University of Zagreb
Faculty of Architecture

University postgraduate doctoral programme
Architecture and Urban Planning

STUDY PROGRAMME ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING

Introduction

The Faculty of Architecture of the University of Zagreb is the successor of a hundred year long tradition and experience in the education of architects in Croatia, which is being carried out through university studies, scientific research and artistic practice in the field of architecture and urban planning, as well as through the tradition of providing postgraduate studies for more than 35 years. Providing postgraduate studies begun at the Faculty of Architecture in the academic year 1969/70 and has continued until today. The postgraduate studies were reorganized in 2005 in accordance with Bologna processes. The doctoral programme has been held since 2007 as the third cycle of architectural education. Until today, nine generations of doctoral study candidates have been enrolled in the doctoral scientific programme Architecture and Urban Planning.

Social relevance of the studies

Faculty of Architecture University of Zagreb is responsible for and provides the doctoral scientific programme Architecture and Urban Planning. Continued interest in these topics is due to social and economic importance of the fields of architecture, urban planning, spatial planning and environmental protection. This interest can also be seen outside of the higher education system, in business and public sectors (ministries of the Republic of Croatia, institutes, counties and cities, architectural design offices, Croatian chambers of architects and civil engineers).

Organization of the studies

Postgraduate scientific programme Architecture and Urban Planning has been organized and performed as a study for achieving the academic title Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the field of Architecture and urban planning. Upon completing the postgraduate study programme for achieving the academic doctoral title, the candidate is awarded the academic title Doctor of Philosophy in the scientific area of technical sciences, scientific field of architecture and urban planning. The programme lasts for six semesters, and it takes place over the course of three years, during which time the doctoral candidate has to achieve at least 180 ECTS points. In line with the Statute of the University of Zagreb, a doctoral candidate's student's status ceases after six years from the date of enrolment.

International recognizability and comparability

Current projects of the Faculty of Architecture and its cooperation with numerous Croatian, European, American, and especially Middle-European faculties, in teaching and scientific collaboration, reflect the openness and active participation in the research of current challenges in the field of architecture and urban planning. The proposed study programme uses the experiences of numerous other institutions, and its organization can be compared to the programmes of similar European universities, such as TU Wien, Politecnico di Milano, IUAV Venezia and ETH Zurich.

Objective of the studies

The objective of the studies is education and preparation of young scientists for responsible dealing with complex and demanding subject-matter of architecture and urban planning in challenging conditions. The programme is being carried out by introducing participants to theoretical knowledge of numerous diverse ancillary disciplines, by encouraging and developing capabilities of intellectual response and thinking, and familiarization with foundations and methods of scientific-research work. As a successor of technical tradition, the Faculty of Architecture nurtures the broadness and tradition of engineering skills and training, which are supplemented by artistic principles and considerations.

Openness of the studies

This programme will be carried out by the teaching staff of the Faculty of Architecture, members of other faculties of the University of Zagreb, and other universities from Croatia and abroad. Lecturers will adhere to the curriculum and detailed plan established by the Council for doctoral studies of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Zagreb.

Scientific PhD Programme can also be enroled and attended by candidates from other fields of expertise. This programme allows mobility of students because, provided that certain criteria are met, it is possible to switch between different programmes. Moreover, some of the courses can be taken at other faculties or universities.

Organization of lectures and learning objectives

PhD Programme lasts for six (6) semesters. Educational forms are distributed by semester in the following way: intense seminar as critical dislocation (I semester); interactive workshop for research into the subject-matter area (II semester); interactive workshop for the methodological elaboration of research interest (III semester); mentorship for achieving the structure of the thesis (IV semester); mentorship for the development of the thesis (V semester), mentorship for the elaboration of the thesis (VI semester). During the course of the doctoral studies, a doctoral candidate has to achieve at least 180 ECTS points. Upon defence of his or her doctoral thesis, the candidate achieves the academic title Doctor of Philosophy in the scientific area of technical sciences, scientific field of architecture and urban planning.

