GETTING STARTED

THE BACHELOR OF ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES APPLICATION PROCESS

Because the Bachelor of Architectural Studies (BAS) degree has a limited number of spaces, the School of Architecture and Planning (SoAP) has an additional, competitive selection process, which is outlined in this document. First, applicants must apply to Wits through the general undergraduate application process (an online application) by June 30th. To be considered for the BAS degree, applicants must meet the specified minimum academic requirements. Information on the degree, the requirements and how to apply can be found here:
www.wits.ac.za/course-finder/undergraduate/ebe/architectural-studies

Following the online application, the School evaluates spatial imagination, creative problem-solving and communication abilities in Exercises 1 and 2, which are detailed on pages 3 and 6. Next, applicants may interview an architect as part of an optional Exercise 3, detailed on page 9. Only those applicants who perform well on Exercises 1 and 2 will be invited for an admissions interview. The Exercises, interview and academic performance all count equally towards admission into the BAS degree programme.

Please double-check the Dos and Don’ts for Submission on page 7 and the How to Submit Your Exercises section on pages 7-8 before submitting your Exercises online, using the website we have specified. Exercises submitted by email will not be accepted. Exercises not submitted in the specified manner or by the deadline will not be considered.

INQUIRIES

For inquiries related to the BAS degree application process, check our frequently asked questions (FAQ) on page 10. If you don’t find what you’re looking for, you may contact:

@ applications.bas@wits.ac.za  011 717 7623

Wits person numbers must accompany all inquiries. Note that due to limited staffing during the COVID-19 pandemic, there may not always be someone available to answer a call at the number above.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

General information about the School: www.wits.ac.za/archplan
Online applications to Wits: https://www.wits.ac.za/undergraduate
Online submission of application Exercises: www.wits.ac.za/archplan/architecture/bas-application-exercise
Fees and funding: www.wits.ac.za/study-at-wits/fees-and-funding
Steps to Apply

1. Complete the general undergraduate application to Wits, including submission of school grades. If you have not already done so, you may complete the Online Application here: https://www.wits.ac.za/applications/

2. Upload high-quality scans or photographs of BAS Exercises 1 and 2, according to the upload guidelines on our Exercise Submission website: www.wits.ac.za/archplan/architecture/bas-application-exercise

   All submissions must be made by the date and time listed at left. It is highly recommended to make your submission long before that deadline, in case you have trouble uploading files the first time you try. Finding a way to submit the document on time is the applicant’s responsibility, and may require planning ahead well in advance. We will not consider late submissions.

   Once submitted, you will get an email confirming submission. Save it as your proof of submission. If you do not see the email within 10 minutes of submitting, check your junk/spam mail folder.

3. Applicants who submit the Exercises on time, meet minimum requirements, and show potential in the Exercises will be invited to an online interview using Microsoft Teams. In exceptional circumstances only, interviews may be arranged by other methods, with permission. Applicants not invited for interviews will also be informed at this time. Applicants who have not heard from the School by this date and do not see a decline notice on their online portal must email to inquire in order to maintain eligibility.

4. Applicants invited for an interview must respond to confirm an interview appointment by this date using our interview invitation website, which will be communicated to applicants who are invited. Applicants who do not respond to the interview invitations may be excluded from further consideration. Make sure that you give your correct contact details when submitting the Exercises, and check your email daily so you can reply to the interview invitation if it arrives.

5. Complete optional BAS Exercise 3. This is not compulsory, but we advise that you either interview an architect, take the Wits EdX MOOC (or both) as detailed on page 8, or both, before this date, prior to the interview. You may also browse architecture books, magazines or blogs to find out if you are going to enjoy this highly demanding course and profession.

6. Last chance to submit academic results if they were not submitted upon application. Grade 12 complete results should be submitted if available, or grade 11 results if grade 12 results are not yet available. No application can be considered without academic results.

7. Online interviews will be held with invited applicants via Microsoft Teams. If invited, you will be asked to upload any additional portfolio materials to our interview website, which will be communicated to you upon invitation. If invited, you will also be given a time slot and call-in information for the interview.

