



Carleton
UNIVERSITY

Canada's Capital University

ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES

Portfolio package

Carleton University requires a portfolio package as part of your application to the Bachelor of Architectural Studies program. **The portfolio package is an essential part of the application—you cannot be considered for admission unless you submit one.**

It is our intention that the application process to the Architectural Studies program be a creative challenge for you. This brochure should help eliminate any anxiety about the portfolio package by providing explanations, answering questions and indicating where you can get additional information.

Preparing your portfolio

Your portfolio package must include, in the following order:

1. **Resumé** maximum two A4 paper sheets
2. **Exercise A** maximum 300-500 words
3. **Exercise B** five A4 panels: cards, boards, protective sleeves or mounts
4. **Personal Insert** optional; maximum three panels compatible with the formats above

The following is a more comprehensive description of these specific items.

1. Resumé

A resumé is an itemized, written description of yourself. It starts with your full name and your current address (including telephone number and email address). It should provide detailed biographical information, including your education, extracurricular activities, travel history, hobbies and special projects. We want to know who you are, what worthwhile experiences you have had, what you have been recognized for, where your interests lie, and what makes you special. Please keep in mind that this is not an employment resumé and we are not looking for any specific "job skills."

Format: typed, maximum of two A4 (or 8.5" X 11") sheets. We recommend point-form text with **brief** descriptions as necessary; please refrain from using "prose style" writing.

2. Exercise A

Exercise A is a writing exercise. You are to submit a text that you have authored; the text should be 300–500 words in length. The subject of the text is up to you. You can decide whether you want to deal with an issue or an emotion, a factual condition in the "real" world or a fictional construct in an imagined world.

You may choose to pose a question or assert a position, be an arbiter among contending ideas or become an advocate of a particular idea. Choosing what to write about is as important as the writing itself. While we want your writing to be clear, thoughtful and grammatically correct, it is important for you to recognize that this is not an examination in English proficiency but rather a creative writing exercise.

Through this exercise, we are looking for insight into your ability to think about the world around you, reflect upon personal and human conditions, recognize issues of importance, form opinions, take positions, and express them in an imaginative yet clear and reasoned way through prose.

3. Exercise B

Our expectation: we are interested in how you **see** (sense, scan, observe, edit, de-code, understand, internalize, frame, encode, present) the world around you; what and how you **draw** from yourself and the environment; and if and how you **make** "things" through a thoughtful act of bringing together materials or transforming them, making intelligent connections, achieving form, defining space and ultimately letting the "thing" either perform a function and/or be expressive of your intentions. The words "see," "draw" and "make," each in themselves, carry many shades of meanings. We encourage you to explore these meanings and arrive at a position that is most accurately expressive of you as a person.

Your response: you are asked to submit a total of five panels of flat visual material in a medium of your choice. These panels are to be in response to the expectations stated in the previous paragraph.

You are asked to consider "**seeing**" in its most comprehensive sense as contrasted with mere recording, as for example, through a fixed surveillance camera or just watching or keeping an eye on some thing or phenomenon. "**Drawing**" is to be beyond the graphic act of drawing as mere imitation, as commonly understood, or just a legal-technical communication from the designer to the builder.

Similarly "**making**" is not to be treated as a mere assembling of parts according to instructions that usually accompany kits of parts as they come in a box. Consider "making" as "drawing-out" in order to manifest aspects of your sense of the world around you. What you make has to be communicated to us through one or more of these panels.

All five panels may be conceived around one theme or they may each put forth different subjects or ideas. The medium and technique used can vary from one panel to another. We request that you present original hand-crafted work. Digital work (AutoCAD, Photoshop manipulations, computer graphics, etc.) should NOT be included. If you prefer that the panels be viewed in a certain sequence or arrangement, you must send us your instructions. **Note:** We are not interested in written explanations of the panels.

We prefer that your panels are prepared specifically for this portfolio package and the original sent in. Please resist the temptation to send single reproductions (laser copies, photographs) of your original work, especially “high school” art exercises.

Format: the overall dimensions for each panel is fixed at A4 (metric) or 8.5” X 11” (imperial). While the image size can vary, the overall size of all panels is to be the same. The panels can be mounted on card stock or inserted in protective sleeves and should stay flat on their own. They can be presented inside a traditional binder or in a customized container of similar size. Please do not use breakable materials like glass or very heavy materials like metals.

The following information must appear on the back of each panel:

Exercise: B
Panel No.: 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5
Applicant name:
Applicant number:
Instructions for viewing (if any)

Please do not write any explanation for your panels.