Courses in PhD Programme are organized in such a way as to allow the candidates to gain scientific insights, knowledge, experience and skills. It is important to ensure the understanding of the core of scientific and applied scientific research in the field of architecture and urban planning. Doctoral candidates are especially encouraged to develop the capability of independent research work, critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas, and to form opinions on complex topics which include relevant social, cultural, scientific and ethical responsibility. Written works and public presentations test the capability of demonstration of the results and conclusions of the original research in a clear and efficient way. Doctoral candidates are expected to understand standards of international scientific publishing. During the course of their studies, they are also expected to become involved in exchange of ideas and discoveries by publishing the results of their own research.

All teaching materials and methodological approaches which are being applied in the PhD Programme are aimed at attaining work competences and the development of generic and transferable skills. Generic skills developed through all courses include the following skills: basic (language and technical literacy – partly also in a foreign language), social (communication, teamwork), conceptual (collection and organization of data, defining and solving problems, “learning how to learn”; creative, innovative and systematic thinking), personal (responsibility towards one's own academic and research work, flexibility, time management, meeting deadlines, self-assessment), and socially relevant skills (civic participation, social responsibility, social activism of a professional, collaboration with local community). In order to encourage them to attain transferable skills, students are included into the preparation of teaching materials and mandatory reading for certain courses, class organization, accepting minor administrative tasks, setting up teaching materials and updating the intranet content of the doctoral studies.

Prerequisites for enrolment

Candidates apply based on a public call for applications. Applicants who have completed the Master Programme of architecture in the Republic of Croatia or abroad, and have achieved 300 ECTS points, or they attained the diploma in the (under)graduate study of architecture and urban planning in line with the earlier, pre-Bologna process. Persons enrolling in PhD Programme have to be fluent in the English language.

Applicants who have completed related university studies/programmes (civil engineering, geodesy, agronomy, art history etc.) can also apply, if their scientific-research interest is focused on architecture and urban planning, which can be corroborated by their past work and results.

Applicants who have completed other study programmes can be required by the Council for doctoral studies to take supplemental exam. Supplemental exam tests their knowledge of architecture and urban planning, which is a prerequisite to attend lectures at this postgraduate study, and the contents and mandatory reading for the exam are defined by the Council for doctoral studies in accordance with the study programme of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Zagreb.

The application for the PhD Programme comprises: (1) an application form, (2) proof of citizenship, (3) a curriculum vitae, (4) proof of completed studies, (5) a certified transcript of records from all previously completed studies, including the calculated grade point average, (6) two letters of recommendation, (7) a description of research interests, (8) a selection of professional papers, and (9) a list of published works. Applications from foreign nationals are evaluated under the same conditions and criteria as those from Croatian citizens. Documents submitted by foreign nationals must be originals or certified copies (depending on the document), in the candidate's native language, and accompanied by a certified translation into English. If necessary, foreign nationals must also submit a certified translation of relevant documents (diplomas, transcripts of records) into Croatian. Upon notification of admission to the PhD Programme, individuals who completed their master's studies abroad must undergo the procedure for the academic recognition of their higher education qualification. This procedure need not be initiated prior to receiving confirmation of admission to the doctoral study program.

The Doctoral Study Council will review all complete and timely submitted qualified applications and conduct an interview with the applicants prior to selection. When selecting candidates, the Council will place particular emphasis on the applicant's overall academic and professional track record, achieved results, scientific research potential, the relevance of their stated research interests, and recommendations provided.

The Doctoral Study Council makes the final decision on applicant selection independently and collectively. The Council reserves the right to reject an applicant without further explanation if it determines that the applicant does not meet the academic standards of the study program, has not demonstrated a satisfactory level of excellence, motivation, and/or scientific research potential in their previous work, or if the Council cannot provide a suitable study programme or an appropriate academic advisor/mentor for the applicant's proposed research area.

Applications that do not comply with the instructions will not be considered.

