

BDes Q&A

What has the acceptance and graduation rate been in recent years?

Last year we reviewed ~650 applications to fill 50 seats in year 1. We keep 10 spots open for second year transfer, and do not accept transfer students above year 2. We sent around 65 offers to receive 50 acceptances, so it is typically 10%. We have an approximately 90% graduation rate.

Will the admissions consider the UBC personal profile that is completed with our application's second program choice?

We do not review the personal profile. The supplemental is used in place of this.

Portfolio aside, what makes a strong applicant?

The ideal applicant has both a very strong creative capability and a strong academic record. For us, your creative ability is quite important. For those looking to improve their chance of being accepted we suggest improving artistic skills such as hand drawing.

How much room is there in a common timetable for classes outside of the BDES program?

You take 33 credits of electives throughout the degree, which is typically 11 - 3 credit courses. 4 of these are taken in your first year.

Can students participate in both co-op and study abroad?

Yes! The timing can be a little tricky but with planning it is possible.

I applied to UBC 2025 and submitted my requested documents. Will UBC send an access link to my supplement application?

Admissions will send you an email 2-3 days after you apply and in that email you will find the link to the supplemental. If it has been more than a week and you have still not received it you should reach out to des@sala.ubc.ca and we can follow-up.

What is the typical grade average of admitted students?

There is no average grade in the same way there is with other programs, as the supplemental carries significant weight. With a strong supplemental, it is possible to be admitted with grades that are lower than those of typical UBC applicants.

Are academic references weighed heavily? Are extra curricular activities such as competitive sports or volunteer experience taken into consideration?

We do not require references for the BDES. We do ask for a resume and consider extra-curricular as part of the supplemental, but it doesn't hold much weight.

Given there is no early admission to this program, do I still have until January to submit supplemental work if I've completed the general UBC early application?

You can submit your supplemental at any time, though we do hold all application reviews until after the deadline as they are all reviewed together. Decisions are typically released mid to late March.

How long are exchanges? Do we have any with Finland?

The study abroad trips are typically around 3 weeks. The Scandinavia trip this coming summer includes Finland and Sweden! We often have trips that go to various regions of Europe.

What is the process for a second year transfer into BDes?

If you want to be admitted to year 2 you will need to have completed our year 1 requirements which you can find here:

<https://vancouver.calendar.ubc.ca/faculties-colleges-and-schools/school-architecture-and-landscape-architecture/bachelor-design-architecture-landscape-architecture-and-urbanism/degree-requirements>

I would encourage you to reach out to des@sala.ubc.ca to discuss a transfer.

How can I demonstrate my artistic skills without a portfolio?

Our design challenge questions in the supplemental ask students to complete three design challenges which we use in place of the portfolio.

How does one get classes credited, if they have previous architectural industry experience?

We do not give academic credit for professional work. If you attended another institution prior to applying, our admissions office will review your previous coursework to identify transferable credits.

Will the school provide co-op opportunities, or do students to find their own co-ops?

We do have a co-op office that assists students in finding opportunities, but it is ultimately up to the student to secure a placement.

With this particular undergraduate degree, is the UBC MArch program shorter?

Yes, we give one year advanced placement in the MArch and MLA program for our BDES graduates. This means the MARCH will take 2.5 years and the MLA 2.

Is it required/recommended to have math 31 (calculus) to be admitted to the BDES program?

Not required, but a strong foundation in math is an asset, so we recommend you complete it. Some technical courses require it, and the math foundation is particularly helpful if a student pursues our graduate programs later.

Is it possible to take Engineering classes alongside the BDES curriculum?

Not really. Most engineering classes are only open to those in the BASC. There may be an occasional cross-disciplinary elective though.

Are there student athletes in the program? What is it like to balance sports and academics?

We have had varsity athletes in the program. It can be tricky to manage your workload and schoolwork but it is possible provided you are dedicated and able to manage your time well.

Does the Dec. 1 deadline for entrance scholarships apply only to the general application otherwise due on the 15th of January, or does that include the supplemental elements as well?

Only the general application!

Does completing IB high school courses in English, Geography, and English fulfill certain first year course requirements?

Yes! IB credits can be used to satisfy our first year requirements. We accept general first year credit to satisfy ENGL and GEOG.

How long is the co-op program? Does pursuing co-op lengthen the degree?

You need to complete 3 terms of co-op to receive the co-op designation, which necessitates extending your degree by one year.

Are there SALA-specific scholarships available to prospective students?

We do not currently have any BDes specific awards; only awards from overall UBC.

Are technically oriented candidates considered over the more artistically inclined?

The ideal candidate has both! If that isn't possible, there is no clear preference between the two. The artistic piece can sometimes be more difficult to teach.