8. We check the academic results of suitable applicants after the interviews. The total selection score consists of scores for the Exercises, the interview and an academic score based on APS points, which are explained here: www.wits.ac.za/undergraduate/entry-requirements/

9. Provisional offers will be sent to some candidates based on total scores by this date. Applicants who accept the conditional offer, maintain good academic performance, and do equally as well (or better) in their final exams will receive firm offers in January.

10. Applicants who receive provisional offers must accept them within four weeks of receipt or the place may be offered to other applicants.

11. Following the publication of matric results, provisional offers are confirmed and some new offers made to waitlisted applicants, which must be accepted within three days to reserve a place. If offers are declined or not responded to, these places are offered to the next in line; this process continues until all places are filled, even if it requires making offers after the first registration date for new students. If you accept an offer elsewhere, please notify the School.
Exercise 1: Objigamathing

The Scenario
You are to make an objigamathing. You do not know what an objigamathing is, because it is something that does not yet exist. It is not a building, or any place you have been; it is something that you have never seen before, that performs some kind of function. Beyond that it can be anything you want it to be, coming from your own imagination. Now imagine that your friends ask you what this objigamathing is, and they want to see it represented physically, in three dimensions, in order to understand it. But, being friends, they do not want you to spend any money, so they ask you to make it using only re-used packaging cardboard (from cereal boxes, crackers, or something similar) and one other found material (something you could find almost anywhere, even refuse).

Your Task

1. Making. Using the packaging cardboard and not more than one other found material, build a three-dimensional representation of the objigamathing that would fit into a box 210mm wide, 297mm long, and 210mm tall (the size of standard ream of A4 paper). You may not use glue, tape, or any other adhesive, so you will have to decide how to assemble your objigamathing.

2. Storyboarding. Draw a step-by-step instruction manual that clearly shows how you made the objigamathing on one or two A4 sheets of paper, using the Storyboard Layout Guide on page 4 as a guide. This must be made up of drawn images using black ink and a maximum of one other colour, not with a pencil, and not through photos. Communicate in such a way that someone who does not speak much of your language could produce a similar object using your manual.

3. Writing. In approximately 200 words, define what your objigamathing is, and write the story of how it came about, and what its possibilities are. Your story should include something about why the objigamathing is significant for you.

4. Photo. Take one good photo of your objigamathing, and print it on a single A4 page. Include this photo with your submission.

Things to Consider
There are a number of decisions you need to make in the process, including:
- How can you use the limited materials to create a wonderful objigamathing?
- How you are going to put the various pieces of the objigamathing together without glue or tape?
- How you explain to someone else what your objigamathing is, or what it does?

Getting Help
If you feel stuck, you may look at precedents (examples of other objects) made from cardboard. However, the objigamathing you create should be the product of your own imagination, with your own personal story. Remember that anything you find online can also be found by the admissions team at the School, so we will know if you are copying! The final object must be a product of your own hands. It can be an abstract object, an invention, an imaginary creature, or anything else you can come up with. Below are some images which may give you some inspiration.

Checklist for Submission
- Scan/photograph 1 or 2 A4 sheets with a storyboard using the issued layout (see page 4), and check after saving to make sure the scan or image is high-quality and legible.
- Scan/photograph 1 A4 sheet, or create a .pdf file, containing a 200 word essay: The Story of Objigamathing.
- Take 1 good photo of your objigamathing and check to make sure it is of sufficient quality.
- Save all the files for yourself; the School does not return completed exercises to applicants.
- Upload to our Exercise upload website using the criteria given on our submission webpage and instructions in the How to Submit Your Exercise section (see pages 7-8).
Sample Storyboard Layouts

Use the Storyboard Layout Guide on the previous page to help compose the way in which you present your drawings. You may draw directions on that sheet if you want, but you may wish to copy it and recompose it on another paper once you decide how to organise your storyboard. The grid shown is a guideline, but you may combine different squares to make bigger ones if you want. Below are some possible ways to lay out the storyboard but these are only suggestions for possible layouts and you are free to explore alternatives using the Storyboard Layout Guide.

You can use each square of the grid separately.

You can combine rows.

You can combine columns.

You can combine lots of squares to make bigger drawings.

You can modify the blocks of the grid however you want.

5mm between small gridlines.

12mm in the middle & at margins.

Put a title somewhere at the top left.

Don't draw outside the margins.