4. Personal insert (optional)

Your resumé and Exercises A and B should be adequate for us to assess your candidacy for the Carleton University Architectural Studies program. However, you may also wish to include something unique and special that you have done to enhance your chances of admission. You are welcome to include up to three personal inserts. The personal inserts can include photographs, additional drawings, reproductions (copies) of larger format works, photographs of 3-D or sculptural pieces, etc.

The format of these inserts must be compatible with the rest of the portfolio package. Please refrain from sending heavy, fragile or bulky items.

Portfolio package format and conditions

As described above, the maximum size of your portfolio pages must not exceed the metric A4 or imperial 8.5” x 11” inside a compatibly sized container. Please print your name and applicant number clearly on the cover and spine of your portfolio. Do not send models, cassettes, slides, videos or rolls of drawings. The total number of pages and panels, including the personal insert in your portfolio, must not exceed 12. Portfolio packages that do not follow this format will not be reviewed.

Submitting your portfolio

Once completed, please send your portfolio package to:

Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism
Carleton University
202 Architecture Building
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa ON K1S 5B6
Canada

The due date for portfolio packages is April 1.

Should the due date fall on a weekend or holiday, portfolios will be accepted the next working day. Applications and portfolio packages arriving after the deadlines will not be reviewed until later in the summer. At that time, they may only be considered as a possible addition to an already established waiting list.

If you wish to have your portfolio returned, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped mailing envelope. We will take every precaution to ensure that portfolios are treated with respect while in our possession. However, Carleton University is not liable and will not be held responsible if a portfolio is lost or damaged. All portfolios not reclaimed by September 30 will be discarded.

You are responsible for meeting all admission requirements for the Bachelor of Architectural Studies. If you are waiting until the summer to complete math or physics requirements, you will not receive consideration during the first round of admission offers. Once you have completed all academic requirements and Admissions Services has received your final grade reports, you may be considered for a space on a waiting list.

Please also note that if you are submitting an English Language Test in support of your application you must submit the results before April 1 in order to be considered for an offer of admission.

Portfolio Review Committee

The school’s Portfolio Review Committee is comprised of faculty. Each portfolio is reviewed, discussed and marked through discussion, and candidates are ranked according to marks. This list of candidates is then sent to the University’s Admissions Services, where applicants’ academic credentials are assessed to arrive at a final ranking. After a thorough review involving Admissions Services, the school’s Director, and the Admissions Committee Chair, offers of admission are made. We try very hard to achieve a match between the interests and aptitudes of the applicant and the learning environment of the school. The portfolio package is our way of anticipating the kind and quality of student you will make.

For more information

There are a number of sources of information available to you that can provide more detail about the Architectural Studies program at Carleton. The Architectural Studies brochure, the school’s website (carleton.ca/architecture), the *Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar* (available online at carleton.ca/cuuc), a folio of the school’s work (that can be purchased from us), and high school visits by Carleton recruitment officers provide valuable information about the school and the program. We also

hold open houses in both the fall and spring to give you a chance to see the school in operation, to talk to our students, and to ask for advice on how to prepare your portfolio package. Members of the school's Admissions Committee are also available to meet you. Appointments can be arranged by calling or emailing:

Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism
Carleton University

Tel: 613-520-2855

Email: architecture@carleton.ca

Frequently asked questions

Resumé

- **What does "this is not a resumé for a job application" mean?**

The resumé you produce when applying for a job informs the employer about the match between your abilities and the performance expectations in the job that is being advertised. Being admitted to a university program, however, is not at all like being given a job. You will be a student/scholar in a university, not an employee. We are teachers/academics in a program preparing you for a profession; we are not your employers. University is an institution that makes our creative collaboration possible.

Exercise A

- **Should I write about "why I want to become an architect"?**

It is not a requirement that you focus your Exercise A topic on your reasons for wanting to study architecture. You can choose any topic that you consider will help us gauge your critical skills, your literary imagination and your manner of communication. While the subject of your creative writing may be architecture or urban conditions, other topics may also describe your interests and your creativity.

- **Should Exercise A be handwritten or typed?**

It really does not matter, as long as the text is clear and easy to read. Please resist the temptation to embellish your text by using complex calligraphic styles, colours, fonts or graphics of any kind.

- **What about quotations and footnotes?**

Please keep quotations to a minimum. If you use any quotes, you must cite the source as a footnote.

Exercise B

- **How is "panel" defined?**

A panel is a flat two-dimensional surface, rectangular in shape, that can hold its flatness when held in hand, or laid flat on a table top. You may use plastic protective sleeves, heavy card material, illustration board, mounting board, foam board or thin masonite (although weight may be a concern). We will also consider a canvas stretched on a rectangular frame as a panel. We advise against the use of heavy materials like metals or brittle materials like glass.

