Master of Architecture Program and Studio Culture Policy

Ethos / Overview

Enrollment in the Master of Architecture Program and studio environment is a privilege granted to students majoring in our Program. As such, each student is bound to uphold this standard, through personnel performance as well as in concert with others. The term “studio” refers to a series of specific, uniquely structured courses as well as a physical place founded on the educational ideals and the belief in an environment that fosters critical thinking, explorative forming and testing of ideas, and professional development. Overall, our Program is grounded in the following essential values (referenced from the AIAS Studio Task Force Report):

A Culture of Optimism – Hopeful that architecture will make a difference to society, and confident that success within the profession or related discipline is possible.

A Culture of Respect – Respect for the individual, the community, ideas, diversity and the physical space.

A Culture of Sharing – Collaboration, interdisciplinary connections and successful oral and written communication are embraced.

A Culture of Engagement – Promoting leadership to foster engagement within communities, among clients and users, and around social issues.

A Culture of Innovation – Encouraging critical thinking, fostering risk taking, and promoting creativity.

Criteria / Standards / Principles

The ideal studio goes much further than merely to establish a place of inspiration and collegiality. It upholds a mutual attitude of respect and tolerance among faculty and students, understanding that cooperation between, and discourse among diverse perspectives within the Program is one of our greatest assets. Our working model asserts a culture of respect and innovation within the Program by allowing ideas, processes, and products to develop freely.

1) Students must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and show consideration for fellow studio residents and faculty. The RIT Code of Student Conduct shall be adhered to.

2) No student under the influence of alcohol, or physical or consciousness altering drugs, may enter any studios, labs, or workshops. Smoking is prohibited at all times – both within the studio environment and throughout adjoining corridors and exterior spaces.

3) Students must respect the work, materials and work areas of fellow students.

4) Students must observe the principles of good citizenship.
5) **Collaboration**, discussion of diverse opinions, critical thinking, creative inquiry and expression around design are encouraged to promote a culture of innovation, exploration, and discovery.

6) In instances of conflict, the highest standards of ethical, professional behavior – as outlined in the RIT Code of Student Conduct – will be our guides. All issues will be handled in a constructive manner with respect, discretion, and humility.

7) Students must maintain a healthy lifestyle to contribute to a healthy and productive studio environment. It is the instructor’s responsibility to distribute a relatively equitable workload throughout the semester, while it is student's responsibility to develop personal time-management skills to meet responsibilities in and beyond the classroom.

**Operation**

- Operation
  1) All RIT tools and equipment must remain accessible to students for use in class and the studio.
  2) Changes to the physical studio layout, changing space assignments, or moving furniture to other locations is not permissible without the consent of the program chair or a studio instructor.
  3) Students using common work areas must clean up when finished and return tools and equipment to their proper storage locations.
  4) Behavior in studio should follow a model of respectful collaboration providing each student and faculty the possibility of a pleasant and productive work environment. It is each student’s right to have workspace setting conducive to a healthy learning environment.
  5) Plotting and work preparation should be done well in advance of routine desk crits or presentations.
  6) Attendance and participation in all assigned reviews is required. Active dialogue is encouraged among critics, professors, and students with the common goal of discovery and invention. In order to benefit from reviews, students and faculty must be considerate of each other’s time by participating in thoughtful discussions specific to the topic.

- Safety
  Students must observe all safety criteria and regulations as outlined and enforced by RIT Facilities Management.
Security

All students registered for design studios will have swipe card access. Open access by others not officially a part of our Program is prohibited.

Storage

Care of drawings, models and all other work through proper storage on or in desks is required at all times.

All academic work is the property of the Program, and students shall prepare and submit digital files on a disk to their respective faculty at the conclusion of each term. Any work identified by faculty as archival or as exhibits for accreditation will be collected by faculty, stored separately for appropriate documentation or preparation.

Disposal

Dispose of trash in receptacles rather than on the floor. Practice principles of sustainability on a daily basis. Dispose of and recycle all materials properly and safely.

Upon completing the studio at the end of a term - Leave the studio as clean and as orderly as you found it. Models, drawings, and other material left in studio beyond the due date for their removal at the end of each quarter/semester or summer session, will be discarded.

Furniture

Desks and Drawing Equipment - Your assigned desk, the walls, partitions and immediate space it occupies is assigned during a school term for your personal use related to academic inquiry and should be treated accordingly. Any theft should be reported to campus security immediately. All students are to have the necessary tools to work at all times. No motorized tools, other than those approved by a studio instructor are allowed at any time.

Space / walls

All studio space and wall areas, other than those areas as a part of a studio work station is understood to be common property and use of these areas subject to the determination of the faculty and shall not be used for any other purpose.

Faculty, Student and Staff Engagement

The Studio is the centerpiece of architectural education and the vehicle from which to impart the Program’s pedagogy. Studio conduct must therefore be of the highest ethical standard and the instructor must be held as a model of such behavior.
Studios may engage in real projects, but only for the academic benefits of such engagement to both the student and the community and in keeping with all University policies regarding such matters.

Throughout the program where quasi-professional work is often the form of community service and/or assistance, special care should be taken to ensure clarity of purpose for the exercise and associated costs and fees.

An instructor’s engagement in design studio teaching should be selfless pursuit imparting knowledge of architecture and searching collectively for new and time honored ways in which design improves the quality of life, protects the settings where life unfolds and stimulates the universal human desire for beauty.

**Faculty/Staff Interaction – Student/Staff Interaction** -

Faculty and Students understand that staff is assigned work by other faculty, administration and university programs, departments and centers, and shall be respectful of their time and professional duties.

**Faculty/Student Interaction –**

Good judgment in deciding when, where and how to converse with students regarding sensitive issues should be exercised. All dialog shall be be non-confrontational and professional with wording and communication, and operate within RIT policy and standards.

**Faculty/Faculty Interaction –**

Faculty understand that the university setting is an environment where ideas can be discussed in a courteous and collegial manner, and differences of opinion should be respected.

**Faculty Workload Expectations –**

All faculty are expected to make time outside of class for additional contact time with students through identified office hours.

**Student/Student Interaction –**

As a professional program, it is understood that all students are expected to interact in a professional, respectful and collegial manner, similar to faculty/faculty interaction described above.

**Review**

This document will be reviewed and updated every spring term of even numbered years by a committee representing both faculty and the student body.

**Date Adopted/Updated**

September, 2012