Put your person number at the bottom right (of both pages if 2).
Exercise 2: The Journey

Background
This is an exercise in freehand artistic drawing. Please note that ‘freehand’ means without the use of rulers or straight edges. There is no correct or incorrect interpretation, we want to see your creative interpretation of the requirements listed below.

Your Task

1. Drawing. With graphite pencil (not coloured pencil) on an A3 sheet of paper, draw your most memorable journey. It could be a family vacation you went on, a place you went with friends, a move to a new house or new school, or some other kind of journey. Open your senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste as you think about your journey. Think about all the things and experiences both familiar and unusual which happen along the way. Consider your destination and how it feels to arrive. Think of this as a journey through space, time and emotions.

2. Communicating. Your drawing must communicate the following:
   - The sequence of events that make up the journey (not just the destination);
   - Noteworthy or significant moments during the journey;
   - Landmarks or special places that were part of the journey;
   - The spatial relationships between these places;
   - Feelings, memories and states of mind that accompanied you on your journey;
   - Qualities of light and shadow.

You need to find a creative way to represent your ideas graphically for the above. Please note that one single scene is not a representation of a journey. A two dimensional map on its own will not be sufficient, and tracing is not permitted.

Checklist for Submission

- Scan/photograph 1 A3 sheet with your original drawing, and check after saving to make sure it is legible.
- Save a copy of the file for yourself; the School does not return completed exercises to applicants;
- Upload to our Exercise upload website using the criteria listed on our submission webpage and instructions in the How to Submit Your Exercise section (see pages 7-8).
Dos and Don’ts for Submission

Do
Do make sure to type your details correctly when prompted on the Exercise submission webpage.
Do double check the ‘checklist for submission’ indicated at the bottom of Exercises 1 and 2.
Do put your Wits person number (not your ID number) on every page.
Do make copies of files for yourself before submitting.
Do take a screen shot of your confirmation of submission, and save it.

Don’t
Don’t submit the Exercises by email, post or courier; submit using the online platform described.
Don’t submit all 9 pages of this set of instructions; submit only your Exercises.
Don’t submit the Exercise 3 information; this will only be reviewed if you are invited to an interview.
Don’t submit files of more than 10MB.
Don’t ask the School to confirm receipt; you will see a message after submitting that confirms receipt.

How to Submit Your Exercises

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, hard copy submissions may be difficult, and in-person interviews are not advisable. For this reason, we have moved to an entirely online platform for your exercise submission. Carefully follow the instructions below to submit your Exercise.

1. Save your .jpg or .pdf file(s) and keep a copy of the files for yourself. Keep these until you get a final decision on your application; they are a backup in case anything goes wrong.

2. Go to our Exercise submission website: www.wits.ac.za/archplan/architecture/bas-application-exercise

3. Click on the image link
You will get redirected to the submission form webpage.

1. Enter your Wits person number
2. Enter your first name
3. Enter your surname
4. Enter your phone number
5. Enter your email address
6. Upload your file(s)

(refer to the guidelines in small text under the "Browse Files" button)

7. Initial in the box to confirm the work is your own

8. Submit your Exercise.

You will be redirected to a submission confirmation page, and will receive an email.
Exercise 3: (Optional) Interview an Architect / Architecture MOOC

Background
Although Exercise 3 is optional, having some exposure to the profession of architecture before the interview is strongly recommended, as it allows you to explore and better understand the profession of architecture and will serve to eliminate any misconceptions of what a future in architecture holds. You may complete one or both options.

Option 1: Interview an Architect

1. **Interviewing.** Since job shadowing in-person is not advisable during the COVID-19 pandemic, do your best to interview a practicing architect, or multiple people in an architectural practice. This involves asking about the day to day roles and responsibilities of an architect, and getting a sense of how they go about their practice. If you cannot find an architectural practice, consider a substitute interview of either a registered draughtsperson or architectural technician.

2. **Documenting.** During your interview, make sketches of any projects they show you and take notes about the conversation and their manner of practice, as well as your own observations.

Option 2: Wits EdX MOOC

Wits, in conjunction with other universities, has developed a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) entitled What Do Architects & Urban Planners Do? It is intended as an overview and preparatory course for people interested in pursuing architecture and other spatial design professions.

