Part Two (II) Section 3 – Evaluation of Preparation/Pre-Professional Education

II.3.1 Evaluation of Preparation/Pre-Professional Education

The vast majority of students in our Master of Architecture program complete the Bachelor of Environmental Design program at Montana State University—typically 85-90% of our M.Arch students fall into this category. For this large contingent of students, we are able to verify that they have met the necessary student performance criteria as those SPCs are met in our undergraduate courses as identified in the expanded matrix located on page 123. Since so many of our M.Arch students move through our undergraduate program, we describe below the basic admission requirements for entering freshman and undergraduate transfer student as well as the admission process to our Master of Architecture program. Some students transfer to MSU from another program and enroll in our undergraduate program. Once they have completed our B.A. in Environmental Design degree, they apply for our Master of Architecture.

The remaining 10-15% of our M.Arch students have completed a pre-professional program from another institution and apply for our graduate program. We also describe below the process we use to determine their placement within our graduate program and how we determine what student performance criteria they still need to complete within our program.

Admission into the Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Design Program
As mentioned previously, prospective students must send an application to the University Admissions Office which is reviewed for admission to the University. http://www.montana.edu/admissions/apply.shtml Once students are accepted into the University they must declare Environmental Design as their major at which time they can enroll in the first year design sequence. As mentioned elsewhere in this document, admission to the Environmental Design Program (second, third and fourth year) is limited and requires that all first year students submit a portfolio for review by the Second Year Admissions Committee. Total enrollment is limited by the teaching and funding capacities of the school. Applicants to the second year of the program must be in good scholastic standing, have satisfactorily completed the Pre-Environmental Design program and have a design portfolio that indicates creative potential. Second Year admission requirements and process for the Environmental Design program can be found at http://www.arch.montana.edu/pages/programs/programs_undergraduate_applicationprocess.php

Students must have an average undergraduate Design Studio GPA of 3.0 or better in order to be considered for acceptance into the graduate program. If a student receives two consecutive grades of "C-" or lower in any undergraduate design studio course they will be required to repeat the last course in which a "C-" or lower was received

Transfer Students entering into the Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Design Program
Students who are transferring into the Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Design program at Montana State University will have all of their previous university coursework evaluated by the MSU Admissions Office. The Admissions office will apply appropriate courses to the MSU Core Curriculum general education requirements. In the case of a transfer student who has previously taken Architecture courses at another school, the School of Architecture will evaluate each course to determine its applicability to the MSU pre-professional Environmental Design program. Evaluation of coursework is done by faculty and administrative evaluation. The Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Director or designated faculty members in each area of Architecture (structures, history, structures, building construction, environmental controls and graphics) will evaluate a course by reviewing course descriptions, syllabi and coursework from the previous course taken. The designated faculty member or administrator will complete a waiver form indicating their acceptance or denial of the previous credit as an acceptable substitution for the given MSU Architecture course requirements and applicable student performance criteria for that course . This process is applicable to all non-studio Architecture courses.

Transfer students who have taken previous Architecture studio courses will be asked to submit a portfolio of their studio work. The portfolio will be evaluated by the School of Architecture Second Year Admissions Committee. This committee consists of 5 faculty members. The committee is asked to make a recommendation on the studio year (1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th) level placement based upon the portfolio's demonstration of ability in the following areas:

Conceptual Development, Technical Development, Visual Communication and Overall Quality of Design. Their decision will be reviewed by the Director and the student will be appropriately placed in the decided studio year.

*Admission into the Master of Architecture Professional Program – **Internal Applicants** Completing the MSU Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Design*
Student can apply for admission into the Master of Architecture program after they have completed their senior capstone studio, ARCH 456 in our current curriculum and ARCH 457 in the new 168 credit curriculum. Students applying for the Master of Architecture degree must submit an application to the Graduate School and a portfolio to the School of Architecture Graduate Admissions Committee. The Graduate School Application must include three letters of recommendation. Both the letters and the portfolio submission are reviewed by the School of Architecture Graduate Admissions Committee. Internal candidates are required to submit their undergraduate transcript, which allows us to verify that they have completed all of our required courses and completed the student performance criteria identified in our matrix. Five faculty review the applicant's portfolio and assign a portfolio score which is averaged to determine a portfolio scores. The writing score from the GRE is factored into the students graduate admission score as is their cumulative GPA and letters of recommendation. This provides a graduate admissions score that is used to determine which students will be accepted into the graduate program. This process occurs for both applicants from our own pre-professional program and for applicants from other pre-professional programs.

- University graduate application information can be found at
  http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/cat_admin_pol.html
- School of Architecture graduate application information can be found on our website at
  http://www.arch.montana.edu/pages/students/students_graduate_applicationprocess.php
- School of Architecture graduate application requirements can be found on our website at
  http://www.arch.montana.edu/pages/students/students_graduate_admissionrequirements.php

*Admission into the Master of Architecture Professional Program – **External Applicants** Completing a Pre-professional Degree Program at Another Institution*
With applicants from other non-professional programs, the admissions process begins with the same set of requirements listed above: an application to the Graduate School, a portfolio of work submitted to the School of Architecture Graduate Admissions Committee, three letters of recommendation and completion of the GRE. These materials are used in the manner described above to determine an applicant's admission or denial into our program.

