

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING

The MIT School of Architecture and Planning (SA+P) is comprised of six main divisions: the Department of Architecture; the Department of Urban Studies and Planning; the MIT Media Lab; the MIT Center for Real Estate; the Art, Culture, and Technology Program; and the Norman B. Leventhal Center for Advanced Urbanism. It is also the administrative home of the MIT Morningside Academy for Design.

Over the years, SA+P has embraced a broad range of fields connected by a strong commitment to research that advances social good. These varied disciplines share the use of design approaches that are distinct from but complementary to the engineering approach to problem solving.

At SA+P, design and policy interventions focus on the improvement of human lives, equity and social justice, cultural enrichment, and the health of the planet. The curriculum empowers students with skills that enable them to design physical spaces, policies, and technologies that enhance the quality of the built environment at all scales.

Students

SA+P enrolls an average of 600–700 students a year, drawn from around the world. Most are graduate students who choose from a range of advanced degree programs. Many pursue cross-disciplinary studies and dual degrees from among those offered at SA+P and across the Institute.

Global Projects

One of MIT's core principles is the belief that professional competence is fostered by focusing attention on pressing global issues. A central aspect of teaching and research at SA+P involves participation in collaborative undertakings among our departments, labs, centers, and institutes; with other units of MIT; and with public and private institutions in the United States and abroad.

History

SA+P's history extends to a century and a half and provides current students with a legacy of pioneering excellence. Founded in 1865, the Department of Architecture was the first such department in the nation and became a leader in introducing Modernism to America. Sophia Hayden was the first woman to graduate from the department in 1890, and three years later Robert Robinson Taylor became the first African American man to graduate from an American architecture program.

The program in city planning was the second of its kind in the country (1932) and later evolved into the current Department of Urban Studies and Planning—the longest continuous planning program in the United States and repeatedly ranked number one in the nation. The MIT Media Lab, the birthplace of multimedia

computing (1985), has come to be known as a world-class incubator of new design ideas; the MIT Center for Real Estate established the nation's first one-year graduate program in real estate development (1984); and the Center for Advanced Visual Studies (1967)—the precursor to the Program in Art, Culture, and Technology—pioneered the use of technologies such as lasers, plasma sculptures, sky art, and holography as tools of expression in public and environmental art. The MIT Norman B. Leventhal Center for Advanced Urbanism (2012), established as a premier research center focused on the design and planning of large-scale, complex 21st-century metropolitan environments, aims to redefine the field of urban design to meet contemporary challenges, utilizing interdisciplinary collaborative practices and the most advanced analytical and representational tools.

Established in 2022, the MIT Morningside Academy for Design is an interdisciplinary hub that celebrates the transformative power of design at the Institute.

Resources

The Rotch Library is one of the nation's premier resources in architecture and planning. Its extensive offerings include architecture, building technology, art history, photography, environmental studies, land use, urban design, housing and community development, regional planning, urban transportation, and real estate. Its visual collections hold more than 60,000 digital images and 380,000 slides. The library also features exhibitions of student, staff, and faculty work, as well as shows drawing from its collections.

Gallery 9, located in the lobby of Building 9, mounts exhibitions of work from across SA+P. The Keller Gallery, a vest-pocket space of about 200 square feet programmed by the Department of Architecture, presents projects by faculty and students. The MIT Museum frequently features exhibitions on architecture and visual studies. The List Visual Arts Center presents 5–8 shows a year exploring contemporary art-making in all media.