Tuition fees

For all doctoral candidates enrolled in the doctoral scientific study in the academic year 2026/27 the tuition fees will amount to 11.650,00 euros. The tuition fee is 2.900,00 EUR for the first semester, 2.200,00 EUR per semester for the second and third semesters, and 1.450,00 EUR per semester for the fourth, fifth and sixth semesters. This price includes the defence of the doctoral thesis. The tuition fee is the same for Croatian and foreign citizens. The tuition fee should be paid upon enrolment in each semester.

Institutional management of the studies

PhD Programme has the Head of Postgraduate Studies, Deputy Head of the PhD Programme and the Council for doctoral studies. The members of the Council are nominated from the faculty staff of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Zagreb and the doctoral candidates. An advisor is at doctoral students' disposal for questions related to organization of courses and formal processes.

The Council for doctoral studies determines the terms of enrolment and enrolment quota and conducts the enrolment procedure, decides on the requests of the students of the doctoral studies, conducts annual evaluation procedures and assesses the quality of the work of the doctoral students. It also oversees the quality of the doctoral study programme and makes necessary decision in order to ensure the quality, it also manages and makes necessary steps in order to implement the required changes to the PhD Programme, and it participates in the creation of development strategy of doctoral studies.

The direction and organization of the doctoral scientific study are defined by:

- Regulations on doctoral studies of the University of Zagreb (2024)
- Regulations on doctoral studies of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Zagreb (2025)
- Strategy of the development of scientific-research work at the Faculty of Architecture for the period 2018-2025.

CURRICULUM

Vision

The vision of the PhD Programme is to promote the high level of research and critical addressing of the problems faced in contemporary challenges in design and planning.

Strategy

Using intense seminar methods, interactive workshops and encouraging mentoring, we try to articulate specific research areas as a contribution to the contemporary discourse in the area of architecture and urban planning. We encourage individual research based on understanding of complex influences within a wider area of built and unbuilt environment. We believe that the knowledge stemming from such research process represents the foundation for formation of our society in the future.

Focus

In our wish to affirm and cultivate international perspective, during the course of the studies we focus on the four characteristic areas important for architecture and urban planning: heritage, project, city and scape.

Thematic orientation

Study programme has been organized in a way that there are four directions prepared for each generation, identifying the contemporary context and challenges in the field of architecture and urban planning. Thematic directions are a result of detailed discussions at the Council for doctoral studies which include current research and interests of the Faculty. Such approach allows fluctuation of the teaching staff across the studies. The Council suggests four seminar and workshop leaders (semesters I-III) from the ranks of active researchers and project leaders who will be responsible for elaborating the themes and proposing lecturers. The curriculum provides the format, while the organization and contents of lectures are provided in the detailed education plan for each semester. (Please find below the detailed curriculum for the 10th generation).

Development of research capabilities

Three year study is divided into two parts. The first part consists of three semesters where the participants define their problem area within the context of contemporary architectural and urban planning challenges, and they develop their research capacity and methodological precision through a number of workshops. Research workshops are also the working framework for creation and presentation of one's own research for the doctoral thesis. From the outset, workshop leaders encourage the participants to focus their work towards the subject-matter area of their future thesis and to develop it during two semesters. At the end of each semester there is a group presentation where each candidate demonstrates his/her own one-semester research in front of the workshop leaders and lecturers of the doctoral studies, as well as in front of all other candidates. It is followed by a collegial discussion, conversations, comments, advisory sessions, recommendations for continuation or supplementation of the research. Finished research can be found on the Internet site of the Faculty (virtual.arhitekt.hr), where it can be viewed as draft by candidates and lecturers of the PhD Programme. Past experiences have shown that group presentations and collegial discussions in the workshops are an excellent way to develop one's own research self-awareness and capability of critical assessment of others (in this case, peers in the study programme). Upon defence of the synopsis in the second part of the studies, candidates proceed with the preparation of the thesis with their mentors, and they have to be involved in scientific activities (writing and research).