External applicants are required to submit a transcript from their undergraduate program. Similar to the process utilized for transfer students into our undergraduate program, evaluation of coursework is done by the appropriate faculty and administrators. The Graduate Program Coordinator, Director of the School, or designated faculty members in each area of Architecture (structures, history, structures, building construction, environmental controls and graphics) will evaluate a course by reviewing course descriptions, syllabi and coursework from the previous course taken. Courses that are not seen as equivalent and would not have satisfied the student performance criteria of our pre-professional program would be identified and students would be required to take the necessary undergraduate courses as part of a provisional acceptance into our graduate program.

In addition, faculty on the Graduate Admissions Committee are asked to assess the work in the portfolio in order to recommend design studio placement as well as other non-studio course work that must be taken to make up for deficiencies that are identified in the applicant's portfolio. The Graduate Admissions Committee consists of 5 faculty members. The committee will recommend if certain areas are found to be lacking in demonstrating ability in the following areas: Conceptual Development, Technical Development, Visual Communication and Overall Quality of Design. Their decision will be reviewed by the Director and the student will be appropriately placed in the recommended studio year or undergraduate course. Because our undergraduate program has 7 semesters of design studio the vast majority of external applicants to our program are placed in either ARCH 355 Architectural Design III or ARCH 456 Architectural Design IV and must complete those undergraduate studios prior to being able to enroll in our initial graduate design studio, ARCH 557. In some cases, external applicants are placed in ARCH 354 Architectural Design II. In addition, students taking these design studios are often required to take the non-studio courses in that particular year as a result of the portfolio review and the recommendation of the Graduate Admissions Committee. A unique program of study is developed for each of these applicants so that they are aware of which courses in our pre-professional program they are required to take and in what semester they are to be taken. For applicants from other programs this review process and development of a program of study is done on a case by case basis.

Students who are required to take undergraduate courses in order to satisfy the student performance criteria requirements of our matrix are provisionally accepted into our graduate program. Once accepted into the graduate program—whether provisional admission or full admission—students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and must receive a grade of B or better in each design studio in order to proceed to the next studio in the sequence. Additional information on provisional admission status can be found at:
http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/cat_admin_pol.html#prov_admin

School of Architecture Graduate Admission Scoring Process for Internal and External Applicants
Beginning in Summer 2009 the admissions policies were adjusted and now reflect the following requirements for admission to the M.ARCH program;

Admission to the Master of Architecture program is based on a student's undergraduate GPA (40%), portfolio review (40%), 3 letters of recommendation (10%) and the GRE writing score (10%). A student must have a minimum studio average grade of "B" (3.0) to be eligible to apply to the M.ARCH program. The minimum Architecture studio grade is determined by computing the GPA for all required undergraduate studios (ARCH 151RA, ARCH 152, ARCH 253, ARCH 354, ARCH 355, ARCH 456). The fourth year studio option course—ARCH 414, ARCH 450, ARCH 458 or ARCH 498—is not used in computing the studio averages as these studio are varied in credit and content. Any student not receiving an average GPA of "B" or better in their Architecture studio courses will not be permitted to apply until they improve their studio GPA by retaking studio courses.

A student's acceptance into the M.ARCH program is determined by an overall admissions score. A student must receive a minimum score of at least a 7.68 to be considered for full admission. Case by case determinations will be made for students who have an admissions score of a 7.64-7.67 and these students may be offered provisional admission to the M.ARCH program. As mentioned previously the Graduate Admissions Review is performed by a committee of five faculty members.

Admissions Score Breakdown
Cumulative GPA (40%)- Min 3.0/Max 4.0
GPA based on a 4.0 system (4.0 = a letter grade of A)

Portfolio (40%)- Min 6.5/Max 12 -Final Score is determined by averaging 5 reviewers portfolio scores.
- 12 points = Outstanding
- 9 points = Excellent
- 6.5 points = Good (Required Minimum)
- 3 points = Poor
- 0 points = Unacceptable

Writing Component (10%)- Min 0/Max 6
This score is the actual score received on written portion of the GRE.

Letters of Reference (10%)- Min 0/Max 3
Letter of Reference score is determined by averaging the overall recommendation criteria from each of the three letters of recommendation.
Highly Recommend= 3 points
Recommend= 2 points
Recommend with reservations= 1 point
Do Not recommend= 0 points

Graduate Program—Remediation
Applicants holding a bachelor's degree or advanced degrees from other universities may be advised to pursue a second bachelor's status instead of non-degree graduate status to complete deficiency work. Second bachelor's students will comply with all MSU undergraduate policies and procedures. Students denied admission to the School of Architecture may attend MSU in non-degree status to gain sufficient foundation work to enter the graduate program. Upon receipt of grades "B" or better for a minimum of 9 four hundred or five hundred level credits, the student may be reconsidered for admission to the program. A maximum of 6 credits of course work earned in this situation may be counted toward graduation.