must have a professional degree plus several years work experience with a licensed professional before they sit for a national examination.

Salary

In 2004, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median annual earnings of architects were slightly more than \$60,000. The middle 50% of all architects earned between \$46,600 and \$79,200. The top 10% earned \$100,000 or more per year. Entry-level salaries for architects are considerably lower.

According to the American Society of Landscape Architects, the average salary in 2004 for a landscape architect just starting to practice was \$34,700, while the average salary for all landscape architects was \$74,600.

Because these salary figures are based on a national average, the salary ranges in different communities may vary from amounts mentioned above.

Education

A bachelor's or master's degree is usually necessary for entry into the profession of architecture or landscape architecture. The pre-professional bachelor's degrees require four or five years to complete. The most common type of master's degree program lasts three and, in some cases, four years and is intended for students with an undergraduate degree in a field other than architecture or landscape architecture. For students with an undergraduate degree in architecture or landscape architecture, the master's professional program takes two years.

Courses in architecture school typically include building design, structures, technology, architectural history and theory, and physical sciences. Landscape architecture courses cover surveying, landscape ecology, landscape design, and plant and soil science. Core to both fields of study is the design studio when students put into practice the skills and concepts learned in the classroom.

There are approximately 110 schools of architecture with officially approved programs. In 2004, 59 colleges and universities offered 77 undergraduate and graduate programs in landscape architecture.

Skills and Abilities

Architects and landscape architects both require creativity, artistic ability, visual orientation, and the ability to conceptualize and understand spatial relationships. They both also need good written and oral communication skills plus computer literacy, especially knowledge of computer-aided design (CAD) software.

Job Opportunities

In 2004 architects held about 129,000 jobs in 2004 – approximately 91,000 were licensed architects -- while landscape architects numbered about 30,000. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of architects is expected to grow until 2014 about as fast as the average (9-17%) for all occupations, while employment prospects for landscape architects will grow faster than the average



(18-26%). In general, job opportunities fluctuate according to activity in the construction industry.

Helpful High School Courses

- ▶ Art history
- ▶ Computer-assisted drafting
- ▶ English
- ▶ Math
- ▶ Physics
- ▶ Studio arts

In addition to the courses above, environmental studies and biology will be helpful for aspiring landscape architects.

Resources

Several organizations provide web-based resources useful to students interested in careers in architecture and landscape architecture.

▶ **American Institute of Architects**

1735 New York Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20006

Website: <http://www.aia.org> – The American Institute of Architects is the professional association for architects. Its website has information about careers and education opportunities.

▶ **American Society of Landscape Architects**

636 Eye Street NW, Washington, DC 20001

Website: <http://www.asla.org> – One section of this website presents career information. It also contains lists of colleges and universities providing degrees in landscape architecture as well as career brochures and many other resources.

▶ **The Landscape Architecture Foundation**, connected with the American Society of Landscape Architects, has a special website that provides extensive career guidance as well as education and scholarship information.

Website: <http://www.laprofession.org>



This Fact Sheet, with some additions and modifications, is taken from the National Building Museum's *Building Blocks: Design Apprenticeship Program* curriculum.