1. **Take the MOOC.** Set aside some time to go through the entire MOOC, which is available online at: [https://www.edx.org/course/what-do-architects-and-urban-planners-do](https://www.edx.org/course/what-do-architects-and-urban-planners-do), and complete the assignments. This is a 3-week course, with 2-3 hours of engagement per week. You can do the free version; we do not require the certificate. All you need is a computer or smart phone and internet access. Please note that you have to register for this MOOC by 30 March 2020 to do the first course. It will be open for future registrations later in 2020, but this may be after the interviews.

2. **Documenting.** As you complete the assignments, assemble the creative work that you do into an organised portfolio, and write a few notes reflecting on how your views about the creative process and architecture have been shaped by it.

Checklist for Your Own Record
You do not need to submit this information to SoAP, but you may want to submit it for your interview. Record:

- A timeline of your progress on either or each of the options above;
- Your impressions of the role of the architect;
- Sketches of what you discussed with the architect, or in the MOOC;
- Compile a portfolio of sketches and/or creative work from your experience. If you are invited to an interview, you submit this for it.

The Interview
Once we have evaluated the BAS Exercises, approximately the top half of the applicants will be invited for interviews, which is the last step in the application. These will take place online using Microsoft Teams; if you are invited to one, you will receive more information at that time. If you are invited, you will be expected to show your obigamathing and a portfolio of creative work. The interview is a required component of the application.

Please note that not all applicants are invited for interviews. Check the email you used for your online application regularly around the date indicated on page 2 when invitees will be notified. Applicants will only be notified by email; if you do not respond to confirm your interview invitation, the School may remove you from consideration.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

**What if I have internet problems at the application deadline, and am unable to upload?** First, you should be planning ahead to avoid this. The ability to plan your work and submit on time is considered part of the Exercises. If you anticipate even the possibility of internet/upload problems, you should compensate by submitting well in advance of the deadline, so you can try again if it fails and still meet the deadline. If you have internet access, but have trouble uploading the files, check your file size. Larger files will take longer and may be more problematic to upload. Keep file sizes under 10MB to avoid problems.

**I uploaded the Exercises; how will I know if the School received it?** You will see a confirmation message once your Exercise has been successfully submitted, and you will receive an email shortly afterwards. Save this email as proof of submission. Do not ask the School to confirm receipt; we receive hundreds of applications and it is not possible to follow up with all of them.

**How many applicants will be accepted?** The BAS programme targets a first-year enrolment of approximately 70 students. This may include students who are repeating after having failed the previous year, and rollovers from previous application years. We continue to make offers until all places are filled.

**How are the application Exercises evaluated?** Understand that there is no right or wrong answer! Your response enables us to evaluate your suitability for architecture. We do not want to see technical drawings; imaginatively drawn exercises which communicate as many layers of meaning as possible score well. Clear, logical but evocative graphic communication is important.

**How will I know how I’ve done in the exercise?** Exact evaluation scores are not released to applicants, but those who score well on the exercise will be invited for an interview; those who do not will be declined. Relevant dates can be found on page 2. Always check your email regularly during this time for updates.

**How can I stay informed of my application status?** Always check the email you used to complete the online application daily; changes to your application status will be sent to you by email. Furthermore, applicants may always check their application status using the Wits application portal. If you have been declined admission for this year, it will be noted on your portal. If the portal says your application is “under consideration”, it means your application is still active. You can log onto your application portal at: [www.wits.ac.za/applications](http://www.wits.ac.za/applications)

**What if I uploaded the Exercises before the deadline, but my application portal says I was declined due to non-submission?** Attach the screen shot of the confirmation message following your submission, include your Wits person number, and email us at: applications.bas@wits.ac.za

**What if I don’t hear anything by the date interview invitations are sent out?** If the date interview invitations are to be sent passes without communication from Wits and your portal shows your application is still active, please check both the email you used for the online application, and the email you listed on the Submission Form, if different. Check both your inbox and your spam/junk mail folders for any communication from a Wits email address (ending in @wits.ac.za). If after looking through your email, you still do not see any communication, and your portal shows your application is still under consideration, email us at: applications.bas@wits.ac.za

**How are applicants ranked when making offers of admission?** We use an internal scoring system which gives equal weight to the three criteria: the exercise score, the interview score, and a score based on your APS.