- **Do all panels have to be of the same size?**

Yes, all panels have to be the same rectangular size. The thickness of individual panels might vary if the material

changes. For example, one panel could be an illustration board and another panel could be a foam board or a stretched canvas. The overall size of each panel must be either A4 (metric) or 8.5" X 11" (imperial). We recognize that some manufactured painting boards are slightly larger or slightly smaller and will accept these (within reasonable limits).

- **Do all panels have to be the same medium?**

No. You have complete freedom to change the medium from one panel to another. For example, one panel could be a pencil drawing, another a water colour, another an acrylic painting, another a photograph, and, finally, they can also be in mixed media. However, you may choose to have all five panels in the same medium. In Exercise B, all must be originals; no reproductions are allowed.

- **What about the subject matter of the panels?**

What is it that you want to see?

This is the most frequently asked question. We explained our expectations in the text above—especially in our descriptions of Exercise B—and have been very careful in our choice of words in stating our expectations and suggesting your response. However, we are quite happy to elaborate the reasons for Exercise B.

Conventional "portfolios of creative work" that Carleton has received over the past 20 years have been mostly an assorted collection of "art work," from either secondary school art programs or from other privately pursued art courses or personal hobbies. Often this work is driven by technique and style-based exercises. We have also received technical drafting exercises that, in many cases, are thought by applicants to be the concrete evidence of their "skills" to pursue the study of architecture. Our experience has taught us that such portfolios do not tell us much about you beyond your "artistic and drawing" skills in a rather literal sense. We prefer to look beyond such skills. We are interested in your potential to be creative, to see beyond the appearance, to imagine in a refreshing and critical manner, to treat art and design as a way of commenting on life and taking positions. We consider Exercise B to be a way of getting to know you and your creative potential.

You may consider Exercise A and Exercise B as our way of having an interview with you without you having to appear in person.

- **Why do you ask us to submit original work in Exercise B?**

Exercise B is your way of presenting yourself visually with the specific intention of being admitted to Carleton's Architectural Studies program. We expect you to treat these five panels as your personal and specific response to our expectations as stated. It is this direct correspondence between our expectations and your response that automatically necessitates your submission to be "original" and not just a copy of your previous work. It is perfectly acceptable and even encouraged that in preparing your panels you appropriate your previous artwork through various reproductive techniques available to you. But we like you to understand that there is a difference between appropriating your previous artwork and merely reducing or duplicating it for us. Remember that digital work (AutoCAD, Photoshop manipulations, computer graphics, etc.) is not considered "original work" and should NOT be included.

■ **What if I cannot draw that well? Do I stand a chance of being admitted?**

We appreciate graphic and technical skills in the execution of work but priority will be given to ideas and intentions that come across as we see your panels. If you feel that at this stage you cannot paint or photograph like a “master,” please do not despair. Give us your best effort. Those admitted will have intensive courses in drawing and multimedia, including photography, in the very first year of the program.

Personal insert

■ **What kind of things can I include in a personal insert?**

You can include reductions of your larger artwork, photographs of built craft projects or buildings, photographs of special events or installations you might have participated in, stage designs, fashion designs, graphic work, book illustrations, cartoons, comic strips, or high school yearbook work. We allow you this option to include any work that you consider will enhance your chance of admission, but could not have been included as originals in Exercise B.

■ **Can I send large size work as a personal insert?**

No. Your personal insert must fit the format of A4 (metric) or 8.5” X 11” (imperial) overall dimensions. The personal insert can have some thickness to it that was otherwise restricted in Exercise B. We have relaxed the strict definition of a “panel” of Exercise B so that you can submit craft work, for example, stained glass, relief carvings, embroideries, etc.

■ **Why are there restrictions on the overall size of a personal insert?**

Given the large number of portfolio packages we receive every year, the logistics (handling, storage and retrieval) are quite cumbersome if work comes in assorted sizes.

■ **Will the quality of my packaging affect my portfolio mark?**

No. We focus only on Exercise A, Exercise B and your personal insert (should you choose to include any). Keep the packaging simple—we should be able to easily insert your work back into the packaging after evaluation and store it until you reclaim it.

Do you want more information?

We think that preparing the portfolio should be an interesting and creative experience. We are here to help make that possible. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school:

Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism
Carleton University
202 Architecture Building
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa ON K1S 5B6
Canada

Tel: 613-520-2855

Fax: 613-520-2849

Email: architecture@carleton.ca

Website: carleton.ca/architecture

Protecting your privacy

At Carleton University, we recognize and respect the importance of privacy. Personal information that we collect is kept confidential. In accordance with section 41 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Carleton University will only use the information in its custody or control in the following circumstances: where the individual identifies the particular information and consents to its use; for the purpose for which it was collected or a consistent purpose (i.e. a purpose which the individual might have reasonably expected).