Academic obligations of the participants

PhD Programme is organized on a semester-by-semester basis. In order to enroll in the next semester, it is necessary to meet the requirements for successfully completing the course obligations from the previous semester. As a requirement for the 5th and 6th semesters, it is necessary to accumulate the required number of ECTS credits from scientific activities (published papers, participation in international conferences, participation in research projects, elective courses, scientific exchange, etc.).

PhD Programme: ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING

Doctoral	1st year	1st semester			
	Mandatory courses	**Lect***	**Sem***	**Exe***	**ECTS**
A _ Bačić	Intense seminar Heritage	15	0	0	**5**
B _ Roth Čerina	Intense seminar Project	15	0	0	**5**
C _ Gašparović	Intense seminar City	15	0	0	**5**
D _ Careva	Intense seminar Scape	15	0	0	**5**
Obad Šćitaroci	Introduction to writing the thesis	5	10	0	**5**
Andrić	Scientific research work: planning, implementation, communication	15	0	0	**5**
	TOTAL	80	10	0	**30**

		2nd semester			
	Mandatory courses	**Lect***	**Sem***	**Exe***	**ECTS**
A or B or C or D	Research workshop	0	15	15	**10**
Šverko	Introduction to scientific publishing	5	10	0	**5**
Head of the studies	Scientific work – proposition of the research th.	0	0	45	**15**
	TOTAL	5	25	60	**30**

Doctoral	2nd year	3rd semester			
	Mandatory courses	**Lect***	**Sem***	**Exe***	**ECTS**
A or B or C or D	Methodological workshop (with potential mentors)	0	15	15	**10**
A or B or C or D	Scientific essay	0	30	0	**10**
Head of the studies	Scientific work – preparation of the synopsis of the thesis	0	0	30	**10**
	TOTAL	0	45	45	**30**

		4th semester			
		Lect*	**Sem***	**Exe***	**ECTS**
Chair of the committee	Scientific work – defence of the synopsis	0	0	45	**15**
	Elective work and courses **				**15**
Head of the studies	*Published category 'A' sci. paper (WoS)*				*15*
Head of the studies	*Published category 'B' sci. paper (out of WoS)*				*10*
Head of the studies	*Attendance at an international (national) conference with a paper****				*10 (5)*
Head of the studies	*Chapter in an international (national) book*				*10 (5)*
Leader of the sci. proj.	*Participation in a competitive international (domestic) project*****				*10 (5)*
Head of the studies	*Sci. exchange (depending on the duration and character)*				*5 - 10*
Course lecturer	*Elective course******				*5*
	TOTAL				**30**

Doctoral	3rd year	5th semester			
		Lect*	**Sem***	**Exe***	**ECTS**
Mentor	Doctoral thesis (mentorship)				**15**
	Elective work and courses **				**15**
	TOTAL				**30**

		6th semester			
		Lect*	**Sem***	**Exe***	**ECTS**
Mentor	Doctoral thesis (mentorship)				**15**
Chair of the committee	Defence of the doctoral thesis				**15**
	TOTAL				**30**
	TOTAL 1ST + 2ND + 3RD year				**180**

* the indicated number of hours represents the workload during the semester
** elective option for the 4th and 5th semesters – in addition to those listed, other unspecified activities worth 5 ECTS credits may be selected subject to the decision of the Doctoral Study Council (VDS); examples include membership in the editorial board of a scientific journal or proceedings, membership in the organizing or program committee of a scientific meeting, presenting papers at a scientific meeting, receiving an international or national award or recognition for scientific work, etc.
*** published and presented scientific papers (only full texts are evaluated, not abstracts or presentations) from meetings, or posters; note that the scientific meeting, conference, congress, or symposium must be organized or sponsored by a professional association or reputable institution and feature a scientific and peer-review committee
**** competitive projects – funded by a reputable institution and selected through a peer-review process (e.g., HRZZ, Horizon, small AF, institutional AF, etc.)
***** only horizontal mobility is supported; approval from the Doctoral Study Council (VDS) must be obtained prior to enrolment