M.Arch Architectural Portfolio Evaluation Criteria

The portfolio review process is a holistic evaluation that takes into consideration the four criteria listed below. It also incorporates aspects of general education, fields of interest, specific geographical and cultural backgrounds, and the applicant's explanatory power of the Statement of Motivation and the Resume. Students who have no previous experience with architecture will be evaluated in the same categories, however the evaluation criteria will be understood and applied more broadly.

Criterion One – Analysis, Concept, Context

- **Project Analysis:** Does the work show critical analysis, research, and investigation of issues preliminary to and informing the outcome for each project presented?
- **Concept:** Is the main concept, or idea, clearly explored and creatively expressed in the work?
- **Context:** Does the work demonstrate clear analysis and documentation of contextual and environmental factors of site, and/or research and documentation of qualitative, cultural, social, and historical issues in the context of the work?
- **Within or Outside of the Discipline:** Critical analysis, concepts, and context can apply to any creative work including art, photography, craft, and creative or analytical writing. Your portfolio should include analytical and exploratory processes that help to show your concept, and that situate your work in its appropriate context.

Criterion Two - Design Development

- **Form:** Does the creative process convey a rigorous exploration leading to a successful translation of concepts, issues of site and/or context, and analysis into the final form?
- **Complexity:** Does the work show the ability to organize small building programs of modest complexity and resolve them within a clear architectural framework? Does the work show complex thinking within its appropriate context?
- **Scale:** Does the work show evidence of design thinking at a human scale, including exploration of design for human purposes and aspirations? Does it show evidence of design of appropriate spaces for movement and other activities?
- **Space:** Does the work show the ability or potential to develop and communicate three-dimensional space and form?
- **Building Systems:** Are explorations of qualitative aspects of materials and/or structural systems apparent in the process? Do these systems support the design solutions?
- **Within or Outside of the Discipline:** Each of these categories could be considered in relation to both architecture and other forms of creative production. Does the work show some intentional relationship to form, complexity, scale, space, and material?

Criterion Three - Representation

- **Visual Communication:** Does the portfolio show clear, organized visual documentation of the projects, allowing others to understand intentions and processes?
- **Graphical Representation:** Does the portfolio show adequate skills to graphically represent the work? Does it show explorative use of tools and media? Does the graphic representation of each project support its design solutions?
- **Craft:** Does the work show appropriate use of materials and skills? Is the work well crafted? As a means of representation, does the work support the concept or analysis?
- **Written Communication:** Creative or analytical writing may be presented in your portfolio as a form of creative production, or the portfolio may include brief, clear, and evocative written descriptions of projects and the ideas that generate them. In either case, does the writing, both in form and content, reveal a thoughtful relation to the concepts it is intended to convey?

- **Within or Outside of the Discipline:** Regardless of the type of work displayed in the portfolio, representation is a critical aspect of the portfolio evaluation. Each project and its representation within the portfolio should illustrate ability in both verbal and visual communication.

Criterion Four - Others

- **Extracurricular (Self-Study) Interests:** Does the portfolio show additional well-conceived and skillfully accomplished investigations and engagement of design-related topics (such as creative artwork, writing, furniture making, etc.)?

- **Growth:** Does the portfolio indicate evidence of self-motivation and growth throughout the projects? Does it include a variety of projects with different programs and scales? Does it show evidence of interests that go beyond standard academic expectations (through depth of research, nature of projects, scope of interests, etc.)?

- **Within or Outside of the Discipline:** Each portfolio should show a broad range of projects illustrating a variety of skills and ideas that you bring to the program from within or outside of the discipline.