



**Graduate  
Studies**

**Office of the Vice-Provost and Dean**  
Yeates School of Graduate Studies

## **Final Assessment Report (FAR) and Implementation Plan**

Periodic Program Review (PPR)

**Architecture (MArch)**

Last Updated: March 8, 2019

## **FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT**

In accordance with the University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the graduate program in **Architecture (MArch)**. This report identifies the peer review identified strengths of the program, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The report also includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the final assessment report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations and who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Master of Architecture Program is a full-time two-year graduate program leading to a professional Master's degree in architecture (MArch). It is accredited by the Canadian Architectural Certification Board (CACB). The Program, which resides in the Department of Architectural Science (DAS), admitted its first cohort in 2007 and received accreditation by CACB in 2010. The MArch degree is in combination with the four-year pre-professional degree (BArchSc) offered in the Department are accredited as a four-plus-two (4+2) program. Students graduating with an accredited degree in architecture are eligible for entry into professional internship programs, the first step towards professional licensure in Canada.

The MArch Program offers a two-year MArch degree in which students complete a three semester-long Thesis in the second year. The Program is designed to allow students who have earned a four-year pre-professional degree, such as a BArchSc degree, to concentrate on an intense engagement with the discipline of architecture. Students entering the graduate program are expected to have a strong background in building design. The graduate program accepts students from other institutions who hold an undergraduate degree equivalent to the BArchSc. The mode of delivery of the academic content is through the modes of studio and courses typical of architectural education, with the addition of graduate seminars and the requirement to complete an advanced thesis in the second year.

The Program identified the following as its founding objectives.

- The program shall be relevant to industry, bringing theory into practice.
- The program shall be forward-thinking, progressive, and future-oriented, striving to lead industry into the coming decades.
- The program shall be cognizant of the Department's traditions, which foster a practice-oriented, holistic approach to architectural studies.
- The program's graduates shall be educated to become leaders: strong collaborators, with the flexibility to take on many roles in the AEC industry; independent, critical thinkers, with the skills needed to conduct the research required in contemporary architectural practice.
- The program must be distinctive to Ryerson.

In Canada, architecture is constituted as a self-regulating profession. The regulatory body in Ontario is the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA). The highly demanding process of professional qualification starts with formal education in a CACB-accredited university program in architecture.

There is strong current and anticipated societal need for this Program and its graduates. The Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS) recognizes architecture as a profession that will be in continual demand for the foreseeable future. Into the middle of the next decade, COPS predict the need for some 800 new architects in Canada per year, based on growth predictions and demographic analyses of current professionals. Current professional programs in architecture in Canada, coupled with anticipated immigration of foreign-trained architects, is not sufficient to meet these needs.

Architects operate in an increasingly dynamic environment that demands highly-educated and qualified professionals equipped to deal with changing requirements and technologies. The level of expertise required by architects and the scope of architects' professional services, traditionally understood to include design and management of building projects, have increased exponentially. Changing social and technological needs have resulted in far more sophisticated building responses, requiring a level of specialized knowledge that has driven the demand for higher standards of education and professional qualification among architects. Increased awareness of health and safety issues, environmental sustainability, differing cultural traditions, integration of urban design and infrastructure, changing social dynamics and the rapid pace of technological change are just a few of the many forces acting on the design and construction of buildings. To respond to these complex forces, in recent years professional education in architecture has risen from the undergraduate to the graduate level, and has included greater research activity related to an array of issues in the design and construction of the built environment.

The **strengths** of the MArch Program include:

- the thesis requirement which offers students the freedom to pursue topics of their own interest where students are required to develop their positions in architecture and they work closely (one to one) with knowledgeable supervising faculty;
- graduates are well-prepared to enter the profession as interns and there is a corresponding high percentage of employment after graduation;
- a wide range of extra-curricular activities are offered by the Program, including a strong series of evening lectures and exhibitions, and travel opportunities connected to studios;
- the Program offers a variety of perspectives on the discipline of architecture through a diverse and multi-disciplinary faculty who are engaged with the studios and courses they teach and are engaged in thesis supervision;
- students entering the program are well versed in the design of buildings which enables them to pursue graduate studies in architecture and complete an advanced architecture thesis to complete their MArch degree.

The comprehensive review of the Program has summarized a number of **weaknesses**, including:

- the electives do not provide enough choice and do not match the graduate level of other studios and seminars in the curriculum due to their shared delivery with the fourth year in the BArchSc Program in the Department;
- the length of the Program is long at six semesters and both students and graduates have indicated a desire to see this reduced by a semester without an impact on the quality of the thesis requirement;
- the transition from three continuous semesters of studios and courses immediately into their final thesis is an exhausting schedule and provides too little formal preparation for thesis;
- students have not been adequately prepared for engagement in architectural theory;

- the Program lacks an informative, attractive presence on the internet;
- workshop hours are limited and there is little space in the building to accommodate full-scale mock-ups, models, and component development;
- the Architecture building does not effectively support activities of its three programs through adequate studio and critique spaces, for example, and suffers other limitations such as indoor air quality.

The strengths and weaknesses of the Program indicate specific **opportunities** to pursue:

- Develop new graduate-only elective courses;
- Strengthen the relationship between the BArchSc and the MArch programs;
- Increase collaboration within DAS, within Ryerson, and outside of Ryerson;
- Develop new programs;
- Make better use of faculty research programs;
- Establish mechanisms to allow early admissions to secure qualified students;
- Admit more international students;
- Improve the program website.

A set of **aspirations** in both shorter and longer term strategies were identified:

- Develop a comprehensive communications strategy that promotes the quality of the program to attract prospective students;
- Establish an active and distinctive shared identity that reflects the MArch program's unique qualities and mission;
- Create a program open to evolving challenges and demands;
- Provide time for architectural discourse and collaboration in research and teaching, less focus on administrative procedures;
- Attract excellent new faculty;
- Acquire significant research grants to support collaborative endeavours between students and supervisors;
- increase scholarships and other financial resources to support students;
- Pursue a refurbished, modernized building with space appropriate for this century and the academic ambitions of the Program and Department.

The conclusion of the data gathering and analysis of the Program conducted during the Periodic Program Review is a response in the form of a Development Plan. The MArch Program has identified key items to work toward:

- Create a comprehensive communications strategy to promote the quality of the MArch Program;
- Refine the curriculum and course offerings to continue to support excellent graduate education in architecture;
- Develop collaborations with complementary opportunities outside of the Program
- Establish a PhD program in architecture;
- Enhance recruitment strategies and activities;

- Continue to develop the research opportunities in the Program;
- Pursue funding opportunities for student scholarships and faculty research;
- Work with the University to transform the Architecture building into a space appropriate for the Program's and Department's academic ambitions;

The Periodic Program Review has been a productive and informative exercise which has produced a comprehensive view of the Program and provided an important perspective on our achievements and weaknesses. The MArch Program will address the goals outlined in the Development over the next five years and attend to some goals immediately as a result of this Review.

## **Periodic Program Review and Peer Review Team Architecture (MArch)**

The graduate program in Architecture (MArch), Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science (FEAS), submitted a Self-Study Report to the Yeates School of Graduate Studies that outlined program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the program, program data including data from student surveys and the standard data packages. Course outlines and CVs for full-time faculty members were also appended.

Two external and one internal arm's-length reviewers were selected from a set of proposed candidates. The Peer Review Team (PRT) for the Periodic Program Review (PPR) of the graduate program in Architecture (MArch), consisted of Professor Brian Lilley (Dalhousie University), Dr. David Theodore (McGill University), and Dr. Andrew Millward (Ryerson University).

The appraisal committee spent two days at Ryerson. The visit included interviews with the University and Faculty Administration including the Provost and Vice-President Academic, FEAS Associate Dean, Vice-Provost and Dean Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS); Associate Dean YSGS, Graduate Program Director of the Graduate Program, and meetings with Faculty, a group of current students, and support staff.

The PRT site visit was conducted on May 22 and 23, 2018. The PRT report was communicated to the Associate Dean, YSGS on July 3, 2018, and the response to the report from Architecture was communicated on September 26, 2018.

### **Program Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities**

The Peer Review Team identified program strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, outlined below.

**Strengths:** There is a societal need in Canada for more trained architects; Ryerson students have a strong technical background (largely owing to undergraduate education). Faculty and Department leadership has clear priorities and a keen sense of the program's strengths and weaknesses.

**Weaknesses:** Space constraints prevent program development. Now that the program is established interdisciplinary horizontal links to other departments could be developed.

**Opportunities:** One-year Masters where certification is the prime focus; creation of research clusters (e.g., wood cluster); alumni development program for industry contacts and endowments; building program to add three stories to the facility.

## Summary of PRT Recommendations with Graduate Program and YSGS Responses

### ACADEMIC RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Recommendation 1: Explore implementing a one-year course-based professional MArch with an additional second year for students interested in a thesis-based research MArch.**

##### **Program Response**

Agreement. The program will form a committee to consider one-year MArch degree options.

The program notes that some graduate programs at Ryerson have been developing and offering a Professional Masters Diploma (PMDip). The program believes that this is a more effective route to a one-year degree. It avoids the confusion of two graduate degrees (one professional and one non-professional) or the need to considerably re-work both the graduate and undergraduate curricula in the Department in order to provide two separate tracks for a professional degree, that is, the two MArch degrees suggested by the PRT. The Department has begun investigating the opportunity of offering a PMDip in Architecture and Technology. This approach to offering a one-year degree would also serve the growth scenario discussed by the PRT and offer other benefits the PRT outlined in their recommendation.

The committee will complete its work in 2019.

##### ***YSGS Response***

*YSGS supports the program response.*

*YSGS refers the program to Policy 112 for further details on the process of developing a PMDip.*

*YSGS also notes that the Associate Dean, Programs is available to consult on the potential development of a PMDip and encourages the program to meet with the Associate Dean early on in the process.*

#### **Recommendation 2: Make concerted efforts to have second advisors on the thesis outside of the architecture faculty, starting with advisors from Building Science, but potentially drawing from across the University: Geography, Digital Media, Fashion, Management, Urban Development, Literature, and so on.**

##### **Program Response**

Agreement. The program notes that procedures and policies are in place to support this recommendation.

For example, the program notes that faculty in the Department whose area of teaching is Building Science have worked with graduate Architecture students as Supervisors, as Second Readers and as Program Representatives (the third member of a Thesis



Committee). Students have also worked with faculty in these Committee roles who have been drawn from other Faculties and Departments at Ryerson. The Thesis in the MArch Program is formulated as a very self-directed activity and the students have every opportunity to look beyond the Department faculty to form their Committees. The program will work on raising student awareness of opportunities for having committee members from outside the program on an ongoing basis.

***YSGS Response***

*YSGS supports the program response.*

*YSGS encourages the program to review the procedures accompanying Policy 164 on Graduate Status, Enrolment, and Evaluation for further details on the requirements for a Master's examining committee (specifically section 21 of the procedures).*

**Recommendation 3: Hire additional faculty for the MArch program.**

**Program Response**

Agreement. The program notes that two faculty members have recently been hired and the search for a third position is to take place during the 2018-2019 academic year. Other positions will be filled as opportunities arise.

***YSGS Response***

*YSGS supports the program response.*

*YSGS notes that the hiring of tenure-track faculty is outside of its purview. It encourages the program to continue to work with the FEAS Dean's Office on issues related to its faculty complement.*

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1: Undertake a fundraising campaign to add three additional stories to the Architecture Building.**

**Program Response**

Agreement. The program notes that a full study of the space resource requirements of the Department and potential costed solutions would be the first step in resolving longstanding space issues. Results of a comprehensive study would provide a focus for a fundraising campaign. The Department is keen to work with the university administration on such an initiative, and plans to investigate the possibility of additional

stories being added to the building, along with a major renovation to address current deficiencies.

The program, working with the department and the Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science, will initiate a detailed study to determine building opportunities. This will be initiated in 2019

***YSGS Response***

*YSGS supports the program's commitment to complete a review of the options to address its space issues. YSGS notes, however, that any potential renovations to the Architecture building are outside of its purview. YSGS encourage the program to work with the FEAS Dean's Office, the Office of Academic Space Planning, and the Provost's Office on the review.*

**Recommendation 2: Undertake a general fundraising campaign (e.g., to support student scholarships and awards) and improve alumni relations.**

**Program Response**

Agreement. The program will provide leads and other relevant information to FEAS and University Advancement.

***YSGS Response***

*YSGS supports the program response.*

## Implementation Plan

### Academic Recommendations

Recommendation	Program Response	YSGS Response	Proposed Action	Responsibility to Lead Follow Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
<p>Explore implementing a one-year course-based professional MArch with an additional second year for students interested in a thesis-based research MArch.</p>	<p>Agreement. The program will form a committee to consider one-year MArch degree options.</p> <p>The program notes that some graduate programs at Ryerson have been developing and offering a Professional Masters Diploma (PMDip). The program believes that this is a more effective route to a one-year degree. It avoids the confusion of two graduate degrees (one professional and one non-professional) or the need to considerably re-work both the graduate and undergraduate curricula in the Department in order to provide two separate tracks for a professional degree, that is, the two MArch degrees suggested by the PRT. The Department has begun investigating the opportunity of offering a PMDip in Architecture and Technology. This approach to offering a one-year degree would also serve the growth scenario discussed by the PRT and offer other benefits the PRT outlined in their recommendation.</p> <p>The committee will complete its work in 2019.</p>	<p>YSGS supports the program response.</p> <p>YSGS refers the program to Policy 112 for further details on the process of developing a PMDip.</p> <p>YSGS also notes that the Associate Dean, Programs is available to consult on the potential development of a PMDip and encourages the program to meet with the Associate Dean early on in the process.</p>	<p>Formed a committee to consider MArch degree options Sep 2018</p>	<p>Graduate Program Director, Architecture, GPC and Department of Architecture</p>	<p>2019</p>

Recommendation	Program Response	YSGS Response	Proposed Action	Responsibility to Lead Follow Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
<p>Make concerted efforts to have second advisors on the thesis outside of the architecture faculty, starting with advisors from Building Science, but potentially drawing from across the University: Geography, Digital Media, Fashion, Management, Urban Development, Literature, and so on.</p>	<p>Agreement. The program notes that procedures and policies are in place to support this recommendation.</p> <p>For example, the program notes that faculty in the Department whose area of teaching is Building Science have worked with graduate Architecture students as Supervisors, as Second Readers and as Program Representatives (the third member of a Thesis Committee). Students have also worked with faculty in these Committee roles who have been drawn from other Faculties and Departments at Ryerson. The Thesis in the MArch Program is formulated as a very self-directed activity and the students have every opportunity to look beyond the Department faculty to form their Committees.</p> <p>The program will work on raising student awareness of opportunities for having committee members from outside the program on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>YSGS supports the program response.</p> <p>YSGS encourages the program to review the procedures accompanying Policy 164 on Graduate Status, Enrolment, and Evaluation for further details on the requirements for a Master's examining committee (specifically section 21 of the procedures).</p>	<p>Procedures and policies are in place to support this recommendation.</p> <p>The program will work on raising student awareness of opportunities.</p>	<p>Graduate Program Director, Architecture</p> <p>Graduate students</p> <p>Graduate Program in Architecture</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Hire additional faculty for the MArch program.</p>	<p>Agreement. The program notes that two faculty members have recently been hired and the search for a third position is to take place during the 2018-2019 academic year. Other positions will be filled as opportunities arise.</p>	<p>YSGS supports the program response. YSGS notes that the hiring of tenure-track faculty is outside of its purview. It encourages the program to continue to work with the FEAS Dean's Office on issues related to its faculty complement.</p>	<p>Two faculty have been hired and a search for a third position is to start. Other positions will be filled when opportunities arise.</p>	<p>Graduate Program in Architecture</p>	<p>2018-19</p>

## Administrative and Financial Recommendations

Recommendation	Program Response	YSGS Response	Proposed Action	Responsibility to Lead Follow Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
Undertake a fundraising campaign to add three additional stories to the Architecture Building.	<p>Agreement. The program notes that a full study of the space resource requirements of the Department and potential costed solutions would be the first step in resolving longstanding space issues. Results of a comprehensive study would provide a focus for a fundraising campaign. The Department is keen to work with the university administration on such an initiative, and plans to investigate the possibility of additional stories being added to the building, along with a major renovation to address current deficiencies.</p> <p>The program, working with the department and the Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science, will initiate a detailed study to determine building opportunities. This will be initiated in 2019.</p>	YSGS supports the program's commitment to complete a review of the options to address its space issues. YSGS notes, however, that any potential renovations to the Architecture building are outside of its purview. YSGS encourage the program to work with the FEAS Dean's Office, the Office of Academic Space Planning, and the Provost's Office on the review.	Initiate a detailed study to determine building opportunities.	Department Chair	2019 to resolution
Undertake a general fundraising campaign (e.g., to support student scholarships and awards) and improve alumni relations.	Agreement. The program will provide leads and other relevant information to FEAS and University Advancement.	YSGS supports the program response.	Provide leads and other relevant information.	Department Chair and Associate Chair of MArch Program	Ongoing

A report on the progress of these initiatives will be provided in the Follow-up Report which will be due in one year from the date of Senate approval.